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**THE PAUL WARNKE NOMINATION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A
CONTROVERSY AND THE REFORMATION OF U.S. STRATEGIC DOCTRINE
IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

by

JENNIFER L. MELLARD

A THESIS

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in
The Department of History
to
The School of Graduate Studies
of
The University of Alabama in Huntsville**

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

2016

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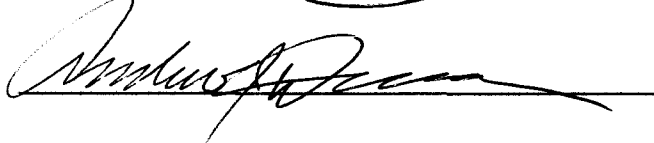
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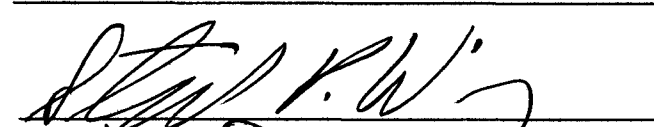
Submitted by Jennifer L. Mellard in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History and accepted on behalf of the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies by the thesis committee.


We, the undersigned members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, certify that we have advised and/or supervised the candidate on the work described in this thesis. We further certify that we have reviewed the thesis manuscript and approve it in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

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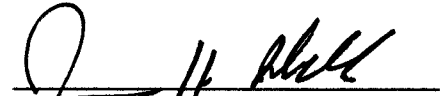
ABSTRACT
The School of Graduate Studies
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Degree Master of Arts College/Dept History
Name of Candidate: Jennifer L. Mellard
Title: The Paul Warnke Nomination: The Construction of a Controversy and the Reformation of U.S. Strategic Doctrine in the Public Sphere

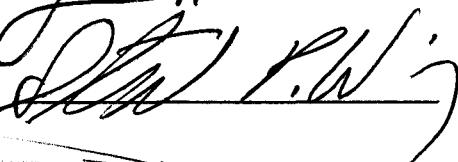
In January, 1977, President Jimmy Carter's nomination of the "assured destruction" advocate Paul C. Warnke to the dual posts of chief negotiator for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) and director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) led to a national controversy. The Senate confirmed Warnke by only a slim voting margin of 58-40 for negotiator and 70-29 for director. Commentators have attributed the nomination's controversial status and results of the vote against him solely to his reputation as an arms controller and for the purpose of controlling SALT II Treaty negotiations. Warnke's private papers, chronological attention to the media response, and in-depth analysis of the confirmation hearings reveal instead that Senators Henry Jackson (D-WA) and Sam Nunn (D-GA) deliberately constructed the controversy not only to control SALT II, but to foment a reformation in U.S. declaratory strategic doctrine to prevent a drift toward a mutual assured destruction strategy. Strategically orchestrated by the use of hearings and headlines, politically constructed through the deliberate creation of a controversy, and tactically calculated to gain the symbolic one-third vote against Warnke's confirmation, the anti-Warnke effort was above all motivated to reverse the public reification of assured destruction before the ratification of SALT II and into the 1980s.

Abstract Approval:

Committee Chair



Department Chair



Graduate Dean



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I owe another debt to Dr. Andrew Dunar and Dr. Nicole Pacino. Since my early undergraduate career, Dr. Dunar has encouraged and supported me, patiently listening with humor and a contagious smile that I will always cherish. Without Dr. Dunar's early support and Dr. Isbell's steadfast mentorship, none of what I was able to accomplish would have come to pass. I owe thanks to Dr. Pacino for encouraging me through some of the thornier thickets and briars of graduate school, lending advice about teaching, researching, and studying with a winsome wisdom that I applied not only to studies but to life. To each of my mentors through this journey, I thank you for listening to my ideas and for never giving up.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THE TWO SCHOOLS.....	15
III. THE NOMINATION AND THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HEARINGS.....	34
IV. THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARINGS.....	58
V. CONCLUSION.....	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	119

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On February 2, 1977, President Jimmy Carter nominated arms control advocate Paul C. Warnke to the dual posts of director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and chief negotiator for the Strategic Arms and Limitation Talks II (SALT II). Warnke's nomination turned into a controversy that sparked a national debate, passing Senate confirmation for negotiator by only a slim voting margin of 58-40. Historians and commentators have assumed the controversy and the number of votes against him was inevitable because of Warnke's reputation. His arms control ideology of restraint in weapons development and his skeptical view of the political utility of nuclear weapons seemed to automatically disqualify him as an effective negotiator. Historians have framed the controversy as part of the post-Vietnam breakdown in the consensus on the use of military force, as part of a renewed anti-communist campaign by a rising coalition of neoconservatives, or as part of the efforts by the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) to gain support for a defense buildup after a decade of restraint. Commentators have assigned leadership of the anti-Warnke campaign primarily to defense-minded Senator Henry M. Jackson (D-WA) of the Armed Services Committee (ASC) and to defense strategist Paul Nitze. Some historians have attributed the effort

against Warnke as an attempt to control SALT II negotiations. The question remains though why shaping SALT II was so important and what the national debate Warnke's nomination stirred was fundamentally about.

In answer to that question and against those orthodox interpretations, this paper proposes a new framework. It argues two central points. First, the nomination was not inevitable. Warnke's reputation was necessary but not sufficient for the number of votes against him. Instead, Senator Jackson and Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) deliberately constructed a controversy by questioning Warnke's credibility. Their strategy of constructing a controversy by holding hearings, with expectation of media coverage, and Jackson's tactic of creating doubt about Warnke's credibility gained enough votes to prove that the Senate could block a future treaty that did not fit their criteria.

While the tactic got the media's attention and the vote, it obscured what the team effort by Senators Jackson and Nunn was really about. When close analysis of the media response to the nomination, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (FRC) and the ASC confirmation hearings are combined with analysis of Jackson's methods and motives from the SALT I (Interim Agreement and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty) hearings of 1972 and Warnke's private papers, a new framework emerges that argues the second point of what the nomination was fundamentally about. The Warnke nomination pitted two competing campaigns of strategic thought on how much was enough for a credible deterrent against each other and marked the turning point toward a new consensus on U.S. declaratory strategic doctrine. To understand then what motivated the anti-Warnke campaign and what the debate was really about, one has to first understand strategic doctrine in a democracy.

In 1954, a speech by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations implied that U.S. strategic doctrine rested on "massive retaliation" against Soviet cities, known as "countervalue" and later as "assured destruction" or mutual assured destruction (MAD), as the sole deterrent.¹ Such publically articulated plans were far from the reality of actual operational planning done by the military, which created an enduring schism between political and operational assumptions of how much was enough for a credible deterrent in the nuclear age.² During the 1960s, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara presided over the schism's deepening division. In 1962, he declared a "no cities" (counterforce against an adversary's military capabilities) doctrine. Military strategy, he said, would have to be regarded the same way conventional military operations were before the nuclear revolution of 1945 seemed to have rendered them militarily and politically useless. "The destruction of the enemy's military forces, not his civilian population," was the objective.³ When it became clear that the requirements for counterforce capabilities were infinite, the budget-minded McNamara publically repudiated counterforce as U.S. declaratory doctrine and shifted toward one of assured destruction. As former Pentagon official Morton Halperin remembered, "all officials have learned to talk in public only about deterrence and city attacks... Too many critics can make too much trouble (no cities talk weakens deterrence, the argument goes) so

¹ Dulles publically repudiated reliance on massive retaliation two years later. Still, the damage was done. See Desmond Ball and Jeffrey Richelson, eds., *Strategic Nuclear Targeting* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 17-18.

² Janne E. Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal: The Politics of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 29.

³ William Kaufman, *The McNamara Strategy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 74-75.

public officials have run for cover...But the targeting philosophy, the options and the order of choice remain unchanged."⁴

McNamara's linguistic legacy profoundly affected domestic politics and strategic policy for the next half century. Declaratory policy became a marketing tool, a political instrument to reassure the public and control the defense budget even as operational planning retained its focus on military targets.⁵ The declaratory concepts of "mutual assured destruction" and other reassuring terms such as "countervalue," (targeting industry and population centers) "mutual deterrence," "strategic sufficiency," and even "minimum deterrence" became popularly ingrained in congressional, public, academic, and even in some defense-minded intellectuals' minds as official U.S. strategic doctrine.⁶ As public creed and deterrence dogma, MAD became canonized in the minds of nuclear theorists, arms control advocates, and national consciousness and reified as U.S. strategic doctrine.⁷

The reification of the doctrine of assured destruction became codified with the signing of the Interim Agreement and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) in May 1972, known as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I). The ABM Treaty limited missile defenses to 200 interceptors for each side, later changed to 100. The Interim Agreement froze the number of missile silos (ICBMs) on both sides to levels then existing or under construction to 1,054 for the United States and 1,607 for the Soviets. It did not prohibit modernization. It did not lead to agreed definitions for what constituted

⁴ Morton Halperin, quoted in Desmond Ball, *Targeting for Strategic Deterrence* (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983), 15.

⁵ Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal*, 90.

⁶ Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal*, 30.

⁷ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 323; Fred Ikle, "Can Nuclear Deterrence Last out the Century?," *Foreign Affairs* 51 no. 2 (1973), 267-269.

"significant" increases in the size of missiles, which the Soviets wanted to keep ambiguous. The terms were to be in place for a period of five years.

Capitol Hill hailed the ABM Treaty, which limited missile defense to a negligible amount, as evidence that the Soviets understood the logic of mutual deterrence and the principle of mutual vulnerability.⁸ There could be no defense against nuclear weapons, and cities would always remain vulnerable. The ABM Treaty seemed to have halted the arms race and provided a finite answer to how much was enough for a credible deterrent. Some defense intellectuals, like assured destruction and arms control advocate Paul Warnke, repeated these assumptions in speeches, Senate testimonies, and publications. Newspapers echoed these thoughts in the pages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.⁹ Restraint instead of preparedness became the dominant ideology driving weapons procurement.

To those less confident in the logic of automatic deterrence, the artificial cap on U.S. capabilities was driving the United States into an increasingly precarious position vis-à-vis the Soviets. Under the terms of the Interim Agreement, both sides were free to modernize their forces. With the agreement allowing the Soviets higher launcher and missile numbers, numerical inequality and potential superiority became increasingly significant. Skeptics feared that the Soviets did not embrace a MAD doctrine and were striving for superiority and a war-fighting capability. As the Soviets continued to expand within the numerical limits of SALT I, skeptics called for a U.S. response before the negotiations of SALT II began. Public reliance on assured destruction and arms control agreements as enough to ensure a credible deterrent was becoming a liability. While

⁸ Joshua Muravchik, "Expectations of SALT I: Lessons for SALT III," *World Affairs* 143 no. 3 (1980/1), 284.

⁹ Muravchik, 284.

some were reassured by the seemingly self-evident nuclear logic of "mutual assured destruction" and the signing of SALT I, by the early 1970s others feared that Soviet counterforce gains meant the United States was drifting from a position of nuclear superiority to "essential equivalence" and parity, and eventually to inferiority unless something was done to reverse the trends.

Defense minded Senators and nuclear strategists feared that without the capability to respond should deterrence fail, the United States would be vulnerable to nuclear blackmail, an "impotent giant" in the face of Soviet coercion during a political crisis.¹⁰ The dominant school of U.S. strategic thinking on the political non-utility of nuclear weapons and unilateral restraint in weapons procurement was jeopardizing the U.S. deterrent. Scenarios of a President being self-deterred from retaliation against a Soviet first strike during a political crisis because he had only the capability to respond with attacks on Soviet cities, knowing the Soviets might then counterstrike against the American people, motivated both fear and pen. As strategist Phillip Bobbit summarized the perceived dilemma, the "caricature of Assured Destruction as no more than the threat to employ nuclear weapons against cities and people" would become a "grotesque reality" without counterforce capabilities against military targets.¹¹ It was this fear that motivated a defense-minded coalition to call for a counterforce revival in the public sphere.

Fundamental to accomplishing a counterforce crusade was resolving the meaning of superiority in the nuclear age. In 1974, former SALT I negotiator Paul Nitze told a

¹⁰ Richard Pipes, remarks during "Peace with Freedom: A Discussion by the Committee on the Present Danger Before the Foreign Policy Association," March 14, 1978, in *The Committee on the Present Danger, "Has America Become Number 2?,"* in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 21.

¹¹ Philip Bobbitt, "Selective Options and Limited Responses, 1974-83, in *US Nuclear Strategy: A Reader*, edited by Philip Bobbitt, Lawrence Freedman, and Gregory F. Treverton (New York: New York University Press, 1989).

congressional committee that the Soviets were on their way to gaining strategic superiority.¹² Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asked in reply, "What in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it, politically, militarily, operationally, at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it?"¹³ The question was more than rhetorical. If superiority was meaningless, then so were inequalities in weapons. If it mattered, then the United States was vulnerable and deterrent requirements were infinite. As military commanders would say, "what the hell is nuclear restraint?"¹⁴ Kissinger called for a national debate following the 1974 Moscow summit to bring such questions to the public's attention. Nitze lamented a year later that no such debate had taken place.¹⁵

The need for action took on increasing urgency as the gap between declaratory doctrine and military capability widened. Nitze warned in 1976 that "the trends in relative military strength are such that, unless we move promptly to reverse them, the United States is moving toward a posture of minimum deterrence in which we would be conceding to the Soviet Union the potential for a military and political victory if deterrence failed."¹⁶ In the same year, the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), of which Nitze was a founding member,¹⁷ published pamphlets warning that "our country is in a period of danger...unless decisive steps are taken to alert the nation that our military and economic capacity is becoming inadequate to peace and security." The principle

¹² Paul H. Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision, A Memoir* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 337-341.

¹³ Henry A. Kissinger, Press Conference before the Intourist Hotel, U.S.S.R, Moscow, Department of State, Press Release, (July 3, 1974), 4, 10-11.

¹⁴ Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal*, 80.

¹⁵ Paul Nitze, "The Vladivostok Accord and SALT II." *The Review of Politics* 37 no. 2 (1975): 147; Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 353.

¹⁶ Paul Nitze, "Assuring Strategic Stability in an Era of Détente," *Foreign Affairs* 54 no. 2 (1976), 227.

¹⁷ Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 353; Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 368-369.

threat was the "Soviet drive for dominance based on an unprecedented buildup to expand political and military influence" in the world.¹⁸ Failures in weapons acquisition were leading actual U.S. capability back toward McNamara's assured destruction force.¹⁹

The CPD and other defense-minded intellectuals and Senators feared that the gap between official doctrine and military capability was moving the United States toward an incredible posture of minimum deterrence.²⁰ Since Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger's 1974 public announcement of a change in U.S. doctrine to "counterforce," the gap had been increasing further.²¹ The public and many in Congress still thought assured destruction was enough and the best solution to U.S. vulnerability was arms control. Correcting the gap and reversing the trends meant changing public strategic thinking. With the SALT II negotiations pending, the CPD determined to bring that to pass by facilitating a national discussion, availing itself of all media with the objective of building a new strategic consensus and support for modernization before SALT II's ratification. They hoped that once the people saw the bankruptcy of the U.S. deterrent from their exposure to a national debate on SALT II, the public would give their support to increasing the defense budget to restore the credibility of the American deterrent.²²

Historians have described the SALT II ratification hearings of 1979 as the defense debate of the decade.²³ They have also viewed the CPD as the primary actor in the

¹⁸ Paul Nitze, "The 1980 Crisis and What to Do About It," January 22, 1980, in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 196.

¹⁹ The Committee on the Present Danger, "Has America Become Number 2?," in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 223.

²⁰ The Committee on the Present Danger, "Has America Become Number 2?," in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 219.

²¹ Sverre Lodgaard, "The Functions of SALT," *Journal of Peace Research* 14 no. 1 (1977), 12.

²² Charles Tyroler, ed., *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, 5, 20-26, 121, 171-177.

²³ Patrick Glynn, *Closing Pandora's Box: Arms Races, Arms Control, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 301; Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 358.

campaigns to increase the U.S. defense effort during the 1980s.²⁴ In actuality, a Senatorial call for a national debate by a defense-minded member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator Henry M. Jackson (D-WA), preceded the CPD's call for action. Jackson answered Kissinger's question by warning that the "real danger ahead is the Kremlin's political use of strategic superiority as an umbrella under which to pursue a series of probes to expand Soviet power and weaken the position of the United States."²⁵ It was this fear of the Soviet use of superiority and the inadequacy of U.S. forces that motivated Jackson's deliberate political construction of a controversy in February 1977 when President Carter nominated Paul C. Warnke to the dual posts of SALT II chief negotiator and director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Warnke's reputation as an advocate and spokesman of the school of assured destruction and unilateral restraint seemed to make the controversy over his nomination inevitable. Most commentators have explained its controversial status as a product of Warnke's reputation as an assured destruction and arms control advocate alone.²⁶ Yet the controversy his nomination provoked was far from foreordained. Warnke's public record was necessary but not sufficient to turn the hearings into a pre-ratification defense debate.

²⁴ Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 180-184, 208; Glynn, *Opening Pandora's Box*, 302; Richard Gid Powers, *Now Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 378-383, 399-410.

²⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, *Military implications of the Treaty on the limitation of strategic offensive arms and protocol thereto (SALT II Treaty): Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 96th Congress, 1st sess., 1979*, 413.

²⁶ See Patrick Glynn, *Closing Pandora's Box: Arms Races, Arms Control, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books), 301; Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 208; Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 358-359; Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of Anticommunism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 366-368, 373-376; Robert Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2001), 14-15; Duncan L. Clarke, *The Politics of Arms Control: The Role and Effectiveness of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.

What he stood for, known by all, was indeed the reason Carter nominated him, and Democrats did not relish directly challenging their new President on policy grounds.

It was Warnke's testimony given in front of the FRC and ASC, wherein the champion of arms restraint sounded instead like a proponent of preparedness, that provided the opposing school of thought an opportunity to make the nomination their battleground not only for shaping SALT II, but for reforming U.S. strategic thought to prevent the drift toward MAD. Following the advice of his supporters, Warnke defended his conversion by arguing it was no conversion at all, but a rational adaptation to changing circumstances. He maintained that his fundamental views were unchanged, even as his positions on specifics adjusted to new developments. Warnke's consistent record over eight years suggested otherwise. Thus, it was not only Warnke's past record that gave cause for doubting his competence. His present repudiation of his past record and refusal to admit he had changed created doubts about his credibility. The question dominating headlines turned from the meaning of superiority to who was the real Paul Warnke?

Amid the brewing storm, President Carter defended his nominee at a press conference on February 8, 1977, the same day as the FRC hearings, pledging that once all knew what Warnke stood for, they would vote for him overwhelmingly.²⁷ As the political leader of the opposing school of preparedness, Senator Jackson based his strategy on testing that hypothesis in front of his own Armed Services Committee (ASC).

To gain the desired votes, Jackson created deliberate doubt about the nominee's

²⁷ "A 'Quick Agreement' on Arms," February 10, 1977, Paul C. Warnke papers part 1, Box 36: Folder 2, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University Library, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as PCWP Part Box: Folder); The American Presidency Project, "The President's News Conference, February 8, 1977," under News Conferences, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=7666 (accessed July 29, 2016).

competence and character by claiming Warnke had changed his positions to win confirmation. Warnke's steadfast refusal to admit he had changed and Jackson's successful methods in creating doubt about his credibility, rather than Warnke's reputation alone, was why the nomination was so controversial.

With the team effort of Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) and nuclear strategist Paul Nitze, Jackson's strategy of constructing a controversy through the tactic of creating doubt about Warnke's credibility demonstrated the inadequacy of assured destruction and gathered a one-third vote against him for negotiator. In Jackson's eyes, resolving the meaning of superiority during the hearings would reverse the talk of assured destruction as enough for a credible deterrent. On the stand, Nunn cajoled Warnke into admitting that assured destruction was not enough to prevent self-deterrence or the Soviet's political use of superiority. By blending the meaning of superiority with Warnke's inconsistency, the team effort discredited both the man and the school he represented for the purpose of gaining enough votes to signal they had enough to block a future treaty.

The more domestic long-term goal was reeducating the American public. Conducting hearings on the nomination, with the expectation of newspaper coverage, would reeducate the public on deterrence theory and force adequacy. Strategically orchestrated by the use of hearings and headlines, politically constructed through the deliberate creation of a controversy, and tactically calculated to gain the symbolic one-third vote against Warnke, the anti-Warnke effort was above all motivated to reverse the public reification of assured destruction before the ratification of SALT II. Jackson's strategy and tactics demonstrated the inadequacy of assured destruction and signaled the

White House that the Senate would not ratify any treaty that gave the Soviets a perceived advantage or restricted the United States to a MAD strategy.

Yet Jackson's political tactics obscured both why the hearings were controversial and the substance of his motives. The significance of the episode must rest on a distinction between what the effort was about and its distorting results. The goal was to educate the public in strategic doctrine, shape SALT II, and build support for modernization to prevent a drift toward MAD. The media's focus on Warnke's credibility highlighted Jackson's tactic of creating doubt but obscured what his effort was truly about. Because of this unintentional outcome, most assumed Warnke's record alone was sufficient for a controversy and subsequently did not recognize the team efforts of Jackson, Nunn, and Nitze in deliberately creating one to win votes. Tactics necessary to win votes were thus not as conducive to the strategy of reeducating the American people to the requirements of deterrence and strategic doctrine. The secondary literature has thus failed to understand what the hearings were about. They were not just about controlling SALT, but shaping U.S. declaratory doctrine. Not grasping the connection between the team effort's construction of a controversy and the reality of U.S. doctrine distorts the nature of strategy in a democracy and fails to recognize the hearings as the necessary precursor to the SALT II ratification hearings as the defense debate of the decade.

Chapter II goes behind the scenes to explain what the anti-Warnke campaign was all about. It explains the deeper motives driving not only the use of Warnke's hearings as political leverage, but the philosophical ones about deterrence theory and the Soviet threat. Alongside Warnke's private papers, it uses the 1972 SALT I hearings to explain

Jackson's motives and methods to place what happened during the ASC hearings within the framework of a climactic clash between two competing schools of thought on the requirements of deterrence. Each school of thought competed for a new consensus on strategic doctrine. Each sought to educate the public on a new consensus in strategic thinking to guide doctrine, weapons, and negotiations policy. This chapter prepares the reader for understanding the rhetoric and the reality of what was happening in the public sphere, both in newspapers and during the hearings themselves.

Chapter III details what was happening in the public sphere with President Carter's announcement of Warnke's nomination, the media response, and the aftermath of the Foreign Relations Committee (FRC) hearings. It argues that the controversy was not inevitable because of Warnke's "dovish" reputation but was deliberately constructed for the purpose of gathering the desired one-thirds vote against him. Warnke's testimony, and Carter's pledge that once all considered what Warnke stood for they would vote for him overwhelmingly, provided the opposition's tactical shift from doubting Warnke's effectiveness as negotiator to his credibility as a man.

Chapter IV analyzes the ASC hearings themselves to show how Jackson, Nunn, and Nitze demonstrated the inadequacy of assured destruction and gathered the desired votes against his nomination. As the only existing in-depth analysis of the hearings, it highlights how successful their teamwork was in dramatizing the hearings to create a controversy and in creating doubt about Warnke's credibility to gather votes. By asking who was the real Paul Warnke, they answered how much was enough for a credible deterrent, establishing the criteria for a credible deterrent and a future SALT treaty. The "comma controversy" during the Senate floor debate on the vote illustrated the tactical

success of denying confirmation by creating doubt. Analysis of the Senate vote itself demonstrated that the controversy was always fundamentally about the domestic strategic debate between assured destruction and counterforce as enough for a credible deterrent.

Chapter V, the conclusion, covers the immediate and long-term aftermath of the hearings. It explains that what Warnke stood for was never truly in doubt, and that the tactic was deliberately created to gather votes. It demonstrates the paradoxical success of achieving the desired votes but obscured the hearings' significance for the team effort's accomplishment of fomenting a reformation in strategic thinking before the SALT II ratification debate. Through the successful gathering of a symbolic one-third vote against Warnke for negotiator, Jackson's and Nunn's teamwork reversed the reification of assured destruction in the public sphere and set the media stage for the CPD's successful campaign to build up the U.S. deterrent in the 1980s. The conclusion further explains how the secondary literature has failed to understand the hearings as the deliberate construction of a controversy and as a climactic culmination between two competing schools of strategic thought on strategic doctrine in the public sphere and the requirements of deterrence in the nuclear age. This paper resurrects Jackson's and Nunn's success in demonstrating the inadequacy of assured destruction that the tactic of discrediting Warnke's integrity has obscured in both the media at the time and subsequent literature since.

CHAPTER II

THE TWO SCHOOLS

Understanding what was happening in the public sphere during Paul Warnke's confirmation hearings requires going behind the scenes, into a decade-long debate between two competing schools of strategic nuclear thought on the requirements of deterrence. Understanding the motives and methods of these two competing public relations campaigns supplies the best framework in which to understand the Warnke hearings. Close attention to the philosophical background between two schools of thought and the political motivation behind Senator Henry Jackson's approach to Warnke's nomination together explain what the anti-Warnke effort was all about. What happened between SALT I of 1972 and the Armed Services Committee hearings of 1977 explains how and why Jackson's strategy and tactics took on the character of a personal attack on Warnke's credibility that obscured the underlying debate of which the controversy was truly about, U.S. strategic doctrine.

British nuclear strategist and strident critic of the U.S. defense community, Colin Gray, predicted in 1978 that the question of what to do about the growing vulnerability of U.S. ICBMs (Minuteman) as the Soviets increased their counterforce capabilities would turn into the debate of the decade. A looming Soviet capability to take out a large

percentage of U.S. ICBMs, leaving only a capability to retaliate against population and industries with submarines and bombers, threatened the credibility of the U.S. deterrent. The consequences for the loss of the only weapons that had counterforce capabilities within the strategic triad of ICBMs, submarines, and bombers would be "an event so momentous that its anticipation should be the occasion for a fundamental review of strategic doctrine."²⁸ The vulnerability of Minuteman intensified an existing debate on how best to deter the Kremlin's political and military use of nuclear weapons.

A coalition of defense-minded strategists and Senators placed the blame for Minuteman's increasing vulnerability on the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and Interim Agreement (SALT I) signed between President Richard Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in May 1972. One of the treaty's primary negotiators, Paul Nitze, even resigned from his post over Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's secretive handling of negotiations through "backchannel" agreements with the Soviet premier, charging the administration with making concessions to get a deal signed.²⁹ Those suspected concessions included halting the number of strategic missile launchers deployed and "under construction" at currently unequal levels, codifying Soviet superiority in perception if not in reality. The agreement left both sides free to modernize within the numerical limits. Nitze and others like Jackson feared that with their higher numbers, in time Soviet "heavies" (high-yield Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)) could give them a strategic advantage in destructive capacity. This would potentially give them the capability to knock out a large percentage of U.S. land forces,

²⁸ Quoted in Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 387.

²⁹ Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2009), 241; Paul Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 338-339; Gerard Smith, *Doubletalk: The Story of the First Strategic Arms Limitation Talks* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1980), 349.

the only forces with enough accuracy to retaliate against Soviet military forces. Further, the Soviets refused to an agreed definition of what a "heavy" missile was or what exactly "under construction" meant, creating the impression of ambiguous "loopholes" and for some, a clear and present danger.³⁰ There was a growing counterforce imbalance (the ability to target another's nuclear forces by a large percentage), and it was not in the United States' favor.

The Senate ratified the treaty after the Nixon administration promised to build the Trident submarine, the B-1 bomber, and the MX missile and approved the Jackson Amendment, which required equality in a future treaty. Still, if eager ratification of SALT I seemed to codify Soviet superiority, the Senate pledged that a second treaty would receive greater scrutiny. Better yet, it would send instructions with the negotiators.

The signing of SALT I amplified and politicized the contentious question of the decade, did superiority matter in the nuclear age? The highly respected defense-minded Senator Henry Jackson, a Democratic lawyer from Washington, thought it did when he proposed the "Jackson Amendment" in 1972 before the treaty went to a vote. The popular amendment passed into law the requirement that any future agreement recognize the principle of equality and "would not limit the United States to levels of...forces inferior" to those of the Soviet Union.³¹ SALT I negotiator Gerard Smith explained in his memoirs that Jackson blamed the "minimum deterrence orthodoxy" of the unduly influential "idealistic arms controllers" and the "soft wholly thinkers" of the Arms

³⁰ The American side issued a unilateral statement of what a heavy was, but the Soviets never agreed to it or even thought it was important to define. Smith, *Double Talk*, 25-28, 40, 322-325, 333, 404; Smith clarified that the ambiguities were not loopholes, but simply areas not under control. Smith, 461.

³¹ Public Law 92-448, "Jackson Amendment," September 30, 1972.

Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) for the results of SALT I.³² Jackson institutionalized his dissent by convincing Nixon to separate the two posts of director and negotiator and to "purge" the ACDA by sweeping it of arms controllers and cutting its resources.³³ Paul Warnke, one of those idealistic arms controllers who was more sanguine about the inequality of a temporary agreement, testified confidently in SALT's favor by dismissing numerical superiority as a meaningless chimera, a "mindless numbers game" that had meaning only if we "bad mouth" our own capabilities.³⁴ Advocates on both sides called for a new consensus to meet the threat of Soviet superiority.³⁵

Increasing Soviet capabilities since the signing of SALT I amplified and politicized this existing debate between two schools of thought on what constituted

³² Duncan Clarke, *The Politics of Arms Control* (The Free Press, 1979), 50-51.

³³ Smith, *Doubletalk*, 45, 112, 320, 442-444; Fred Ikle sent a history of the ACDA and what became known as the "purge" to Warnke in late 1976 during the Carter election cycle. Fred C. Ikle, note to Paul Warnke, September 23, 1976, Joseph S. Clark, Report to Governor Jimmy Carter, "The Reorganization, Restaffing and Potential Functions of the Arms Control & Disarmament Agency in a Carter Administration, 1977", PCWP1 23:1; Duncan Clarke, *Politics of Arms Control: The Role and Effectiveness of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 50-51.

³⁴ *Congressional Record*, June 28, 1972, PCWP1 23:17; Paul C. Warnke, Statement Before the Arms Control Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 13, 1971, PCWP1 19:7.

³⁵ Paul Nitze, "The Strategic Balance between Hope and Skepticism," *Foreign Policy* 17 (1974-5), 153; Theorists like Bernard Brodie argued that nuclear weapons constituted a revolution in strategic thinking. There could be no use of nuclear weapons; they existed only to deter. Bernard Brodie et al., *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, Brace), 76; Bernard Brodie, "The Development of Nuclear Strategy," *International Security* 2 no. 4 (Spring 1978). Others thought more like Herman Kahn, who wrote passionately that nuclear weapons and strategies should be used and developed the same way conventional ones were, to fight and win wars. Deterrence depended on a strategy of use. Civilian officials followed Brodie more than Kahn, including Defense Secretary Robert McNamara through the 1960s. See Michael D. Salomon, "American Strategic Thinking," October 1976, PCWP1 19:17; Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 133, 191; Richard Betts, *Nuclear Balance and Blackmail* (Brookings Institution, 1987), 207.

Their mutual use of the language of "strategic doctrine" created the impression that it was actual U.S. military strategy. Politically, many refer to the rhetoric of official declaratory policy as "doctrine," which takes on distinct theological flavors but is not actual targeting policy. See Fritz W. Ermarth, "Contrasts in American and Soviet Strategic Thought," *International Security* 3 no. 2 (1978), 139-142; Paul Warnke, "Notes for Talk to Columbia International Fellows," December 4, 1970, PCWP1 15:37.

deterrence in the nuclear age. How each school approached negotiations depended on its view of the nuclear revolution and the Soviet threat.

One school was essentially known as assured destruction advocates and arms controllers. For them, the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons made their political use unthinkable. The nuclear revolution rendered superiority meaningless. The only way to eliminate the other's deterrent was to completely disarm them, impossible in the nuclear age. Deterrence was thus mutually assured because even one bomb left over after a first strike was enough to destroy a society in retaliation. The ability to retaliate with "unacceptable damage" guaranteed no reasonable leader would risk mutual destruction.³⁶ Therefore, assured destruction was always enough to deter the Soviets, who even if they had superiority could not use it for political objectives.³⁷ Since mutual assured destruction (MAD) was an inescapable fact of nuclear logic, bargaining chips and military preparedness were only recipes for a dangerous arms race. A few submarines, with the ability to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the adversary's society, were enough to deter.³⁸ They opposed counterforce capabilities against military targets because countervalue capabilities against population and industry was enough to deter any sane leader. Counterforce capabilities only made their use more thinkable, thus more likely to be used.³⁹ Faith in the logic of deterrence gave them confidence that restraint and arms

³⁶ Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 247.

³⁷ Michael Krepon, *Strategic Stalemate: Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in American Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 39; A. Chayes, G. Rathjens, and J. Ruina, Memorandum to: Verification Study Review Group December 3, 1970, PCWP1 15:44; Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 247.

³⁸ Robert E. Hunter, April 3, 1970, PCWP1 19:4; Susan B. Davis, sent to Paul Warnke with note attached "use to you and DCACD," April 6, 1970, PCWP1 19:4.

³⁹ Lynn E. Davis, "U.S. Nuclear Doctrine and Counterforce," July 16, 1976, PCWP1 22:14; Democratic National Committee, "Democratic Policy's Council Committee on Arms Control Named," *News*, November 8, 1969, PCWP1 19:1; Paul C. Warnke, chairman, Committee on Arms Control and Defense Policy, proposed "State of the Nation" inclusion of the Democratic Policy Council, January 21, 1970,

control agreements rather than preparedness were the best solution to Minuteman's vulnerability.⁴⁰ They explained the Soviet buildup as simply a reaction to U.S. actions. If the American superpower stopped building, so would the Soviets. They seemed to gain institutional support as MAD and assured destruction became reified in official public speeches and declared U.S. policy through the 1960s.⁴¹ Unfortunately for them, they left a window of criticism open by talking of MAD as a strategy and assured destruction as strategic doctrine rather than a description of their nuclear philosophy.⁴²

The other side along the spectrum sought to reverse this reification of assured destruction in official declarations and its inhibiting effects on actual U.S. nuclear capability.⁴³ The Soviet buildup since the Cuban Missile Crisis and SALT I aroused

PCWP1 19:3; Paul C. Warnke, "The Defense of American National Security in the Mid-1970s", 1976, PCWP1 22:19.

⁴⁰ Democratic National Committee, "Democratic Policy's Council Committee on Arms Control Named," *News*, November 8, 1969, PCWP1 19:1; Paul C. Warnke, chairman, Committee on Arms Control and Defense Policy, proposed "State of the Nation" inclusion of the Democratic Policy Council, January 21, 1970, PCWP1 19:3; Paul C. Warnke, "The Defense of American National Security in the Mid-1970s", 1976, PCWP1 22:19.

⁴¹ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 232-241, 322-323; Krepon, *Strategic Stalemate*, 1; Janne E. Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal: The Politics of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 75.

⁴² Michael McCwire, "Deterrence: The Problem-Not the Solution," *International Affairs* 62 no. 1 (1985-6), 63.

Particularly offensive to their critics was that Robert McNamara's formula for assured destruction, the ability to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the other side after a first strike, took on the aspect of official U.S. strategic doctrine. It was originally intended as criteria to measure the adequacy of the deterrent, for sizing and procurement purposes. Its unintended consequence led many to assume that assured destruction was official U.S. employment doctrine against almost exclusively civilian and industrial targets. Worse, this was assumed by its advocates as a credible deterrent. In reality, the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) had always had a mix of military and industrial targets, with more emphasis on the former that changed little regardless of rhetorical changes in the public sphere. This institutional distortion of reality made countering it that much more urgent as U.S. superiority was shifting toward parity, and potentially Soviet superiority. See Jorma K. Miettinen, "Schlesinger's New Strategy and Its Implications for Europe," *Instant Research on Peace and Violence* vol. 4 no. 3 (1974), 145-147; Ted Greenwood and Michael Nacht, "The New Nuclear Debate: Sense or Nonsense?," *Foreign Affairs* 52 no. 4 (1974), 762.

⁴³ Especially concerned about the "evangelical streak in American arms controllers" were Former ACDA director Fred Ikle and Colin Gray, who were both prolific writers against the canonical status of "mutual deterrence dogma" in official policymaking circles. Ikle was fond of using vivid imagery and metaphors to describe those caught in a "grim jail of their own ideas," whose "reptiles in the minds" were akin to theological articles of faith that had to be cast out and reformed. Nuclear weapons were "designed for use, not ornamentation." A strategy of use required thinking about the unthinkable. Gray lamented that such

fears that the Kremlin was striving for superiority, with the intention to fight and win a nuclear war in the event deterrence failed. Defense preparedness advocates insisted that reliance on a cities-only deterrent capability left the President with only the options of capitulation or annihilation after a Soviet first strike in a crisis. The President would be self-deterred from retaliating for fear of a return strike against the American people. The specter of political blackmail instead of nuclear holocaust convinced them that the counterforce imbalance gave the Soviets a strategic and political edge.⁴⁴ Assured destruction in the 1970s was simply no longer credible, the Soviets were striving for superiority, and eagerness in agreements was a dangerous substitute for a deterrent capability. The United States needed a strategy based on what to do if deterrence failed-- a strategy to fight and win a nuclear war, a strategy of use. For defense advocates, MAD thinking was dangerous, and preventing a treaty that restricted the United States to such a capability was their primary goal.

Pending SALT II negotiations politicized these philosophical divisions, and Minuteman's vulnerability by the mid 1970s gave them visceral urgency. The debate was a domestic civilian one in the rhetorical public sphere that had little to do with actual military strategy, but the strategic implications of their opposing positions were significant because declaratory policy determined budget and weapons policy. Domestically, declaratory policy served as either a

privileged prophets were drafted into the defense community and gained intellectual dominance into the 1960s. Colin Gray, "What Rand Hath Wrought," *Foreign Policy*, 4 (1971), 116-119;

Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 364; Fred Ikle, "Can Nuclear Deterrence Last Out the Century," *Foreign Affairs* (January 1973), 269-271.

⁴⁴ Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 244-256, 346-352, 369-377. See also Fritz W. Ermarth, "Contrasts in American and Soviet Strategic Thought," *International Security* 3 no. 2 (Fall 1978), 142-152; Rob Paarlberg, "Forgetting About the Unthinkable," *Foreign Policy* 10 (1973); Colin S. Gray, "The Strategic Forces Triad: End of the Road?," *Foreign Affairs* 56 no. 4 (1978); Fred Ikle, "Can Nuclear Deterrence Last out the Century?," *Foreign Affairs* 51 no. 2 (1973); Paul Nitze, "Deterring Our Deterrent," *Foreign Policy* 25 (1967-1977); Paul Nitze, "Assuring Strategic Stability in an Era of Détente," *Foreign Affairs* 54 no. 2 (1976); Donald Snow, "Current Deterrence Thinking: An Overview and Review," *International Studies Quarterly* 23 no. 3 (1979), 452-482.

budget ceiling or a marketing tool. U.S. countervalue and counterforce capabilities depended on the public mood and congressional funds.⁴⁵ As the strategic balance shifted in the Soviets' favor, the meaning of superiority and how much was enough for a credible deterrent took on increasing urgency, and U.S. declaratory policy of assured destruction became a heated liability.

As the Senatorial representative of the defense preparedness school, Senator Henry Jackson had been campaigning from inside the Congress to reverse the reification of assured destruction thinking and prevent the drift toward a MAD capability since at least 1963.⁴⁶ Jackson's primary complaint against SALT I was that its vague language and imprecise definitions gave the Soviets what he called a loophole through which Soviet heavies could pass.⁴⁷ With time, accuracy and MIRVs⁴⁸ added to their numerical advantage would give them overall superiority.⁴⁹ What they would do with that and what the United States should do in response became his central concern. In that context, he insisted that SALT II must ensure equality. The Senate, he warned, must "play a full and equal role in bringing about such a treaty."⁵⁰ The Soviets were striving for superiority, and public debates on the threat and the necessary response would help the American

⁴⁵ See Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987), 207; Krepon, *Strategic Stalemate*, 1; Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal*, 12, 30, 90; Barry E. Carter, "The Strategic Debate in the United States," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 33 no. 118-23 (1978), 19-20. The military stake in such capabilities obviously is greater, but they were still dependent on congressional funding for weapons systems and new programs from congressmen who in turn were influenced by either frightened or strident constituents. Carter, 20.

⁴⁶ Henry M. Jackson, "The Limited Test Ban Treaty" (September 13, 1963), in *Henry M. Jackson and World Affairs: Selected Speeches, 1953-1983*, ed. Dorothy Fosdick (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 127.

⁴⁷ Henry M. Jackson, "The Senate and the Interim Salt Agreement" (August 11, 1972), in *Henry M. Jackson and World Affairs: Selected Speeches, 1953-1983*, ed. Dorothy Fosdick (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 138-142.

⁴⁸ Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle. This is a ballistic missile equipped with several warheads, each capable of independent targeting. This greatly magnifies destructive and payload capabilities.

⁴⁹ Henry M. Jackson, "Détente and SALT" (April 22, 1974), in *Henry M. Jackson and World Affairs: Selected Speeches, 1953-1983*, ed. Dorothy Fosdick (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 159.

⁵⁰ Jackson, "The Limited Test Ban Treaty," 154.

people understand what constituted a credible deterrent.⁵¹ He would do so by holding hearings on the SALT agreements in his own Armed Services Committee.

The Armed Services Committee hearings for SALT I of 1972 explicitly revealed Jackson's underlying philosophical and strategic motives obscured during Warnke's confirmation hearings. His words and actions revealed his objective--a new doctrine to guide negotiations--and what the Warnke hearings and defense debate were truly about--strategic doctrine in a changing strategic environment.

Fundamental was Jackson's favorite word. The most important overriding question that was fundamental to the whole debate, he kept repeating, was the survivability of Minuteman into the 1970s and how the treaty could preserve the deterrent.⁵² The problem posed by new Soviet counterforce capabilities was at the "heart of the controversy," Jackson said. Soviet capability as permitted under SALT I gave them the potential to destroy ninety-five percent of Minuteman by 1977. Minuteman was so vulnerable that its destruction by a first strike in a crisis left a President with only what sea forces could do in retaliation, the destruction of Soviet cities, only then to face a likely Soviet response of a third strike against U.S. cities using their reserve forces, wiping out life in North America.⁵³ For Jackson, the survivability of the deterrent meant that the doctrine guiding negotiations, and the negotiator who led them, were fundamental to the whole debate. SALT I had left Minuteman vulnerable, and his goal was to ensure SALT II did not do the same.

⁵¹ Jackson, "The Limited Test Ban Treaty," 134.

⁵² U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Military Implications of the Treaty on the Limitations of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the Interim Agreement on Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, 92nd Sess, 1972, 235, 268.* Hereafter cited as *Implications*.

⁵³ *Implications, 272-273.*

A few exchanges demonstrated how the single-minded urgency of Jackson's style underlined these substantive issues, exhibited contemporary fears, and illustrated the divide between the two schools of thought.

With SALT I negotiator Gerard Smith, Jackson sought to demonstrate the inadequacy of assured destruction to deter the Soviets from political or military use in a crisis. Jackson had a hard time convincing Smith that present U.S. doctrine was not enough. Soviet heavies suggested to Jackson they were striving for an ability to knock out Minuteman on the first blow rather than a "simple doctrine of assured destruction" based on retaliation. Smith thought one was hard-pressed to find anyone subscribing to any simple doctrine, and pointed out that the United States had similar capabilities in accuracy and yield as the Soviets. Jackson carried on that Smith missed the point, that under SALT I the Soviets retained a first strike capability, which meant that first strike scenarios were "things that you must think through when you are representing the United States" at negotiations.⁵⁴

Thinking the best method to discredit the opposing school was to pose scenarios, Jackson again invoked one of a President left with the single option of striking Soviet cities with only submarines left after the land forces were destroyed. Smith countered that these were military questions of strategic doctrine and targeting, best left to the Joint Chiefs of Staff rather than a negotiator.⁵⁵ Jackson defined it instead as a political judgment and continued that there was a school of thought that held "all we need are a couple of Polaris submarine boats to deter the Soviet Union." Unmoved, Smith replied that even in Jackson's scenario the leftover forces would leave a President in "pretty good

⁵⁴ *Implications*, 368-386.

⁵⁵ *Implications*, 388, 411.

shape to deter that sort of attack."⁵⁶ While Jackson insisted that a President would be deterred from retaliating only with Polaris subs, Smith calmly maintained that even the worst case would not leave the United States impotent. In exasperation, Jackson said, "No, no. We are postulating that we are right down to the choice...of having all of our people wiped out if we retaliate." An imperturbable reaction from Smith provoked a frustrated Jackson to reiterate the point that SALT left Minuteman vulnerable and the President deterred.⁵⁷

Jackson's attempt to get Smith to admit the doctrine of assured destruction inadequate had faltered. There must be a minimum surviving force adequate to deter the Soviets from using the threat of nuclear blackmail, he said, and a policy built around it. While Smith reassured Jackson that "those who say all you need is two Polaris boats" were not in the delegation, Jackson insisted that an explicit statement of just how much was needed was imperative for planning purposes. Jackson explained that what he was "trying to bring out here" was there was no way to go into SALT II "without some guiding basic doctrine."⁵⁸ Any delegation had to have the right one "to be effective in SALT negotiations."⁵⁹

The assumptions of the negotiator on the requirements of deterrence were thus paramount in the context of how the shift in the strategic balance would influence Russian behavior in the world. Jackson stated explicitly that he was trying to find out "what strategic concepts will guide defense policy," how "we approach these negotiations, on what basis we evaluate the acceptability of an agreement, and what our

⁵⁶ *Implications*, 388-389.

⁵⁷ *Implications*, 390-402.

⁵⁸ *Implications*, 394.

⁵⁹ *Implications*, 388.

basic defense strategy is."⁶⁰ An agreed upon criteria for a credible force was imperative for moving forward. The rationale governing these policies was "fundamental to the negotiating process" and defense planning. The Senate was "entitled to know" the views that governed negotiations, because the recommendations of the negotiator were "founded on certain assumptions about our requirements for a credible strategic force."⁶¹ He was determined that the next one would not represent the opposing school of thought.

Jackson's interactions with Admiral Zumwalt and Dr. William Van Cleave best illustrated how the political utility of superiority required a change in U.S doctrinal thinking that he was determined to bring to pass. The problem of what the Soviets would do if they had superiority drove Jackson to insist once more that a sea-based deterrent would leave the President self-deterred. Zumwalt said "you are preaching to the choir," but noted the larger problem was that "there is not a majority who agree with you and me" on the specific concern of Minuteman survivability.⁶² Dr. Van Cleave agreed that the specter of the diplomatic use of superiority necessitated a sea change in strategic thinking. The only way to ensure survivability was "rethinking our attitudes about defense and about assured destruction."⁶³ Fomenting that revolution of thinking was the reason for Jackson's relentless emphasis on a vulnerable deterrent that left the Soviets free to use their growing superiority.

Jackson's efforts in 1972 provided an early answer to Kissinger's 1974 question of "what in God's name is superiority, what do you do with it at these levels of numbers?"⁶⁴

The Soviets were out for superiority for the purpose of political blackmail. The sum of

⁶⁰ *Implications*, 412, 418.

⁶¹ *Implications*, 419.

⁶² *Implications*, 506.

⁶³ *Implications*, 584-585.

⁶⁴ Henry A. Kissinger, Press Conference before the Intourist Hotel, U.S.S.R., Moscow, Department of State Press Release, (July 3, 1974), 4, 10-11.

Jackson's efforts was to prevent the caricature of assured destruction, as "no more than the threat to employ nuclear weapons against cities and people," from becoming a "grotesque reality."⁶⁵ In light of this, the new delegation needed a doctrine that guided negotiations, one that denied the Soviets a usable superiority. With a vulnerable deterrent and the prospect of Soviet blackmail, the importance in Jackson's mind of the assumptions of the next negotiator motivated the scope and intensity of his deliberate campaign to reform American strategic doctrine and attitudes.⁶⁶

While there was a recognized danger of the caricature of assured destruction becoming a grotesque reality, a community of arms controllers committed to the old orthodoxy strove to maintain it as declared U.S. doctrine by changing the terms of the debate to the "real world" after the nuclear revolution. They had a different answer for what the Soviets might do with superiority and their own solution for the vulnerability of Minuteman.

As spokesman for that community, Paul Warnke had been lobbying for over a decade for arms control as the solution to the problem of deterrence. Warnke's interest and stake in the outcome of the defense debate is reflected in his vast collection of articles about U.S. strategic doctrine. The overriding preoccupation of his notes was

⁶⁵ Philip Bobbitt, "Selective Options and Limited Responses, 1974-83," in *U.S. Nuclear Strategy: A Reader*, edited by Philip Bobbit, Lawrence Freedman, and Gregory F. Treverton (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 339.

⁶⁶ Historian Dunn called the alarm over U.S. ICBM vulnerability the political construction of a threat. The Nixon administration emphasized U.S. land vulnerability out of political expediency to sell SALT but never solved the problem. Minuteman became the fulcrum for anxieties over the new strategic parity, the adequacy of assured destruction, and Soviet motives and doctrine. As he aptly phrased the critics of the old orthodoxy, their "loss of trust in MAD occurred as the assurance part of deterrence theory" was no longer accepted by "those who believed the Soviets were pursuing a war-fighting capability." The new importance placed on the political and psychological aspects of deterrence nearly gave the military a blank check in which to build a credible force structure. Dunn captured the mood of the 1970s, full of anxieties and fears poured out on the politics of SALT. David H. Dunn, *The Politics of Threat: Minuteman Vulnerability in American National Security Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 22, 34-40, 56, 74, 78.

what to do about the opposing school. Yet Warnke was an advocate, not a strategist. His intellectual convictions can be discerned by combining what and how he read, what he said in public and to his colleagues, and his activities. From this evidence, the themes recurrent in his papers over nearly twenty years can be distilled down to one conviction. There could be no use of nuclear weapons; their purpose was only to deter, because MAD was an inevitable fact of the nuclear revolution.⁶⁷ In the nightmare nuclear world, "madness is divinest sense."⁶⁸ Even if the Soviets destroyed all U.S. land ICBMs, Warnke thought that "ten Poseidon subs" would be sufficient to destroy their society.⁶⁹ Superiority then was a "chimera," a meaningless quest, since a disarming first strike was militarily impossible.⁷⁰ Any doctrine contemplating use, such as counterforce, war-fighting, or damage limiting, only made war more feasible, and thus more likely.⁷¹ The scenarios were thus implausible, for no leader would risk Armageddon for political gain. From these philosophical convictions Warnke determined that the requirements for deterrence were stable because nuclear war was unthinkable.⁷² His advantage as an advocate was his access to the public and the Congress. His disadvantage would be the very public record he left behind by the time Carter nominated him for chief SALT II negotiator.

Warnke and the arms control community he led knew well the fears and arguments of the rising coalition of Senators and strategists seeking a new orthodoxy in

⁶⁷ Paul C. Warnke and Leslie H. Gelb, "Foreign Commitments and Force Structure: The Case for a Defense Policy," September 1970, PCWP1 28:7.

⁶⁸ Paul Warnke, "The Shoes Don't Match," Notes, Re: SALT Agreements, PCWP1 19:11.

⁶⁹ Paul Warnke, "The Shoes Don't Match," Notes, Re: SALT Agreements, PCWP1 19:11.

⁷⁰ Paul C. Warnke, Statement Before the Arms Control Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 13, 1971, PCWP1 19:7.

⁷¹ Paul Warnke, "The Shoes Don't Match," Notes, Re: SALT Agreements, PCWP1 19:11.

⁷² Paul C. Warnke and Barry R. Schneider, "A Nuclear War Must Never Be," *Chemtech*, September 1981, PCWP1 28:21.

response to the shifting balance. In 1970, one member of their community sent Warnke an article by Paul Roche, "Laird Traps Democrats," suggesting an early tactic for their own campaign. Roche warned that if "liberals ignore the shift in the balance" and the development of Soviet heavies and MIRVs they'd be "consigned to oblivion."⁷³ To avoid such a fate, they proposed adopting the "liberal realist" Jackson as their "tutor" on how to respond to the national security challenge.⁷⁴ Warnke's hand written notes from a meeting in 1970 showed that they knew that efforts to change current doctrine to "uses other than deterrence" was their main challenge. On a sheet of sketch paper he asked, "Do we take on the war-fighting rationale and defeat it? Does 'sufficiency' otherwise lose significance? Do we want to limit qualitative?"⁷⁵ The rest of his notes suggest the answer was yes. They would do so by changing the "terms of debate to the real world," confronting "worst-case and bargaining chip arguments," and using treaties as the means to "prevent exploit [sic] superiority."⁷⁶ The genesis of their public campaign can be found in the minutes of an Arms Control Summer Study and Planning Session held in 1973.

The arms control community was convinced that MAD was an inevitable fact but was under attack from the opposing school. All agreed that "nobody has figured a way out of deterrence" and it was "harder to make the case" for an assured destruction posture against the "alleged political value" of nuclear weapons. Warnke declared that any "groping for an escape from MAD" was impossible, for "MAD is inevitable." Their

⁷³ John P. Roche, "Laird Traps the Democrats," March 3, 1970, PCWP1 19:4. Their assessment was acute enough to align with Richard Betts' nearly twenty years later that it would be "politically suicidal to dismiss counterforce ratios. Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Brookings Institution, 1987), 192.

⁷⁴ John P. Roche, "Laird Traps the Democrats," March 3, 1970, PCWP1 19:4.

⁷⁵ Paul Warnke, handwritten note, December 11, 1970, PCWP1 15.44.

⁷⁶ Paul Warnke, handwritten note, December 11, 1970, PCWP1 15.44; Paul Warnke, "Political-Military Approach to Security," (Outline of Comments by Paul C. Warnke--National Council of Churches Consultation on New Perspectives on Security), PCWP1 15:40; Paul C. Warnke, Notes for Chicago Talk, June 17, 1970, PCWP1 15:39.

consensus was that "MAD is here by policy or not," for there was no logical "escape from MAD."⁷⁷

Led by Warnke, the group devised a campaign to devalue the political utility of nuclear weapons by relying on a policy of talking. Asking if "meaningless quantitative and qualitative differences have political significance," Warnke said, "obviously this is Jackson's concern." Convinced that "MAD assures neither will use for limited purposes," but aware of Jackson's position that "numerical superiority can be translated into political leverage," Warnke advised adopting a policy of "talking about the 'adequacy' of our numerically inferior posture." He determined that a public, "realistic appraisal of what deterrence actually required would undermine this political factor."⁷⁸ That this necessitated a change in "hardware" not "semantics," revealed Warnke's preference for talking over capabilities as an adequate deterrent.⁷⁹ As for Minuteman's vulnerability, it was only an "attractive nuisance," a problem solved by treaty, not weapons.⁸⁰

Committing to an unchanging declaratory doctrine as enough to deter assumed the sufficiency of rhetoric to influence public and defense opinion. To "contribute to the evolution of a new consensus" based on an unchanging declaratory doctrine of assured destruction, arms controllers "should defend a position of finite deterrence."⁸¹

⁷⁷ Harvey Brooks and Anne H. Cahn, "Notes of the First Wingspread Meeting of Arms Control Summer Study," March 9-19, 1973, PCWP1 19:13.

⁷⁸ Harvey Brooks and Anne H. Cahn, "Notes on the Second Wingspread Meeting of Arms Control Summer Study," March 30-31, 1973, PCWP1 19:13.

⁷⁹ Harvey Brooks and Anne H. Cahn, "Notes on the Second Wingspread Meeting of Arms Control Summer Study," March 30-31, 1973, PCWP1 19:13.

⁸⁰ Paul C. Warnke and Barry R. Schneider, "A Nuclear War Must Never Be," *Chemtech*, September 1981, PCWP1 28:21; Harvey Brooks and Anne H. Cahn, "Notes on the Second Wingspread Meeting of Arms Control Summer Study," March 30-31, 1973, PCWP1 19:13.

⁸¹ Harvey Brooks and Anne H. Cahn, "Notes on the Second Wingspread Meeting of Arms Control Summer Study," March 30-31, 1973, PCWP1 19:13.

The leverage of defense advocates in the Armed Services Committee was the only obstacle to creating this "new attitude" about "how much is enough."⁸²

The next several years witnessed the essence of their campaign's focus on the political utility of nuclear weapons. Up to 1976, the arms control community had been working to "make nuclear weapons politically and militarily useless."⁸³ Through articles, speeches, and testimony, Warnke supplemented their efforts as spokesman by actively promoting a "reformation in the way we view nuclear weapons and develop plans for possible use."⁸⁴ He approached the "lack of consensus as to the inutility of nuclear weapons" by focusing on two themes.⁸⁵ The first was warning of the impending holocaust if ever used, and the second was attempting to delegitimize their perceptual value in the strategic balance. Any apparent superiority had "political consequence only if we concede a meaning they otherwise lack."⁸⁶ Minuteman's vulnerability and any "perceived inequalities" could be "erased entirely by simple statements of well founded confidence in the validity of the American strategic deterrent."⁸⁷ The strategy of rhetoric reflected their conviction that a policy of declaring assured destruction would be enough to deter any use.

Further stemming the tides of change necessitated addressing the Soviet threat.

They recognized the problem of U.S. ICBM vulnerability, but thought the Russian threat

⁸² Harvey Brooks and Anne H. Cahn, "Notes on the Second Wingspread Meeting of Arms Control Summer Study," March 30-31, 1973, PCWP1 19:13.

⁸³ Walter Slocombe to Paul Warnke, sending 7 Nuclear Disarmament Task Force Papers, July 20, 1976, ACDA 1976, PCWP1 22:14.

⁸⁴ Paul C. Warnke, book review of *Nuclear Weapons and Law*, edited by Arthur Selwyn Miller and Martin Feinrider. Westwood Connecticut Greenwood Press, 1984, PCWP1 28:23.

⁸⁵ Paul C. Warnke, book review of *Nuclear Weapons and Law*, edited by Arthur Selwyn Miller and Martin Feinrider. Westwood Connecticut Greenwood Press, 1984, PCWP1 28:23.

⁸⁶ Paul C. Warnke, "National Priorities for the Next Decade," (remarks delivered to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces) September 18, 1975, PCWP1 16:6.

⁸⁷ Patricia Schroeder, "Alternative Defense Posture Statement," 1975, PCWP1 11:1.

was exaggerated. Warnke sketched on notebook paper that the true danger was "if we irresponsibly overestimate the threat...in terms of the nature of our public debate on defense and the nature of the balance."⁸⁸ Warnke wrote Zbigniew Brzezinski in 1976 that "actual use of Soviet military power is hard to find, and they gained no benefit of "international influence" by their new military strength."⁸⁹ Fellow arms controller B.T. Feld published articles assuring that mutual deterrence "will continue in affect barring madness" and asking what then was "the fuss all about?" and "why the campaigns to 'wake up America?' by groups and individuals alike?"⁹⁰ Advised by Warnke, Senator Hubert Humphrey gave speeches declaring that the scenarios of destroying Minuteman were "fanciful," and hysteria would only bring the specter of blackmail into being.⁹¹ The arms controllers had thus stood their ground against cries of a Soviet drive for superiority from media, Senators, and organizations alike. Their own answer to Kissinger's question of what do you do with superiority could be summed up in one word: nothing. A doctrine of assured destruction was always enough.

Thus, while Jackson was determined to prevent the caricature of a drift toward MAD becoming reality, Warnke campaigned to convince the world that the caricature of MAD was actually the only reality there was. There was nothing to fear from the changing balance, or from Soviet superiority, because MAD was here by policy or not.⁹²

⁸⁸ Handprinted, undated PCWP1 23:17.

⁸⁹ Paul Warnke, letter to Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, September 10, 1976, PCWP1 19:12.

⁹⁰ B. T. Feld, "Can We Have National Security Without Arms Control?," (paper prepared for the Colloquium at Los Alamos), January 25, 1977, PCWP1 19:17.

⁹¹ Senator Hubert Humphrey, "A Chance to Halt the Arms Race Now," Statement on U.S. Senate Floor, March 25, 1971, PCWP1 19:18.

⁹² According to many historians, the strategy of talking may actually have been more perceptive, if not as effective, than it appeared on the surface. Barry Carter wrote as early as 1978 that the West drew on American sources to assess the state of the military balance and deferred to the debate in the States on strategic matters. Lawrence Freedman confirmed this when he wrote that perceptions of the balance were "shaped by the pronouncements of prominent Americans." Carter accurately pointed out how Europe relied

It was the opposing school's goal to prevent MAD from becoming reality even as the arms controllers insisted it was the only reality there was in the nuclear world.

on American sources for information on the balance. That they did so illustrated why political perceptions were so important, but also how the U.S. debate was an "essentially domestic American dialogue" to which many Europeans deferred. Arguments of the 1970s by arms controllers such as Jan Lodal that "our own rhetoric determines perceptions" of vulnerability and capability may not be so naïve. Writing from a European perspective in 1981, Michael Howard wrote that Russia's neighbors were more "impressed by conventional forces," which held more political currency than an abstract nuclear superiority. Historically, it mattered more what political leaders said and were willing to do than the capabilities behind them. Howard found later confirmation in Richard Betts' conclusion that "threats were not calibrated to the balance" because the balance of interests was a better predictor than the balance of power, and in Robert Jervis' conclusion that simply by arguing he had rectified American inferiority, President Reagan's "claims were an effective substitute for building large numbers of missiles."

What such studies did prove was that in declaratory policy nuclear weapons mattered very much in both crises and in the credibility of the deterrent. Such a reality of European reliance and nuclear skepticism did nothing in 1977 to assuage the caricature of what would happen should the balance shift in the Soviets' favor, and the effect of such a shift on deciding how much was enough for a credible deterrent. But the reality of the political utility of declaratory policy did everything in 1977 to pose a problem for the credibility of the deterrent if the Soviets were striving to use their potential superiority and to protect it under SALT II.

Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 374.

Barry E. Carter, "The Strategic Debate in the United States," 19; Lodal, "Assuring Strategic Stability: An Alternative View," *Foreign Affairs* 54 no. 3 (1976), 478; Michael E. Howard, "On Fighting a Nuclear War," *International Security* 5 no. 4 (1981), 16; Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*, 216; Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 216.

CHAPTER III

THE NOMINATION AND THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

HEARINGS

When President Jimmy Carter nominated the superiority-skeptic and restraint advocate Paul Warnke to the dual posts of chief SALT II negotiator and director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) in early February 1977, a controversy seemed inevitable and a defense debate assured. Most commentators assumed Warnke's reputation alone turned the nomination into a national controversy.⁹³ Yet if the nomination was going to serve as a forum for inaugurating a national defense debate before the ratification hearings of SALT II, Warnke's reputation alone was insufficient. As Warnke and Carter were ideologically aligned in philosophy and goals, Warnke's reputation was why Carter chose him. Without a concerted effort by Warnke's doubters to challenge his being approved as negotiator, it was clear that he would pass the Foreign Relations Committee uneventfully. What the opposition needed was a tactic to get at

⁹³ See Patrick Glynn, *Closing Pandora's Box: Arms Races, Arms Control, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books), 301; Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 208; Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 358-359. Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of Anticommunism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 366-368, 373-376; Robert Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2001), 14-15; Duncan L. Clarke, *The Politics of Arms Control: The Role and Effectiveness of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.

least one-third of the Senate to deny him the role of negotiator, proving it had enough votes to derail ratification of a Warnke-negotiated treaty. Warnke's testimony, and Carter's press conference in his defense, provided the tactic that Senator Jackson (D-WA) of the Armed Services Committee (ASC) seized upon as the means to gain the desired votes against Warnke without directly challenging the new Democratic president. Media coverage was central to Jackson's strategy of reeducating the public on the requirements of deterrence. Yet as news coverage shifted from Warnke's past record to his present character, the question dominating headlines in February 1977 turned from the meaning of superiority to who was the real Paul Warnke. The media's shift in focus from questioning Warnke's effectiveness as negotiator before the FRC hearings, to what Warnke really stood for after the hearings, successfully constructed the controversy that would inaugurate a national defense debate in anticipation of the ASC hearings on Warnke's confirmation held by Senators Jackson and Sam Nunn (D-GA).

Carter campaigned on a platform of a defense capability second to none and the elimination of nuclear weapons.⁹⁴ In interviews he favored "rough equivalency," doubted the need for numerical equality in missiles, and discouraged bargaining chips (weapons programs as leverage in negotiations). The reality of nuclear destructive capacities made considerations of whether one nation had a slight advantage over the other irrelevant. Carter said that once nuclear weapons were used, all-out war was likely, and the possibility of limited nuclear war was slim.⁹⁵ The *Washington Post* leaked a report

⁹⁴ Sidney Kraus, ed., *The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford* (Bloomington: Indiana Press University, 1979), 476.

⁹⁵ "Excerpts From the Interview With Carter on His Concepts in Foreign Policy," Special to the *New York Times*, July 7, 1976, PCWP1 22:12.

commissioned by Carter asking the Pentagon what constituted a minimum deterrent.

Two hundred missiles launched from just a few nuclear submarines were quite enough.⁹⁶

Paul Warnke had been publically advocating for turning such convictions into policy for years. He testified after the signing of SALT I in 1972 that the logic inherent in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which precluded substantial missile defenses, ensured that any surviving forces would always be sufficient "totally to devastate the attacker's side."⁹⁷ Under such circumstances, "the continuation of the missile numbers game is in fact a mindless exercise, that there is no purpose to either side achieving a numerical superiority, which is not translatable into either any sort of military capability or any sort of political potential."⁹⁸ There was no possibility of either side achieving "any sort of meaningful advantage in the strategic weapons field unless the other side was willing to concede that advantage." Superiority had meaning only if one said it did.⁹⁹ In a debate on how much was enough with then-Senator James Buckley (R-NY) in 1972, Warnke famously said that "even substantial nuclear superiority short of nuclear monopoly could not be a decisive factor in any political confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union."¹⁰⁰ In a 1974 article he argued that an "assured second strike capability--the secure forces that, even after a Soviet first strike, would be capable of

⁹⁶ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Carter's 200 Missiles," *Washington Post*, February 12, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

⁹⁷ *Congressional Record*, 95th Congress, First Session, February 11, 1977, Vol. 123 No. 26, PCWP1 23:17.

⁹⁸ *Congressional Record*, 95th Congress, First Session, February 11, 1977, Vol. 123 No. 26, PCWP1 23:17.

⁹⁹ *Congressional Record*, 95th Congress, First Session, February 11, 1977, Vol. 123 No. 26, PCWP1 23:17.

¹⁰⁰ James L. Buckley and Paul C. Warnke, *Strategic Sufficiency: Fact or Fiction?* Rational Debate Series (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1972), 46; Skepticism toward nuclear advantage was a common argument of the arms control community. From a personal note attached to an article written by Walter Slocombe titled "The Political Implications of Strategic Parity," it appeared his arguments had a little help. Slocombe hoped he would find the article "helpful background for your contest with Buckley. You should simply destroy him." Walter Slocombe, note to Paul Warnke, "The Political Implications of Strategic Parity," May 1971, PCWP2 1:63.

devastating Soviet society," was enough to prevent nuclear war.¹⁰¹ When Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger announced a public change in targeting policy toward counterforce in 1974, Warnke published a counterproposal in 1975 in *Foreign Policy* replacing counterforce and bargaining chips with sufficiency and restraint called "Apes on a Treadmill" that summarized his convictions in print. He wrote that there was no need to be number one because a numerical lead was only politically significant if "we act as if it matters," conceding it a meaning it "would otherwise lack." With confident assurance that there was nothing to fear from the Soviet buildup because strategic forces were "not translatable into political currency,"¹⁰² he proposed a policy of restraint with hopes of reciprocation from the Russians. They were after all only following their only superpower model, the United States, in what he called a "'monkey see, monkey do phenomenon" of aping.¹⁰³

Warnke hoped his public reputation would earn him a spot in the new administration. On July 29, 1976, he wrote the hopeful President-elect a letter assuring him that the balance was stable and the U.S. retaliatory capability was assured.

"Discussions of defense problems may often find us spinning mushroom clouds on a head of a pin," but realistic appraisals of U.S. defense needs showed the defense budget simply too high, and Nitze's scenarios of a Soviet first strike eroding U.S. ICBMs and bombers and leaving only impotent subs simply unlikely.¹⁰⁴ Carter was intrigued.¹⁰⁵ When Carter

¹⁰¹ Paul C. Warnke, "Possible Outcomes of SALT," *The American Journal of International Law* 67 no. 5 (1973), 43.

¹⁰² Paul C. Warnke, "Apes on a Treadmill," *Foreign Policy* no. 18 (1975), 22-3.

¹⁰³ Paul C. Warnke, "Apes on a Treadmill," *Foreign Policy* no. 18 (1975), 29. This was less colorfully known as the "action-reaction" model favored by Robert McNamara. Glynn, *Closing Pandora's Box*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Paul C. Warnke, letter to The Honorable Jimmy Carter, July 29, 1976, PCWP1 22:15.

¹⁰⁵ According to accounts, he had met with a prospective group of people which included Nitze and Warnke during the summer of 1976 to discuss strategic policy. Rumors had it that Carter was not persuaded by Nitze's mathematical scenarios and passionate calls for a buildup. Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 78;

was making his picks for administration posts, it was understood that for fear of alienating defense hawks he might be hesitant to align too closely with either "liberal Senators" or the "vocal arms control community."¹⁰⁶ Carter thus passed Warnke over for Secretary of Defense but thought him ideal for chief negotiator and director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA).

Through mid-February, Warnke turned the new president down.¹⁰⁷ Warnke expressed thanks for the president's willingness to "work with me in ACDA," but "after much thought, however, I have concluded that it is not feasible for me to accept an appointment at this time and I have therefore asked that my name be withdrawn from consideration. Perhaps later on in the administration I may find that my personal situation and an attractive offer coincide." In that event, he would be thrilled.¹⁰⁸

Desperate after being turned down after a second plea, Carter called him into the Oval Office and made a third offer. By late February Warnke reportedly "relented on the condition that he would stay on the job only for a short time, just long enough to get the negotiations with the Russians over the hump,"¹⁰⁹ and after Carter gave him assurance

Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War*, 253-254; Dunn, *The Politics of Threat*, 84-85.

The advocate with a "strong liberal following," Warnke seemed also to have lost his chance for the top defense post when Carter reportedly told Warnke at some point, "I thought you were talking about being Secretary of Defense not anti-defense Secretary." "Washington's Pick-a-Name Game," *TIME*, November 22, 1976, 14, PCWP1 22:11.

¹⁰⁶ When Carter was making his picks for administration posts, it was understood that for fear of alienating defense hawks he might be hesitant to align too closely with either "liberal senators" or the "vocal arms control community" (John Palfrey), sending a draft of a memorandum to Vance, June 28, 1976, PCWP1 22:14.

¹⁰⁷ He may have been holding out for something more. Arms controller Jeremy Stone urged him in late December 1976 that "if better positions are not offered to you, I hope that you will not automatically reject ACDA." Jeremy J. Stone, letter to Paul C. Warnke, December 22, 1976, PCWP1 23:2.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Warnke, letter to Barry E. Carter, January 14, 1977, PCWP1 22:17.

¹⁰⁹ Nicholas Lemann, "Why Warnke Quit," *Washington Monthly*, May 1979, 30, PCWP1 23:29.

that "he would play a central" and pivotal role in the negotiations.¹¹⁰ That was precisely what his critics and SALT skeptics feared.

Warnke drew fire even before Carter publically announced his name on February 2, 1977. Rumors by the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) that Warnke was a "paid Russian agent"¹¹¹ and circulation of an anonymous memorandum charging Warnke with advocating "unilateral abandonment...of every weapons system which is subject to negotiation," characterized the tactics of the far-right coalition against him.¹¹²

Within the more sedate Congress, Senator Nunn was the first to publically raise his voice in objection in an open session of an Armed Services Committee on February 1. Known for having attracted attention from the media with his warnings about the declining American advantage, Nunn said "I would have no question about Mr. Warnke's intelligence or integrity but I do have questions about his viewpoints."¹¹³ He was most alarmed by Warnke's statement in the Buckley debate that "even substantial nuclear superiority short of nuclear monopoly could not be a decisive factor in any political confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union."¹¹⁴ Senator Frank Church (D-ID) defended Warnke's 1972 remarks as falsely "being treated as some radically new

¹¹⁰ Jeremy J. Stone, letter to Paul C. Warnke, December 22, 1976, PCWP1 23:2; William Beecher, "Warnke expected to accept SALT job," *Boston Globe*, February 1, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Janne E. Nolan, *Guardians of the Arsenal: The Politics of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 136.

¹¹² Anonymous memorandum Re: Mr. Warnke, PCWP1 23:14; (Anti-Warnke Memorandum by Senate staffer, circulated to senators. This memorandum was attributed to "reactionary forces" by TASS, the Soviet agency). Charles W. Corddry, "Carter faces opposition on Warnke for arms post," *The Sun*, February 2, 1977, PCWP1 23:7. Written by Penn Kemble of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, along with staff associated with Senator Jackson, the memorandum was intended to "stimulate opposition if Warnke was named to a policymaking post." Oswald Johnston, "Carter Seeks Early Warnke Showdown," *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹¹³ Tom Mathews with John L. Lindsay, "Arms and the Man," *Newsweek*, February 7, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹¹⁴ Charles W. Corddry, "Carter faces opposition on Warnke for arms post," *The Sun*, February 2, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

and extremely dubious doctrine rather than a succinct expression of what has been conventional wisdom since the dawning of the nuclear age."¹¹⁵

While nuclear liberals were ready to confirm Warnke, Nunn warned that "I don't think a Warnke nomination is going to breeze through" and intended to make their voices heard on the floor of the Senate, where Warnke's "confirmation was unlikely to be unanimous."¹¹⁶ Nunn declared himself undecided on how he would vote, content to give advance notice that Warnke's appointment would "not sail through the Senate."¹¹⁷ He ensured this by summoning Warnke before the "more martial atmosphere" of the Armed Services Committee for questioning.¹¹⁸ He said on February 2 that the "Nation will be well served by a thorough examination" of Warnke's positions on weapons and the "attitudes that he will carry with him to the crucial SALT negotiations." He would give Warnke full opportunity to explain "whether or not opinions have changed or there are changed circumstances," welcoming an examination of "some of the crucial questions that do confront the SALT II negotiators" that would "follow once the nomination is forwarded to the Senate."¹¹⁹

Senator Jackson joined Nunn in inviting Warnke to testify in front of the Armed Services Committee. By February 3, Jackson told the press "I want the facts. I'm

¹¹⁵ Statesman News Services, "Church Backs Warnke – Nuclear Superiority Viewed as Fantasy," *Statesman*, February 5, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹¹⁶ Charles W. Corddry, "Carter faces opposition on Warnke for arms post," *The Sun*, February 2, 1977, PCWP1 23:7; Leo Rennert, "Cranston Quickly Comes To Defense Of Arms Limit Nominee," PCWP1 36:2. Carter lost his first pick for CIA director when a successful grassroots campaign to block Sorenson led the president to withdraw his name. Warnke's opponents were hoping for similar success, having gone so far as to suggest their own list of fifty people they wanted to see in defense posts for the new administration. See Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (New York: South End Press, 1999), 180; Mark R. Arnold, "Arms and the Man: The Issue Isn't Just Paul Warnke," PCWP1 36:2; Tom Mathews with John L. Lindsay, "Arms and the Man," *Newsweek*, February 7, 1977, PCWP1 36:2; Daniel Southerland, "Arms-Control: 'dove' choice by Carter stirs 'hawks'," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 2, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹¹⁷ Charles W. Corddry, "Warnke chosen for arms advisor," *The Sun*, February 3, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹¹⁸ Mary McGrory, "Selection of Warnke Ruffles the Hawks," PCWP1 36:2.

¹¹⁹ *Congressional Record*, 95th Congress, First Session, February 2, 1977, Vol. 123 No. 205, 3247.

disturbed by some of the positions and recommendations made by Warnke."¹²⁰ Nunn and Jackson both dissociated themselves publically from the rumors and memorandum in favor of declaring themselves undecided on how they would vote. Jackson's aides described him as "agnostic but concerned."¹²¹ Newspapers may have been perplexed by Jackson's neutrality, but as Jackson's biographer described, it was typical of Jackson's strategy to withhold judgment in anticipation of holding his own hearings for the public record.¹²² He and Nunn deliberately maintained a publically agnostic position while the far right kept the media fires burning in anticipation of the ASC hearings.

It may not have sounded like all-out war by February 5, but the atmosphere was thick with insinuating imagery.¹²³ The *Arizona Republic* vividly described the scene descending on Warnke as "like a wall of downfield tacklers forming to smother a punt return runner."¹²⁴ If anything was in doubt during the early opposition, it was Warnke's devotion to Carter's pledge of a defense capability second to none. Warnke's past public record provided ample evidence of an apparent contradiction between Carter's campaign pledges and Warnke's "highly advertized positions."¹²⁵ A "menace to the country" to some and a "victim of senatorial mugging" to others, Warnke's nomination polarized both

¹²⁰ Bernard Gwertzman, "Choice of Arms Aide is Facing Opposition: Warnke Nominated by Carter – Senate Fight Expected," *New York Times*, February 3, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹²¹ Mary McGrory, "Selection of Warnke Ruffles the Hawks," PCWP1 36:2; Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Confirmation Seen Virtually Certain Despite Critics," *Washington Post*, February 6, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹²² Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, 150.

¹²³ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "A 'Full-Fledged Battle' Over Paul Warnke?," *Washington Post*, February 3, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹²⁴ "Another nominee in trouble," *Arizona Republic*, February 6, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹²⁵ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "A Full-Fledged Battle Over Paul Warnke?," *Washington Post*, February 3, 1977, PCWP1 23:7; "Warnke Another Bad Choice," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, February 7, 1977, PCWP1 36:2; Mark R. Arnold, "Arms and the Man: The Issue Isn't Just Paul Warnke," PCWP1 36:2.

correspondents and makers of policy as the public sphere erupted in a richly imaginative word war.¹²⁶

Even as the clamor took on the aspect of a pre-ratification battle, absent a surprise Warnke would be the expected negotiator. The confirmation seemed "virtually certain despite critics," as one headline predicted and Democratic Senators like Robert Byrd (D-WV) conceded.¹²⁷ The *Washington Post* speculated that if "senators like Henry Jackson, Sam Nunn, and Strom Thurmond (R-SC) choose to mount a major challenge to Warnke," it would "provide the first major debate in the administration on U.S. strategic policy."¹²⁸ If the opposition wished to make Warnke's nomination the battleground or gain a sizable number of votes against him, they needed stronger grounds than Warnke's reputation alone.

The Foreign Relations Committee Hearings

In his memoirs, arms controller Thomas Graham said that he "had a hand in Warnke's opening statement and tried to persuade him to back away somewhat from his previous positions on weapons systems" and the views he had expressed in "Apes on a Treadmill."¹²⁹ Warnke was willing to be more "conservative and centrist" in his views but "wanted to argue that these views were consistent with his past." Graham thought that a "better course would be to admit they were different" and say one's views as a

¹²⁶ Victor Zorza, "Caution Voiced But Opportunities Are Evident: Carter Too Hasty on SALT??" *Christian Science Monitor*, February 3, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

Organizing Committee of the Emergency Coalition Against Unilateral Disarmament, "Warnke Information Packet," February 11, 1977, PCWP1 23:14.

¹²⁷ Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Confirmation Seen Virtually Certain Despite Critics," *Washington Post*, February 6, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹²⁸ Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Confirmation Seen Virtually Certain Despite Critics," *Washington Post*, February 6, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹²⁹ Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 77.

private citizen naturally became less extreme once within government, but "my argument did not prevail."¹³⁰ The decision would be a fateful one.

Anticipating criticism and surprising all, Warnke opened with what can only be called audacious charm. "I would like to make it very clear...that I do not have any preconceived position with respect to the arms control field, that I approach this with an open mind."¹³¹ He claimed he had always been "prepared to change my mind as further facts developed," and if found mistaken would feel "perfectly free to admit it."¹³² If anyone thought that he represented a "fixed philosophical position...some of them will be surprised, and some others will be disappointed."¹³³ He implored them to "recognize that I have been out of government for the past eight years" and "know nothing except what I read in the papers."¹³⁴ To many, Warnke's own public record seemed to suggest otherwise.

The news as a source of information on that public record elicited many of the initial questions. Charges of opposing all weapons systems subject to negotiations from the anonymous memorandum, quotes from Warnke's debate with Buckley about no sane President using nuclear weapons for political gain, and questions about his supposed proposal of unilateral disarmament from "Apes on a Treadmill" were the main subjects of inquiry. Warnke qualified each of these by stating circumstances had changed since 1972, which warranted shifting analyses on each point. He maintained, though, that he

¹³⁰ Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 77.

¹³¹ United States Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Warnke Nomination: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 95th Congress, 1st sess., Nomination of Paul Warnke to be Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, with the Rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as director, February 8 and 9, 1977, 9*. Hereafter cited as *Warnke nomination*.

¹³² *Warnke nomination*, 9.

¹³³ *Warnke nomination*, 16.

¹³⁴ *Warnke nomination*, 20.

did not mean by the Buckley debate statement that "we could safely yield strategic superiority to the Soviet Union."¹³⁵

SALT I and U.S. strategic doctrine dominated concerns from Warnke's two main FRC opponents, Senator Robert Griffin (R-MI) and Senator John Danforth (R-MO). Griffin was disturbed by Warnke's new concern about numerical inequality and the size of the missiles permitted under the SALT I limits. He quoted Warnke's statement in 1972 that "there is no purpose to either side of achieving a numerical superiority which is not translatable...into any political potential."¹³⁶ Warnke reconciled the difference by saying that Soviet improvements since 1972 in throw weight and accuracy have made the numerical imbalance significant.¹³⁷ Just as skeptical that Warnke had reformed overnight, Senator Danforth quoted Warnke's statement that the more "we do in the way of modernization of nuclear forces" to increase survivability of ICBMs only meant the "more chance we will end up" without an agreement.¹³⁸ In those circumstances, Danforth feared Warnke was leading the United States into a situation in which when faced with a conflict with the Soviets, "the only response available to us will be a massive nuclear war and which urban populations will be targets."¹³⁹

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) tried to pin Warnke down on a doctrine in which such a feared scenario would become a reality. "You have spoken many times about the need to reach a position of minimum deterrence...what size arsenal would you consider to be minimally appropriate?" Warnke denied having ever said as such and endorsed the ability to use nuclear forces on a "less than all-out basis. So I don't accept the doctrine of

¹³⁵ *Warnke nomination*, 25-26.

¹³⁶ *Warnke nomination*, 45.

¹³⁷ *Warnke nomination*, 45-47.

¹³⁸ *Warnke nomination*, 59.

¹³⁹ *Warnke nomination*, 87.

minimum deterrence."¹⁴⁰ Hatch then asked what Warnke thought of the Jackson Amendment. Warnke said equality, in a permanent agreement, was the principle and law he would uphold.¹⁴¹ In light of these contradictions, Danforth thought it was time for a good debate, because the "worst thing that could happen would be for Mr. Warnke to negotiate a treaty and then have that treaty defeated by the Senate."¹⁴²

Just as the first day of hearings was ending on February 8, President Carter gave a press conference in defense of his chosen nominee. Only a few days before the hearings, he had responded to questions about Warnke's suitability by affirming him as the "best man in the country for the job" and that his confirmation was "crucial to his administration."¹⁴³ He would stick by his choice. Having been turned down twice, Carter explained that he was unsuccessful in finding anyone else who was "as well-qualified as he is who would express my views." Having "met with him several times to discuss his attitude on disarmament matters," Carter said "I know Warnke very well," his "views are well considered by me. I have accepted them." He had firm assurance that Warnke's "proposals are sound. I have no concern about his attitude," and "I have complete confidence in him."¹⁴⁴ Carter pledged that "I think when members of the Senate consider what Mr. Warnke stands for, he will be approved overwhelmingly."¹⁴⁵

Media observers thought that on the face of it, it seemed that the Senate had "little choice

¹⁴⁰ *Warnke nomination*, 89.

¹⁴¹ *Warnke nomination*, 88-89.

¹⁴² *Warnke nomination*, 110.

¹⁴³ Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Confirmation Seen Virtually Certain Despite Critics," *Washington Post*, February 6, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

¹⁴⁴ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1977, Book 1-January 20-June 24, 1977* (United States Government Printing Office, 1977), "President's Press Conference, February 8, 1977," 94.

¹⁴⁵ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1977, Book 1-January 20-June 24, 1977* (United States Government Printing Office, 1977), "President's Press Conference, February 8, 1977," 94.

but to confirm...unless it develops during the confirmation hearings that his views are seriously out of line with those aired by Carter." The only alternative might have been to "challenge the premises which led the President to pick him in the first place. This could turn the confirmation issue into a full-scale debate on defense policy."¹⁴⁶

That was precisely what happened. Warnke's surprising hard line, and Carter's pledge that once the Senate considered what Warnke stood for they would approve him overwhelmingly, provided challengeable premises on which to mount a controversy and turn the nomination into a battleground.

Paul Nitze had been searching for such a battleground to stimulate public awareness of the impending danger of a Soviet nuclear advantage. After learning that his friend Senator Jackson planned not to do anything to oppose the nomination, he "brooded over the problem and wrote a letter" to Chairman John Sparkman (D-AL) of the FRC on February 7.¹⁴⁷ In the letter, Nitze said he was concerned that Warnke, who had "spoken with such certainty on matters of military requirements, weapons capabilities, and strategy, may nevertheless not be a qualified student or competent judge" on such matters, and opposed him just for negotiator.¹⁴⁸ He broadened his opposition to both posts after hearing Warnke's testimony. He based his reasoning on Warnke's change of mind. "I had thought up to that time he did in fact really believe in the various positions that he took" from 1969-1976.¹⁴⁹ Having originally opposed Warnke for being too certain, he now opposed him for being too flexible. On trial now was what Warnke really believed and who Carter thought he had nominated.

¹⁴⁶ "Warnke Quiz," *San Diego Union*, February 9, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹⁴⁷ Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 354.

¹⁴⁸ *Warnke nomination*, 136.

¹⁴⁹ *Warnke nomination*, 137.

Nitze based his judgment on Warnke's changing definition of superiority and suspect capabilities as an advocate. In the FRC hearings, Warnke had said he would not cede the reality or appearance of superiority, but the question was "by what change of logic does he come to that?" If it was the "very odd definition of superiority" as not possible "unless you have the counterforce capability to almost entirely eliminate the retaliatory forces of the other side," and the defenses to deal with a counterstrike, such a definition was completely "arbitrary."¹⁵⁰ Nitze did not "believe [Warnke] understands anything about this, nor do I think he is being honest or consistent in saying what his views are."¹⁵¹ Nitze went on to describe Warnke's position on bargaining chips as "absolutely asinine" and his arms control viewpoints as "screwball, arbitrary, [and] fictitious." Nitze asked, were those the "kinds of capability of advocacy that you want?" From his perspective, such lack of logic and consistency did not inspire high confidence in a pending negotiator or a future treaty.¹⁵²

Nitze's objections synthesized the philosophy of nuclear war with the politics of treaties. Warnke's view of nuclear war as unthinkable made him comfortable recommending budget and weapons cuts.¹⁵³ The danger posed by Warnke's school of thought in control of negotiations incited Nitze to clarify that "what I really object to here" is that the certainty in which he spoke should "only come from somebody who knows what he is talking about." Nitze warned that the rejection of a treaty would be a tragedy. In light of that, it was "very important that the debate on these issues takes place prior to the negotiations." There was no other way for the President to know what to

¹⁵⁰ *Warnke nomination*, 138.

¹⁵¹ *Warnke nomination*, 138.

¹⁵² *Warnke nomination*, 143.

¹⁵³ *Warnke nomination*, 146.

expect come ratification. He was determined that the issues were "to be debated concurrently with the man."¹⁵⁴

The Interim

Newspapers were the perfect vehicle for generating such a national debate. In the interim between the FRC and Armed Services Committee (ASC) hearings, headlines reverberated with questions and commentaries on the implications of Warnke's nomination. For some the anti-Warnke cabal was an obviously staged preview of treaty deliberations, and antagonists were only pretending to see Warnke's flexibility as a "critical flaw in a negotiator" rather than take comfort that he was not an "uncommonly stubborn man" unwilling to "change his views on the metaphysical issues" in nuclear warfare.¹⁵⁵ Many observers shared Nitze's unbelief that "overnight Warnke has reformed."¹⁵⁶ Claims of Warnke's "characteristic charm and verbal agility" during the FRC hearings did not easily deflect what became the primary focus on how, why, and when Warnke must have changed his mind.¹⁵⁷ Did he believe in unilateral restraint or not? Did he now support the B-1 bomber and the Trident he had only last month opposed? The "fuzziness of understanding" on the new negotiator's precise views meant that a "long intense and substantial debate is in order," just as the cluster of "anti-Warnke hardliners" had collaborated to accomplish.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *Warnke nomination*, 150.

¹⁵⁵ Charles Bartlett, "Fear of Warnke unfounded," PCWP1 36:2.

¹⁵⁶ First Space News Service, "A Screwball, Arbitrary Point of View," February 11, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹⁵⁷ Daniel Southerland, "Paul Warnke: leans toward accommodation to bring A-curb", *Christian Science Monitor*, February 17, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹⁵⁸ "Which is the real Paul Warnke?," *Chicago Tribune*, February 15, 1977, PCWP1 36:2. "Warnke's Scalp", *New Republic*, February 19, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

Behind the scenes, a friend wrote the beleaguered candidate a personal note of congratulations for the FRC hearings going so "well for you," and was sure that Warnke would "surmount the other hurdles" awaiting him in the ASC. As for the attention Nitze received in the press, his friend suggested that the deprecating remarks "seemed so intemperate as to suggest even that he is motivated by personal animus."¹⁵⁹

An editorial gave the private suggestion public exposure when Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* inveighed that "there is an almost venomous intensity... a feeling beyond usual policy disagreement in a democracy." It was as if the "opponents have made him a symbol of something they dislike so much they want to destroy him."¹⁶⁰ The intensity reflected a "policy disagreement so fundamental that any imaginable arms limitation agreement will face powerful resistance." Lewis attributed the rise of a new "military-intellectual complex" to those supporting a larger defense budget and intense suspicions of the Kremlin. That Warnke shared Carter's views on the dangers of the arms race was "doubtless what so greatly agitates critics."¹⁶¹ Lewis was attuned to the intensity of the immediate politics, if not the underlying fundamentals of nuclear philosophy motivating the effort to make Warnke's nomination the battleground.

Warnke's reputation as a "super-dove" and his changes of mind provoked "fowl" language on both sides. While the *Pink Sheet on the Left* characterized Carter's choice as "putting the fox in charge of the henhouse," another organization argued that Warnke "may be characterized as neither hawk nor dove but as a very wise owl."¹⁶² *Time* was

¹⁵⁹ George C. Christie, letter to Paul Warnke, February 10, 1977, PCWP1 11:7.

¹⁶⁰ Anthony Lewis, "The Brooding Hawks," *New York Times*, February 10, 1977, PCWP1 23:7.

¹⁶¹ Anthony Lewis, "The Brooding Hawks," *New York Times*, February 10, 1977, PCWP1 23:7. One could also argue that this marked the birth of the neoconservatives. See Dimitri K. Simes, "The Anti-Soviet Brigade," *Foreign Policy*, no. 37 (1979-1980), 28-42.

¹⁶² "Warnke Nomination One of Carter's Worst," *Pink Sheet on the Left*, February 14, 1977, PCWP1 36:2; "Will These Months of Change be for the Better?," *News Notes*, February 14, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

little disturbed that Warnke "took pains to toughen up his image" in their article entitled, "A Proper Perch for a Dove," but the *Salt Lake City Tribune* was as disturbed as Senator Hatch, who asked "Why does he want this job so badly that he would reverse his stance on these issues? That's what worries me."¹⁶³ With doves descending down on Warnke for his revised views, a cartoon published in the *New York Daily News* on February 11 by Warren King embodied the hope that his supporters would lose confidence in his commitment as an arms control advocate:



Warren King, *New York Daily News*, February 11, 1977

As the doves and hawks ruffled their feathers over the fundamentals of defense, the central question fomenting the debate reached national headline proportions in the

¹⁶³ "A Proper Perch for the Dove," *TIME*, February 14, 1977, PCWP1 23:7; Paul Wetzel, "Hatch Cites Warnke Threat," *Salt Lake City Tribune*, February 14, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

Chicago Tribune's "Which is the real Paul Warnke?"¹⁶⁴ The "disturbing divergence of opinion" on Warnke's qualifications between Carter and Nitze prodded wondering "how can two person's views of the same man differ so radically?"¹⁶⁵ Nitze's opinions on Warnke's competency to judge and his lack of consistency compelled two conclusions in concert with anti-Warnke hardliners. First, Warnke had "written irresponsibly on strategic arms control." Second, "now that Warnke has virtually repudiated those writings," he showed he could "not be trusted to do what he said."¹⁶⁶ The question of who was the real Paul Warnke dominated headlines as the Armed Services Committee hearings neared.

Before Warnke could deal with the crafty Russians, he had to pass his domestic challengers from the Armed Services Committee, as Herbert Lawrence Block's political imagination captured well in his political cartoon of February 14. This time it was an army of "anti-arms control senators" mounted on a canon, rather than a flock of doves wielding olive branches, that descended on Warnke with binoculars and battle gear in hand to inspect Carter's choice as the new negotiator. The headline caption, "the other part of the job is trying to deal with the Russians," indicated it was less the Kremlin than the Congress which would be his toughest challenge:

¹⁶⁴ "Which is the real Paul Warnke?" *Chicago Tribune*, February 15, 1977, PCWP1 36:2, <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1977/02/15/page/14/article/which-is-the-real-paul-warnke> (accessed August 16, 2016).

¹⁶⁵ "Which is the real Paul Warnke?" *Chicago Tribune*, February 15, 1977, PCWP1 36:2, <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1977/02/15/page/14/article/which-is-the-real-paul-warnke> (accessed August 16, 2016).

¹⁶⁶ "Which is the real Paul Warnke?" *Chicago Tribune*, February 15, 1977, PCWP1 36:2, <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1977/02/15/page/14/article/which-is-the-real-paul-warnke> (accessed August 16, 2016).



Herbert Lawrence Block, February 14, 1977

As the grounds for opposition shifted from doubts about Warnke's effectiveness as negotiator before the FRC hearings to the credibility of his fluctuating convictions after the hearings, by late February media coverage in anticipation of the ASC hearings had successfully shifted the focus of the debate from the meaning of superiority to who was the real Paul Warnke.

Warnke was well aware of the rising tide against him. Interviewed by a reporter on how he felt when the President said he was the best qualified for the task, Warnke humbly replied that he was "highly flattered but not entirely convinced." Asked how he felt about the news coverage, he quipped that he "thoroughly enjoyed all favorable articles and editorial comments. Resent deeply anything which is at all critical." He preferred the controversy in contrast to its being ignored, and he felt on balance that it

"underscored the importance of the issues" and of "arms control as the central factor... in world peace."¹⁶⁷

Privately though, Warnke wondered what motivated the extent and intensity of the campaign. Two handwritten notes of his preparatory material partially explain the course and outcome of the hearings. The first was a list of arguments against his positions, citing Nitze's concern for throw weight. The question at the end of the list, "Why Jackson Effort?", suggested that though he expected opposition, he did not expect the nature of their attack. The second note was from a friend who provided an answer. Bill Jackson wrote Warnke a one page note just prior to the hearings warning him to "watch out for two traps." The first trap was "getting into specifics of weapons systems." The second was "above all, don't appear to retreat from your fundamentally same positions in favor of arms control and checking the rise in expense expenditures. You weaken your position by over rationalization, or admitting to rethinking so many positions." Lastly, he told Warnke to insist he be "permitted to answer fully the questions posed. There is no such thing as a constructive dialogue with Scoop on these matters. He wants to dictate the terms of SALT."¹⁶⁸ Indeed, that summed up the political thrust of Jackson's efforts.

As seen in the hearings conducted during SALT I, Jackson historically had used hearings as a way to influence treaty negotiations. Both disarmament advocate Thomas Graham and historian Robert Strong thought that Jackson "seized on this controversy to turn the Warnke nomination into a full-scale debate on strategic policy, as well as a

¹⁶⁷ Paul C. Warnke, letter to David L. DeLuca, February 14, 1977, PCWP1 11:6.

¹⁶⁸ Bill Jackson, handwritten note to Paul Warnke, undated, PCWP1 23:9.

referendum on SALT II" when Nitze's testimony guaranteed an open battle.¹⁶⁹ Jackson's biographer Robert Kaufman described his strategy more accurately as a calculated one from the beginning. As seen since SALT I, his strategy was not to oppose treaties outright since they were expected to pass. Instead, he took advantage of the ratification process by holding separate hearings with expectation of media coverage to alert the American people to the Soviet threat and toughen treaty provisions.¹⁷⁰ He would do the same with the Warnke nomination. He would not oppose his confirmation outright, but would instead use it to shape both SALT II negotiations and U.S. strategic thinking.

Jackson also had more directly personal methods should his public efforts fail. Sensitive to senatorial concerns, Carter agreed to meet with Jackson over breakfast at the White House on February 4, 1977.¹⁷¹ Just a week after the FRC hearings on February 15, Jackson followed up with what became known as the Perle-Jackson memorandum, detailing guidelines for SALT II. In summary, it said that SALT II must not confer an exploitable advantage to the Soviets, and it must reduce the threat to Minuteman's survivability by eliminating the Soviet advantage in heavies, which it insisted had to be precisely defined. The memorandum counseled against repeating the negotiating tactics of SALT I.¹⁷² It also implied that the negotiator's skill and ability to bring about such an outcome was of the utmost importance, and suggested that any future treaty would be subjected to close scrutiny.

If Warnke was at one time surprised by the extent of Jackson's efforts, an undelivered draft of Warnke's opening statement for the ASC hearings demonstrated that

¹⁶⁹ Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 77; Robert Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 22.

¹⁷⁰ Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 150.

¹⁷¹ Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson*, 361.

¹⁷² Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson*, 361-363.

he quickly became aware of its motivating force. The draft is worth reviewing to show how he deliberately qualified his convictions in public while he was privately irked by the politicking. Similar to his FRC defense that circumstances rather than he had changed, he blamed the dynamic nature of strategic relations for affecting the merits of time-bound arms control proposals. Since 1972, Soviet modernization and development of MIRV missiles meant that "unless action is taken through arms limitation--this modernized force will eventually gain the capacity, *at least on paper*, as the Committee knows, to destroy rather high fractions of our land-based force" [emphasis added]. The United States had a similar capability, he said, "on paper at least, to destroy high fractions of the Soviet land-based missile force." But "these are, of course, paper and pencil calculations with many operational uncertainties...nevertheless, it is clearly disturbing to military planners on both sides that these calculations posed a threat to U.S. ICBMs."¹⁷³ The emphasis on pencil and paper threats suggested unabashed disbelief in the threat of Soviet political or military use of nuclear weapons. Warnke's edits, by crossing out words and rewriting in the margins, also suggested a man inordinately cautious in his diction and self-conscious about revealing his convictions.

Warnke thought the issue should have been resolved by acknowledging the negotiator's limited role in treaty provisions. He recognized that "many members of this committee may wish to interrogate me on the question of arms control philosophy...but general principles do not...decide concrete cases." Proposals rested on consensus among the executive branch, which "require decisions on what criteria we are to use to determine the adequacy of our forces." No negotiator or director on his own could determine those

¹⁷³ Paul Warnke, (draft of statement to be given before the Armed Services Committee, 1977), PCWP1 23:9.

assessments, nor what those criteria should be.¹⁷⁴ For Jackson, that was the whole point. As Jackson had exclaimed in 1972 in his dialogues with Gerard Smith, the assumptions of the negotiator on the requirements of deterrence were crucial, and he was determined to prevent the opposing school representing the United States at SALT II.¹⁷⁵ Warnke and Jackson then were at loggerheads, and Warnke knew it.

Warnke then turned in the draft to the pending vote on his confirmation. He tried to spin the controversy over his nomination by arguing that such intensity of interest would send a signal to the Soviets that Congress would "not settle for just any agreement" and would get "the closest assessment when the Treaty is brought back." He warned that he would not "encourage senators to vote against me to straighten that impression of Senate vigilance." Warnke wrote in draft form what he did not say in public: "with all due respect, therefore, Senators should not feel that they must decide today upon the basis of my personality and character, and writings, whether they would probably like the Treaty which the Executive Branch would negotiate through me, and then vote accordingly on the basis of that speculation."¹⁷⁶ Of course, that was exactly the way the Senate would scrutinize his suitability.

The differences in Warnke's undelivered draft and delivered remarks he would give in front of the ASC showed that Warnke knew that the substance of his views and the integrity of his character were the motivating factors behind the Jackson effort. His marginal and in-text corrections of the draft he eventually delivered illustrated the lengths

¹⁷⁴ Paul Warnke, (draft of statement to be given before the Armed Services Committee, 1977), PCWP1 23:9.

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Military Implications of the Treaty on the Limitations of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the Interim Agreement on Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms*, Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, 92nd sess, 1972, 235, 268, 388-394, 412-420, 478.

¹⁷⁶ Paul Warnke, (draft of statement to be given before the Armed Services Committee, 1977), PCWP1 23:9.

he would go in order to avoid certain connotations or a patronizing tone, and to recast past positions as being more flexible than his actual convictions. He closed the draft with, "there is no question but that the United States must be second to none in military power, but, hopefully, if arms control policies are successful, at lower levels of cost and destructive potential." In his edits, Warnke replaced "second to none" with "have sufficient military power to deter aggression."¹⁷⁷ Privately then, he never wavered from his conviction that superiority was simply not possible and sufficiency was the only alternative, just as he had publically campaigned for years.

During the ASC hearings, Warnke's strict adherence to Bill Jackson's advice provided Senator Jackson an effortless strategy for discrediting both the man, and through the team efforts of Senator Nunn and strategist Paul Nitze, the school of thought he represented. An extensive examination of the consistency of Warnke's public record in contrast to his present positions would prove his downfall. Creating doubt by examining the public record in comparison to his present testimony would gather the votes needed to send a symbolic signal to Carter that a treaty negotiated by someone with Warnke's philosophy faced slim prospects of ratification. The strategy of holding hearings never changed, but Jackson's tactic adapted to testing the hypothesis of Carter's press conference pledge that once all considered what Warnke stood for they would vote for him "overwhelmingly."¹⁷⁸ Warnke's change of position, and refusal to admit he had fundamentally done so, sealed his fate.

¹⁷⁷ Paul Warnke, (draft of statement to be given before the Armed Services Committee, 1977), PCWP1 23:9.

¹⁷⁸ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1977, Book 1-January 20-June 24, 1977* (United States Government Printing Office, 1977), "President's Press Conference, February 8, 1977," 94.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Two spokesmen for the competing public relations campaigns on strategic thought met in late February 1977 after weeks of anticipation. Leader of the restraint and assured destruction community, Paul C. Warnke, faced the leading congressional voice of defense preparedness, Senator Henry Jackson (D-WA), in the Armed Services Committee (ASC) hearings he and Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) insisted on having before voting on the Senate floor. Senator Jackson's goal was not only to shape SALT II negotiations, but to change the discourse of U.S. strategic doctrine. Conducting hearings, with the expectation of media coverage, was his method of fomenting a sea change in strategic attitudes and reeducating the public on the requirements of deterrence. Jackson challenged President Carter's pledge that once all considered what Warnke stood for they would vote for him overwhelmingly. Jackson's political tactic of creating doubt about Warnke's credibility gathered the votes and Nunn's philosophical tactic of probing Warnke's definition of superiority established the criteria for a future treaty and a credible deterrent. Warnke's change of positions, and refusal to admit he had fundamentally changed, created the conditions for a controversy and tactical grounds for opposing his nomination. Through the team effort of Jackson and Nunn, Warnke's protagonists

demonstrated the inadequacy of assured destruction as a credible deterrent and gathered enough votes to prove they could block a future SALT II treaty that restricted the United States to a MAD strategy. The construction of a controversy by gathering enough votes against Warnke reversed the reification of MAD before the ratification of SALT II and set the media stage for the successful reformation of strategic thought into the 1980s.

The ASC hearings opened on February 22, 1977. Warnke's opening statement focused on addressing the charges swirling in the media since the Foreign Relations Committee (FRC) hearings. Notes and drafts of his opening statement in his papers revealed that he and his defense team had been working since their aftermath to, if not cover the cracks, address the charges. Thomas Graham, who had initially advised him to take a right of center turn, took the role of ghost writer for Warnke's opening statement and anticipated responses. Bill Jackson's admonition to admit to no fundamental change of view set the tone of Warnke's steadfast demeanor and, to most, his frustrating implacability. Addressing the focus on his past record, he said that having testified since 1969, "I cannot today support each and every recommendation made in the past eight years." This was because "subsequent developments" required reassessment of those ideas, whose merits were, as a "function of timing and substance," now obsolete.¹⁷⁹ It was circumstances, not he, that had changed.

Warnke then turned to SALT itself. The Soviets and the United States had both availed themselves of freedom to modernize. Addressing the much maligned appearance of inequality, he argued that U.S. technical and warhead advantages offset Soviet

¹⁷⁹ United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. *Consideration of Mr. Paul C. Warnke to be Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and Ambassador: hearings together with individual views. Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 95th congress, 1st sess., February 22, 23, 28, 1977, 7.* Hereafter cited as *Consideration*.

numerical ones. The temporary nature of the agreement meant the Soviet's supposed lead was no cause for alarm.¹⁸⁰ This claim addressed Senator Griffin's accusation in the FRC that Warnke was more concerned now than in 1972 over the numerical imbalance. In one of the few times he had ever mentioned "heavies" over his career, Warnke then brought up concern for the Soviet throw weight advantage granted by permitted modernization. Concerned over the pace of the Soviet buildup, he said that rough equality existed, "but if trends continue our position could be in jeopardy." He pledged to use arms control solutions to maintain deterrence in that situation, and was an "enthusiast for making the effort."¹⁸¹

Jackson was little convinced by Warnke's defense. As the ASC hearings proceeded, he questioned Warnke's self-representation as a tabula rasa by quoting back to him his opening statement during the FRC hearings, "I do not have any preconceived positions with respect to the arms control field."¹⁸² Using his skill as a lawyer as if building his case, Jackson countered that all knew Warnke had written, testified, and recommended to the extent that it was fair to say he was a "tireless advocate" of views and positions in the arms control field. Such an abundant public record from which to draw meant enough evidence to evaluate his "judgment and foresight" in national security issues. It was Jackson's primary task to "explore that record today."¹⁸³

Jackson then shifted the focus of skepticism about Warnke's suitability from substance to character. "What is striking about Mr. Warnke's prepared testimony today is how markedly it differs from the views he has been expressing for the past eight years,"

¹⁸⁰ *Consideration*, 8.

¹⁸¹ *Consideration*, 10.

¹⁸² *Consideration*, 16.

¹⁸³ *Consideration*, 16.

he said. Men changed their minds, he admitted, but "what is unusual is the suddenness with which Mr. Warnke had come to the conclusions he expressed" in the FRC and before them today.¹⁸⁴ Warnke's new concern over the Soviet buildup, that "our position could be in jeopardy at some point in the future," troubled him.¹⁸⁵ Jackson said that the "suddenness with which Mr. Warnke has changed his position on a number of central issues raises some fundamental questions about whether, and to what degree, the Senate is justified basing its judgment on the assumption of consistency, clarity, and forthrightness. This, to me, Mr. Chairman, is the central issue before this committee."¹⁸⁶

With that statement, Jackson placed Warnke's integrity within the context of the memory of SALT I. Trust in negotiators was the Senate's sore spot. None wanted a repeat of imprecise definitions, ambiguous provisions, or inequality that seemed to be responsible for potential Soviet superiority. With the skill of a lawyer who knew his audience and the power of suggestion, Jackson laid out the case from which the whole hearings flowed.

Jackson sought to set the record straight. Warnke's past weapons recommendations became the first part of his record lay bare. Jackson compiled a list of thirteen weapons Warnke had opposed and presented them for Warnke's confirmation as an accurate summary. Warnke said "Yes, sir, Senator, that is absolutely correct."¹⁸⁷ Those who had read Warnke's FRC testimony were likely struck by the reluctance with which Warnke acknowledged past recommendations. This was Jackson's purpose in using the list as a base from which to ask Warnke to supply "where in the record you

¹⁸⁴ *Consideration*, 16.

¹⁸⁵ *Consideration*, 16.

¹⁸⁶ *Consideration*, 17.

¹⁸⁷ *Consideration*, 18.

have made different recommendations...prior to your nomination."¹⁸⁸ Warnke's response that he could not cite specific references, because he lacked a "glossary with respect to the collected works of Paul C. Warnke," did little to nudge the notion of inconsistency out of the minds of the Senatorial jury.¹⁸⁹

The bulk of the secondary literature stops at Jackson's list of thirteen weapons and Warnke's seven-word affirmation. Glynn, Kaufman, and Powers each quoted that single interaction without exposition on its substantive meaning or strategic implications, nor how it was part of Jackson's strategy and tactics.¹⁹⁰ In quoting that interaction as representative of the entire hearings, each assumed that Warnke's opposition to weapons inevitably made his nomination controversial and was the single cause for the votes against him.

If Jackson's list of thirteen is instead placed within the framework of his strategy of constructing a controversy by creating doubt, then the hearings, and the defense debate, become about much more than weapons programs. Weapons have doctrinal and postural implications. Behind the weapons was the declaratory doctrine supporting their rationale, and a philosophy of how much was enough. They represented insurance against blackmail for preparedness proponents, and the potential specter of a holocaust for arms controllers. This visceral, philosophical underpinning clashed with the politics of negotiations as two schools of thought competed in open forum not just over weapons,

¹⁸⁸ *Consideration*, 18.

¹⁸⁹ Ironically, Warnke's papers compiled after his death in 2001 indicated he had done nearly precisely that. It was likely as a result of the necessity of compiling an ongoing defense amid the controversy that his papers are replete with clippings, preparation notes, support and opposition files, drafts and letters, prepared and undelivered testimony, and what in essence was a glossary of his collected works from at least 1969. Warnke's paper trail was undeniable.

¹⁹⁰ Robert Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy*, 26; Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: A History of Anticommunism*, 377; Robert Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, 360; Patrick Glynn, *Opening Pandora's Box*, 279.

but strategic doctrine.¹⁹¹ By following the hearings' dramatic unfolding with insights into Jackson's motives and strategy, the substantive issues rumble beneath what seemed on the surface a skirmish over weapons policy. Close attention to these background issues revealed the significance of that moment for the deeper debate of which his nomination was about. Most importantly for the outcome of the hearings, the exchange alone did not sink Warnke. It was not his record but his change of positions, and his denial that he had so changed, that created the controversy. It was this synthesis between substance and politics that made Jackson's tactic so seamlessly effective yet easily missed.

With the sober skill of a sleuth, Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) probed and prodded beneath the surface of Warnke's changing positions. He started by quoting Warnke's opening statement that if trends continued, "our position could be in jeopardy."¹⁹² Nunn concurred heartily with Warnke's new assessment, but told him that "some of your past statements I find very, very inconsistent, almost diametrically opposed to the statement this morning." Nunn concurred with Jackson that a change of mind was fine, but he was bothered that "you have changed your mind without acknowledging you changed your mind, and it bothers me worse if you have changed your mind and don't realize that you changed your mind."¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ See Michael Charlton's interview with Richard Perle in *Deterrence to Defense* for comments on Jackson's "visceral" divinations about Soviet intentions. Michael Charlton, ed. *From Deterrence to Defense: The Inside Story of Strategic Policy, Candid Interviews with the Architects of American Nuclear Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 41-43.

See also Richard Betts' description of the scene of the 1970s as a fight over SALT II that was bound up with intensifying anxieties over the changing nuclear balance. SALT encouraged a focus on "arcane measures of capability," but "fundamentally, however, the salient anxieties were general, political, and visceral more than specific, military, and technical." Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1987), 207.

¹⁹² *Consideration*, 41.

¹⁹³ *Consideration*, 42.

Those words would make the straight-jacket of Warnke's commitment to consistency a coffin. While Warnke thought the comment unexceptionable, Nunn countered that never before the nomination would such statements have been expected from him. A dialogue with another Senator in 1976 seemed to prove it. Warnke had then believed that even if the Soviets completed their programs, there would be no change in the balance. Nunn asked Warnke how he reconciled the difference. Warnke explained that Soviet hard target kill and accuracy advancements after those completed programs made the difference. Even then the United States would still have the edge in hard target capability.¹⁹⁴ But as his record showed, this capability was precisely what Warnke had campaigned against.

An attempt to salvage Warnke's predicament came from Senator Gary Hart (D-CO). He also became the first to bring up what lurked in the philosophical background, the question of Soviet intent and the potential utility of superiority. Warnke treated it as self-evident that the Soviets would use superiority to U.S. disadvantage should they gain it, but he qualified their advantage as more of the political than military kind. A perceived military superiority could leave the other at a political disadvantage, Warnke had no doubt.¹⁹⁵ As this paper argues, this was just such a perception that Warnke's school sought to replace with the inutility of nuclear weapons.¹⁹⁶ In answering Hart, Warnke remained philosophically consistent if semantically fuzzy, for in the past he had publically asserted that advantage accrued only if voluntarily ceded.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ *Consideration*, 42-44.

¹⁹⁵ *Consideration*, 44.

¹⁹⁶ *Congressional Record*, 95th Congress, First Session, February 2, 1977, Vol. 123, PCWP1 23:17.

¹⁹⁷ Paul C. Warnke, "National Priorities for the Next Decade," (remarks delivered to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces), September 18, 1975, PCWP1 16:6.

Inherent confusions in the nature of the strategic thinking debate only became deeper as Hart led Warnke into another nebulous nuclear division of thought. "We have proceeded over the past several decades on a theory of deterrence...do you believe that that theory should be shifted to what has been called a counterforce strategy--that our strategic capability should be retargeted on hard targets? What are your attitudes toward that discussion?"¹⁹⁸

Hart's phrasing of the question as a dichotomy between deterrence and counterforce illustrated the philosophical and declaratory rather than military nature of the public debate. On the declaratory level, some saw counterforce capabilities as nuclear war-fighting, with all its theoretical and practical implications.

Having been of that school, Warnke explained to Hart that the "fundamental aim has to be to maximize the deterrent efficacy of our forces" for "assured retaliatory capability" and perceived equality. The issue was how to achieve that aim. Warnke said he endorsed refinements in target selection through command and control, but added that "having a counterforce capability improves deterrence by improving the number of options the President would have...so I don't think they are alternatives, I think they are complementary."¹⁹⁹

That was the language of the defense advocates, not a deterrence faithful. It hit at the central question of how much was enough, a direct answer to which his school avoided by declaring an "assured retaliatory capability" sufficient and large degrees of counterforce unnecessary.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ *Consideration*, 45.

¹⁹⁹ *Consideration*, 45.

²⁰⁰ For discussion of degrees of counterforce and semantic confusion, see Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 255, 334, 359, 374; Milton Leitenberg, "Presidential Directive (P.D.) 59: United States

The semantics exhibited in the Senators' questions illustrated the dichotomous thinking between deterrence and war fighting between the two schools. In reality, there were degrees of counterforce. Most arms controllers and sufficiency advocates did approve of limited counterforce, and not many would endorse massive retaliation as the only option, nor only the ability to strike cities. Such nuances though get lost in the semantics and linguistic dichotomies employed in debates. The important point is that these arguments are used politically. Their lack of relation to military reality is precisely the reason weapons become so significant in the debate. Focus on weapons is a symptom of the confusion and the result of the misunderstandings created by the semantic debates.

After years of campaigning against counterforce capabilities, Warnke's newfound appreciation for it would have struck his more ideological arms control colleagues as near heresy.

To Warnke's doubters, such linguistic admissions were political opportunities. After reminding the witness of his past record of opposition to new weapons programs and affinity for unilateral restraint, Senator John Tower (D-TX) asked Warnke if he believed the Soviet effort indicated an "approach to concepts of deterrence and stability" similar to the United States. Warnke admitted that indeed some Soviets may espouse a "nuclear war fighting capability," but U.S. forces and arms control negotiations "ought to be optimized for deterrence rather than for war-fighting."²⁰¹

Nuclear Weapon Targeting Policy," *Journal of Peace Research* 18 no. 4 (1981); Louis Rene Beres, "Presidential Directive 59: A Critical Assessment," *Parameters* (March 1981); Sam Marullo, "The Ideological Nature of Nuclear Deterrence: Some Causes and Consequences," *The Sociological Quarterly* 26 no. 3 (1985); Donald M. Snow, "Current Nuclear Deterrence Thinking: An Overview and Review," *International Studies Quarterly* 23 no. 3 (1979); Leon Wieseltier, "When Deterrence Fails," *Foreign Affairs* 63 no. 4 (1985); Joseph A. Cernik, "The Current United States Targeting Doctrine of Nuclear Weapons: An Explanation and Analysis," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 6 no. 1/2 (1976).

²⁰¹ *Consideration*, 55.

Warnke's separation indicated the philosophical undercurrent of the strategic thought debate. His earlier endorsement of counterforce belied the military nuances underneath. And his semantics illustrated the confusing nature of the public debate that his antagonists used to their advantage.

Tower's follow-up questions on whether the Soviets "accepted the doctrine of mutual and assured destruction" as a source of strategic stability or thought "nuclear war to be unthinkable" identified the crux of the philosophical currents.²⁰² The issue was the Soviet buildup and the desired U.S. response. The division in responses rested on the philosophical question of whether one thought nuclear war thinkable or unthinkable. Warnke's articulated plan to Tower was to probe Soviet intentions through SALT to explore whether they would accept a "deterrence view rather than a nuclear war fighting view."²⁰³ This was inconsistent with his previous views proposing unilateral initiatives, Tower charged, and he demanded that Warnke provide evidence of arriving at those conclusions prior to his confirmation hearings.

Identifying when Warnke had arrived at those newfound conclusions prior to his nomination was Jackson's fundamental objective. He opened his next line of questioning by saying, the "importance of the discussion...today lies not just in the substantive issues." What really troubled him about Warnke being the negotiator was a clearly established pattern of positions and arguments in the public record over many years, and now, "on the eve of these hearings, I find a complete change of positions."²⁰⁴ It was not that he had changed, for "that is fine--we all change. But I can't find in the public record where you have made statements expressing these fundamental changes prior to your

²⁰² *Consideration*, 55-56.

²⁰³ *Consideration*, 56.

²⁰⁴ *Consideration*, 57.

appearances before the Foreign Relations Committee and this committee today."²⁰⁵

Jackson asked Warnke to show on the public record where he had changed his mind prior to the confirmation hearings, for this was the "fundamental principle" as far as he was concerned.²⁰⁶

The implications were clear. The tone was set. The challenge hung in the air. The record could not be hidden, and the explanations were suspect.

As Warnke calmly maintained that his fundamental positions were unchanged and Jackson quipped that "fundamental" was a matter of debate, Jackson turned to his favorite substantive issue, the "much discussed subject, the meaning of superiority."²⁰⁷ The atmosphere thick with both insinuation and substance was the perfect time to probe Warnke's views on the "military meaning and political implications of superiority." While Warnke tried to distinguish between the desirability and futility of meaningful superiority, Jackson interrupted by asking "what do you think the Soviets are really up to?" Did he not admit in a prior office visit that the Soviets were "out to get superiority?"²⁰⁸ Warnke repeated his opening statement that if trends continued the Soviets would have a strategic edge, but he said its military significance was questionable.

Nunn interrupted Warnke's explanation of his newfound definition of jeopardy to say that it did not square with what he said in 1976, that the balance would remain unchanged even if the Soviets continued building. Jackson concurred with "I must say

²⁰⁵ *Consideration*, 58.

²⁰⁶ *Consideration*, 58.

²⁰⁷ *Consideration*, 58.

²⁰⁸ *Consideration*, 58-59.

that that is not consistent with what you have just said to me," but Warnke replied that it indeed was.²⁰⁹

The fuzzy semantics may have been illustrative of both the nature of the subject and the strategy of creating doubt, but it was Jackson's next question that punctured the confusing atmosphere. "What are the Soviets up to? I think that is what the great national security debate ought to be about. I raised a question about it and you said that the Soviets are headed for superiority."²¹⁰

Warnke's admission that the Soviets were striving for superiority acknowledged its appeal. The perennial issues between the two schools were the political implications of Soviet capabilities and the perception of Soviet superiority and what the necessary U.S. response should be.

Warnke began making distinctions about those issues, as was his art. He distinguished between actual and cosmetic superiority. Actual superiority was when one could not respond to a challenge because one could not prevail. Cosmetic superiority was the perception of a political disadvantage, "even if in military terms it might not mean the difference between victory and success."²¹¹ Jackson compared the present to the past Warnke by bringing out an excerpt from a 1971 testimony during the SALT I ratification hearings. Warnke had then said "nuclear superiority has become a meaningless and irrelevant criterion in designing strategic forces. The argument continues to be made, however, that a numerical lead which is militarily meaningless

²⁰⁹ *Consideration*, 59.

²¹⁰ *Consideration*, 59.

²¹¹ *Consideration*, 59. It was here that Warnke's fundamental views could upon close examination be clearly discerned. The distinction between military meaning and political perception was a function, in his view, of the nature of nuclear weapons. It was impossible either to disarm an adversary or to win a nuclear war. What then was left in the contest was the perception of advantage. It was the phenomenon of perception that Warnke's public record showed he had been campaigning to devalue for years.

may somehow be exploitable politically. I feel that this is a fallacy." Warnke concurred with the statement he made in 1971 but explained to Jackson that that was "not the kind of superiority that was important."²¹² In other words, numerical superiority did not matter in 1971.

Jackson spoke for all when he replied, "you lose me on that," and tried to simplify matters by pinning a doctrine of minimum deterrence on Warnke. He proceeded with an excerpt from 1969 in the *Congressional Record* that "inferiority is no cause for alarm or even embarrassment if what we have is enough to deter any Soviet preemptive strike." Well, Jackson said, "that is the doctrine, clearly, of minimum deterrence." All he elicited from Warnke was, "I don't believe so," to which Jackson said, "well, it is assured destruction doctrine. How do you reconcile that with what you have just said to this committee?" It depended on one's definition of superiority, Warnke said.²¹³

Such semantics, charges, and confusion embodied the essence of the decade-long debate between the two schools, as the politics of arms control merged with the viscerally charged nature of strategic doctrine in a democracy.

The questions focused on Warnke's consistency in relation to his definition of superiority. He tried to clarify by defining it in two ways. It was "significant if it has military significance or if its cosmetic impact is such as to put you at a political disadvantage. It is consistent with what I testified in 1972 that if you want to put it that way, inferiority in numbers... was in fact, of no significance."²¹⁴ Jackson only repeated the technique of quoting Warnke's words back to him, this time with the now infamous quote from Warnke's 1972 debate with Buckley: "Even substantial nuclear superiority,

²¹² *Consideration*, 59-60.

²¹³ *Consideration*, 60.

²¹⁴ *Consideration*, 60.

short of nuclear monopoly, could not be a decisive factor in any political confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union."²¹⁵ Warnke maintained that the case he was making in 1972 was that no President would sanely use nuclear weapons in a political crisis because Soviet developments toward parity rendered them politically impotent. But that "did not suggest, of course, that I would yield meaningful superiority to the Soviet Union," Warnke said.²¹⁶ Jackson was less concerned with that at this point. More immediately disturbing was that Warnke's present words were "incomprehensible and completely at odds" with his past words.²¹⁷

Having successfully created confusion over Warnke's definition of superiority, Jackson moved on to his more fundamental objective, Warnke's credibility. "I am asking you now, and this is the central issue," when and where "did you arrive at those changes?"²¹⁸ Warnke's record stood. Jackson's challenge mounted. His question, as he addressed the chairman, "goes to the credibility and the viability of the witness as a negotiator when I find from the printed record, that there has been a consistent pattern of position and argument up until the nomination was made." He requested that Warnke supply a written compilation of statements in answer to when and where. Warnke, Jackson said, had "followed a pretty consistent pattern on fundamental strategic doctrine," but had changed at the FRC hearings and before them today. Warnke maintained that his "fundamental position has not changed," Jackson asked when and where, the witness claimed consistency, and Jackson, with ominous tones, said "we have a predicate now to proceed on. You are taking the position that you have not changed.

²¹⁵ *Consideration*, 60.

²¹⁶ *Consideration*, 60.

²¹⁷ *Consideration*, 61.

²¹⁸ *Consideration*, 61.

We will pursue that."²¹⁹ Warnke's claim of consistency was now the predicate Jackson would thoroughly explore and the rest of the Senators would persistently follow.

From that point on it mattered little what Warnke really believed or how he explained past positions. The impression was made, the charges stuck, the witness was defenseless, and the lawyer, Jackson, was relentless. The question of superiority was already a contested and pivotal realm of strategic thought between the two schools. When merged with the question of Warnke's competence and credibility, such philosophical questions of deterrence theory and force adequacy became politically charged with personal insinuations of competence and credibility. The question of superiority was key to both strategic thought and to Warnke's demise.

The second day of the ASC hearings, February 23, opened with some softballs and hardballs. Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) worried that Warnke's attitude foreshadowed a Carter administration of weakness. Senator William Scott (R-VA) noted the "considerable opposition" Warnke faced, and narrowed the strategic issues down to their domestic political core by asking if "you should be confirmed, say by a 60-to-40 vote in the Senate, would you be able, successfully, to negotiate with the Soviet Union realizing that any treaty negotiated would have to be approved by the Senate by a two-thirds vote?" Scott turned the palpable symbolism into tangible bluntness by declaring "today we are concerned with the superiority of our nation, with the preservation of our nation, and in all candor I must resolve any doubt that is in my mind against your nomination; and, therefore...I cannot support your nomination and tend to speak against it as strongly as I can on the Senate floor. I think you might be the right man in the

²¹⁹ *Consideration*, 62.

wrong job, and I would recommend the Peace Corps."²²⁰ A reminder from Senator Thomas McIntyre (D-NH) of the Senate's own record of opposing counterforce programs over the last decade did little to turn the tide. An especially un-charmed Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) admitted Warnke's confirmation was scarcely in doubt, but nonetheless desired to lead Warnke "over a philosophical trail" on negotiations and Soviet inclinations to "snooker this country."²²¹ The under-bellied soft balls were abandoned for an ultimate hardball from the senior Senator Sam Nunn, picking up where Jackson had left off and preparing for the climax of the hearings.

Nunn probed Warnke's definition of jeopardy that he used in his opening statement. Once more Warnke's recent testimony was the reference point. Warnke had distinguished in his exchange with Jackson between actual superiority, where one was not able to respond because one could not prevail, and cosmetic superiority, where perception put one at a political, but not military, disadvantage. Nunn compared this definition with Warnke's opening statement, where Warnke said that "if present trends continue, our position could be in jeopardy at some point in the future."

As the dialogue commenced, the suspense mounted. What was Nunn up to? It became clear as the exchanges continued. Nunn was after what Warnke meant by "could be in jeopardy." Warnke's definition of deterrence, of what constituted an assured retaliatory capability, played a crucial role in what transpired.

There was military superiority and political superiority in terms of perceptions. Warnke and Nunn agreed on that. So what then did jeopardy mean? Nunn pinpointed the issue: "do you see that they could put us in a position, if these trends continue, that we

²²⁰ *Consideration*, 89.

²²¹ *Consideration*, 93-95.

would not be able to retaliate after absorbing a preemptive attack by them?" Warnke admitted that was the "ultimate threat to our strategic capability." If "we were in a position which they, by striking first, could take out so much of our missile force as to make it unlikely that we would be willing to respond for fear their counterstrike would be devastating, then we would be deterred; they would not be deterred."²²²

Nunn pushed before pouncing. That was "something less than the capability of eliminating our retaliatory capability though, is it not?" It was indeed something short of that, yes, Warnke admitted. Pushing a little further, Nunn asked what about our submarines? If the Soviets developed their hard target kill capability would we not still be able to retaliate with those? Yes of course we would have those, with great destruction, Warnke replied. Nunn pressed, we would still be in jeopardy in that situation? Warnke simply stated that "we could be in jeopardy if the Soviets were to think that we would be deterred and they would not be deterred. It was a question of deterrence as well as a question of capability." Soviet capability to destroy U.S. land forces might give them the perception that we would be self-deterred. Nunn clarified this admission. "Their first strike might preclude our second strike, because we are afraid of their third strike?" There it was. Warnke replied yes, he could conceive of a situation that put us at a "disadvantage under those circumstances."²²³

Well that was the language and feared scenario posed by the defense preparedness side. It was directly opposite of what Warnke had said in 1972, that such a scenario of self-deterrence, that "if the Russians are not deterred from a first strike because they think we won't make a second strike because we are afraid of a third strike, then there is no

²²² *Consideration*, 96.

²²³ *Consideration*, 97.

possibility of deterrence," was insanity.²²⁴ Nunn was quick to point that out. Warnke was even quicker to explain it. But his calmed response could not cover the confusion. Nunn voiced his distress. He was trying to find ways to support him, he said, on "exactly the point a lot of people have been debating with all sincerity for a long time, and I think you have changed your position."²²⁵

It was down to principle now. Nunn said he thought Warnke had changed it in the right direction, but "for you not to think you have changed your position leaves me in a state of total bewilderment. I don't know where you are."²²⁶

The penultimate moment came as the question of superiority turned to how much was enough. As Warnke explained that the relative capabilities remaining left one or the other side with an advantage, Nunn said in exasperation, "that is exactly what Jim Schlesinger's thesis was" when we needed options other than all-out retaliation.²²⁷ Warnke told Nunn that flexibility was enough. Nunn clarified, but not hard target kill? If both sides have it, Warnke said, that was destabilizing.

The issue came down to the Soviets having a counterforce capability that we did not, Nunn said. The President would "not have the option under your theory to retaliate against their land based missile systems" because he would have only the option of retaliating against Soviet cities. The pointed question was "do you follow what I am talking about?"²²⁸ Warnke said he did, and that was the difference between 1972 and 1977. Since the facts had changed since then, Nunn asked Warnke if he was "willing to reexamine our counterforce capability" based on Soviet developments? Warnke replied,

²²⁴ *Consideration*, 98.

²²⁵ *Consideration*, 98.

²²⁶ *Consideration*, 98.

²²⁷ *Consideration*, 98.

²²⁸ *Consideration*, 99.

"Given the fact that the hard target kill capability has increased, I think that has become a relevant measure of strategic equivalence."²²⁹ What about what he said in 1972 that flexibility was the worst thing one could have because it just means a greater chance they will be used? Warnke responded "Well, I still feel that having that flexibility, on both sides, is worse than if you had it on neither side." The rest of the climactic exchange warrants full exposure:

Senator Nunn: But you do agree that [the Soviets] are developing it, don't you?

Mr. Warnke: I agree, they are developing it. It is one of the objectives we ought to have in arms control negotiations.

Senator Nunn: You would agree, if we can't achieve that objective, we may have to develop that, too?

Mr. Warnke: I think we not only would have to develop it, I also think we are developing it at the present time.

Senator Nunn: Of course, you have been opposed to that development?

Mr. Warnke: I have opposed it on both sides. I am opposed to either side having the kind of capability that makes nuclear war more feasible and more likely.

Senator Nunn: But you also agree, though, in the final analysis that it is more dangerous...if they have counterforce, without us having it than if we both have it?

Mr. Warnke: I agree with that.²³⁰

With that, the champion of restraint had rendered the arms control community's decade-long campaign meaningless. Superiority mattered, military capabilities could measure it, and without counterforce capabilities, the U.S. would be self-deterred, open to Soviet coercion. The political utility of nuclear weapons was, indeed, possible, and with less than a capability to disarm the other side. Nunn had gotten Warnke to admit in 1977 what Jackson could not elicit from SALT I negotiator Gerard Smith in 1972. Assured destruction was not enough to deter in a crisis where the Soviets had a counterforce capability the President did not have.

²²⁹ *Consideration*, 99-100.

²³⁰ *Consideration*, 100.

The significance of the admission was shattering. Warnke had stood against counterforce since 1969 and had publically opposed Schlesinger's 1974 announcement of it as U.S. strategic doctrine. Now in 1977 he was endorsing it. The theory of deterrence based on assured retaliation he had championed for years he now admitted as insufficient in the face of recent developments. The change was enough. But it was the steadfast refusal to admit he had changed that led directly to the ultimate question of the hearings, Warnke's credibility. Where did he stand? Could he be trusted? These were the questions behind the continued probing of Warnke's positions on weapons and superiority. Jackson tried to pin minimum deterrence on Warnke and Nunn had boxed Warnke into admitting it was not enough to deter. Confusion abounded, but the motive was the same. Warnke's agility at making words mean different things, while not acknowledging the difference, made Senators confused about what Warnke stood for.

Thereafter the themes remained centered on Warnke's competence and credibility. Senator Jake Garn (R-UT) thought Warnke had weakened his negotiating position by his past positions. A Goldwater-negotiated treaty would be better trusted.²³¹ He was not questioning Warnke's integrity, he said, but that seemed to be the implication by the very comment itself. Senator Dale Bumpers (D-AR) returned to the changing definitions of superiority between Warnke past and present, while Senator Dewey Bartlett (R-OK) referred to the Evans and Novak article in the *Washington Post* leaking how Carter had asked the Pentagon how much it would take to maintain minimum deterrence. Senator Hart objected that it sounded like Warnke had been nominated for Secretary of Defense rather than arms negotiator, that asking when Warnke changed was like asking "when I fell in love with my wife," and that the proceedings were really a lesson in not writing

²³¹ *Consideration*, 102-104.

articles or giving speeches for fear they would be "thrown up to them" twenty years from now.²³² Senator Nunn interrupted to acknowledge that Warnke's confirmation was not in doubt. The "question we are deciding is how we are going to individually vote."²³³ The pending vote was just what the immediate focus on Warnke's inconsistency was all about.

Jackson and Nunn had successfully accomplished their immediate goal, but Jackson had yet to get to the real politics motivating him, SALT. He cited past and present records to build his case. Warnke had said in 1972 that Soviet numerical advantage was "of no significance as long as we possess the ability to destroy the Soviet Union even if they were first to strike," and that "we can accept the numerical imbalance because it is in fact totally irrelevant to our security." He told Griffin during the FRC hearings that he was concerned about "numerical disparity...because it seemed to me that made the agreement perceptually vulnerable." What accounted for the difference?²³⁴

Warnke said the political ramifications of an apparent lead concerned him, Jackson asked when and where prior to 1977, Warnke tried to explain, and Jackson interrupted with, "well, here we go again." Where Warnke was "running into trouble" was the conflict between what he said during confirmation and his previous statements over a period of time. Jackson then made a connection to SALT in the minds of the Senatorial jury by asking Warnke if he had criticized SALT I for imprecise language. Warnke said he was indeed dissatisfied over "loopholes" in the agreement.²³⁵

The implications of Warnke's fuzziness for SALT motivated Jackson's assessment. He said he was "seeking an explanation here," but was disturbed by seeming

²³² *Consideration*, 112-114.

²³³ *Consideration*, 115.

²³⁴ *Consideration*, 116.

²³⁵ *Consideration*, 118.

"outright contradictions" between the confirmation hearings and "fundamental views over the last several years." If Warnke could not see the difference, that "would call your judgment and perceptiveness into question."²³⁶ It was "time to bring this to a head. If you maintain these are not fundamentally different positions, even though they appear to be so by any ordinary interpretation, that suggests to me an ability on your part to find needle-threading loopholes and saving reservations, to a degree, that would disturb me on two counts."²³⁷ Playing on the disappointments and anxieties over SALT I, Jackson skillfully combined Warnke's past reputation and present confusion to emblazon on the Senate's mind the untrustworthiness of a Warnke-negotiated treaty. The Senatorial audience must have been leaning at the edge of their seats as Jackson proceeded. "First, I would worry about your holding the Soviets to a firm interpretation of agreements that they might sign. And second--and perhaps more important--I would find it difficult to place much confidence in the crucial explanations you will have to present to the Congress about treaties that you will negotiate."²³⁸

The psychological work of creating doubt accomplished, Jackson followed up with the substantive work of exhausting a thorough examination of Warnke's inescapable record. He presented Warnke with a list of nine of the nominee's apparent contradictions and asked him to verify when he had changed prior to the nomination. The list of nine allegations on such topics as superiority, counterforce and minimum deterrence, and SALT I became the evidence beyond reasonable doubt that Jackson used to seal his case. The list of nine allegations' intended effects were immediate as the wafting pall of

²³⁶ *Consideration*, 119.

²³⁷ *Consideration*, 119.

²³⁸ *Consideration*, 119.

Carter's pledge, that once all considered what Warnke stood for they would approve him overwhelmingly, hovered over Jackson's compelling tactic of creating doubt.

The success of Jackson's tactic was most clearly seen in Senator Robert Byrd's (D-WV) turn at the helm. "I might say, Mr. Chairman, in reading the record of yesterday's hearings that there is some confusion as to exactly what Mr. Warnke stands for. I will need to study the record before I can ask some more questions."²³⁹ Time did little to resolve the doubt, as it left him later to say only, "I find it will take some time to study these proceedings. I am totally confused as to just what is Mr. Warnke's position now, vis-à-vis what his position has been in the past." Finally he gave up and just followed Jackson's example by asking Warnke about his opposition before and his acquiescence now to the B-1 bomber.²⁴⁰ The use of Jackson's tactic demonstrated the Washington lawyer's success and sealed the case that reasonable doubt precluded affirmation of Carter's pledge of complete confidence.

The tactic was brilliant, the effect immediate, and the defense pointless. Asked if he had any final words, Warnke stated plainly, "I think, Mr. Chairman, that I am about talked out."²⁴¹ Once ready for an open dialogue, he was now personally spent. The press and his critics were only just beginning.

Throughout the first two days of Warnke's appearances media headlines and rhetoric were both dramatic and penetrating. They commented on the "withering questions" from the "grueling cross examination," and on Warnke's assailed status from

²³⁹ *Consideration*, 136, 146.

²⁴⁰ *Consideration*, 146.

²⁴¹ *Consideration*, 152.

the "onslaught."²⁴² They identified Jackson as the "vanguard of the sustained attack" from "anti-Warnke forces" who hoped to "muster enough support to block" Warnke's nomination on the Senator floor and weaken Warnke's bargaining position.²⁴³ The *New York Times* thought that Jackson's attempt to show inconsistencies in Warnke's record was meant to "prove that he had altered his views only in the last month with the aim of winning Senate confirmation."²⁴⁴

The record alone, though, was insufficient. By Nunn's own admission they thought he would have no trouble being confirmed.²⁴⁵ The constraining factor according to *Congressional Quarterly* was the desire by Democrats to avoid a direct challenge on policy grounds in support of their new President, a desire particularly troublesome for Jackson.²⁴⁶ To most observers, it still seemed that Warnke's critics had yet to "come up with a tactic to derail the nomination."²⁴⁷

Senator Griffin's dissenting remarks from the majority report of the FRC on February 25 hinted at just such a tactic. Griffin wrote that before the first day of the FRC hearings, "it was no problem to determine what Mr. Warnke stood for." It was now apparent that Warnke had "suddenly changed his mind," misrepresenting long held positions.²⁴⁸ Excerpts from Warnke's past remarks on weapons programs, the defense

²⁴² Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Clears Hurdle As Grilling Continues," *Washington Post*, February 23, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁴³ United Press International UP-063, February 23, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁴⁴ Bernard Gwertzman, "Senate Panel Sets Special Debate To Weigh Warnke Qualifications," *New York Times*, February 24, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁴⁵ Pat Towell, "Warnke Said to Alter Views on Arms Policy," *Congressional Quarterly*, February 26, 1977, in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* v. 35 (Jan-Mar 1977): 348.

²⁴⁶ Pat Towell, "Warnke Said to Alter Views on Arms Policy," *Congressional Quarterly*, February 26, 1977, in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* v. 35 (Jan-Mar 1977): 348.

²⁴⁷ Pat Towell, "Warnke Said to Alter Views on Arms Policy," *Congressional Quarterly*, February 26, 1977, in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* v. 35 (Jan-Mar 1977): 348.

²⁴⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Nomination of Paul Warnke: Report together with Individual Views, Warnke nomination, Consideration*, 95th Congress, 1st sess., 11. Hereafter cited as *Foreign Relations Report*.

budget, mutual restraint, and strategic superiority, compared to his Foreign Relations testimony, pitted Warnke against himself. A genuine conversion was welcome, but Griffin could not "help but wonder what brought about this strange and sudden transformation." Even a genuine rebirth raised the question of whether it was the "new, or the old, Warnke that President Carter really wanted" for negotiator.²⁴⁹ Given the importance to the people, Griffin intoned, of an equitable SALT II Treaty, "which would require the support of two-thirds of the Senate before ratification--I would hope that President Carter would view anything short of overwhelming Senate confirmation of Mr. Warnke as a signal to reconsider and withdraw his nomination."²⁵⁰ The tactical turn toward the credibility of the negotiator and the strategic use of confirmation votes in a democracy followed inexorably from the efforts and leadership of "Scoop" Jackson.

While by the weekend of February 25, 1977, the turn from the substantive to the personal was undeniable, only one commentator correctly identified the deeper defense questions motivating the effort. Lee Lescaze of the *Washington Post* wrote that the personalized tactic "rarely addressed directly" the underlying questions of how much was enough and how best to approach negotiations. Instead the opposition focused on Warnke's credibility, his understanding of the Soviet threat, and his past positions on weapons systems, with the hope that if "they can demonstrate he changed his positions only to win confirmation, they can gather enough opposition to block the nomination."²⁵¹

That was precisely the tactic that would if not unseat Warnke as negotiator, send the desired message to Carter to go slow in SALT II and anticipate a rocky ratification debate. Even Lescaze, though, did not foresee that the tactic would not only address, but

²⁴⁹ *Foreign Relations Report*, 30.

²⁵⁰ *Foreign Relations Report*, 32.

²⁵¹ Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Hearings Skirt Basic Issues," *Washington Post*, February 27, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

also give an answer to, the perennial defense question of how much was enough for a credible deterrent. The team effort of Jackson, Nunn, and Nitze would combine the personal with the substantive in a way easily missed but brilliantly executed. Asking who was the real Paul Warnke in the end answered how much was enough for a credible deterrent.

Armed Services Committee Hearings Part II

Called as one of the two witnesses in opposition as the hearings resumed on February 28, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul H. Nitze took his seat before a doubting Senate and a riveted press. Some had suggested, he began in his opening statement, that he was motivated by "personal animus" against Mr. Warnke.²⁵² While that was indeed what George Christie suggested to Warnke in a letter after Nitze's FRC testimony,²⁵³ Nitze publically claimed that it was not so.²⁵⁴ Instead, their differences were substantive. Retreating from his earlier adjectives of "asinine," "arbitrary and screwball," he rehearsed doubts about Warnke's clarity and consistency. Someone whose reasoning was "so subtle as to be widely misleading" inspired little confidence that Warnke would be one who all understood what he meant by his public statements. Both sides, he continued, could agree on the need for "prudent arms control" and adequate defenses. The divisive issues were in the specifics. The underlying issue, in Nitze's estimation, was how exactly to deny the Soviets any significant margin of superiority.²⁵⁵

²⁵² *Consideration*, 161.

²⁵³ George C. Christie, letter to Paul Warnke, February 10, 1977, PCWP1 11:7.

²⁵⁴ *Consideration*, 161.

²⁵⁵ *Consideration*, 161-162.

With characteristic genius Nitze grounded his opposition in the substantive but left the larger impression of the personal with political implications. Nitze cited Warnke as saying "we cannot accede to Soviet nuclear superiority," but continued that "if he means that in any sense that ordinary mortals would understand it to mean, there is no issue with Mr. Warnke on this point."²⁵⁶ Perhaps Warnke's subtlety meant he had "in mind U.S. nuclear capabilities substantially inferior" to the Soviets. An "objective study of the record" demonstrated Warnke had consistently rejected all of the proposals designed to check adverse trends. Nitze thought that it was "this cavalier attitude of imprudence which I think disqualifies Mr. Warnke" in the field of arms control. Since the Soviets were out to achieve "socialist triumph" by dominating the world, any agreement had to help check such adverse trends.²⁵⁷

A national debate was the domestic solution Nitze was looking for. If the implication that Warnke negotiating a reversal of trends was not likely, Nitze made sure that eventually it would be prevented by "having made possible a debate which, through concentrating on the qualifications of one man...has necessarily spread to the most basic underlying issues" of prudent arms control within the framework of national security.²⁵⁸

Warnke's character and competence were up first in that debate. Nitze elaborated to Senator Tower on Warnke's "lack of due care...and understanding." The nominee's opposition to accuracy in particular left Nitze baffled as to how "one can do anything but lose a war in the event deterrence fails and one only goes after cities because one has no

²⁵⁶ *Consideration*, 163.

²⁵⁷ *Consideration*, 164.

²⁵⁸ *Consideration*, 164.

capability of going after military targets."²⁵⁹ That was indeed the whole crux of the substantive matter that divided the two schools of thought over the previous decade.

What seemed immediately politically important in 1977 was the lack of understanding over Warnke's philosophical evolution rather than the changing requirements of a credible deterrent. Warnke's "great ability at confusing people" seemed to Nitze a "wilderness....he mystifies me."²⁶⁰ Even an attempt by Senator McIntyre to show "how easily sincere disagreements about particular issues can be invalidly translated into unfortunate personal attacks on a nominee's character and even his Americanism" backfired. McIntyre's attempt to defend Warnke only cajoled Nitze into denigrating Warnke's patriotism:

McIntyre: Well, if you valued him as a former colleague, it makes it pretty clear that you don't really basically object to Mr. Warnke's character.

Nitze: It does not. I have said I have valued him. Frankly, I cannot understand the things he has been saying in the last few days. I do not think they are proper.

McIntyre: Are you saying you impugn his character as an American citizen?

Nitze: If you force me to, I do.

McIntyre: That is very interesting. Do you think you are a better American than he is?

Nitze: I really do.²⁶¹

In his memoirs, Nitze said that he meant to say, "I really do take exception to what I believe to be inconsistent and misleading testimony by Mr. Warnke," and complained that the "press pounced on that remark and ignored most of the discussion of the substantive issues."²⁶² In reality, he was himself as responsible as the press by focusing on Warnke's "desperately eager" attempts to "soft peddle his earlier statements on

²⁵⁹ *Consideration*, 175.

²⁶⁰ *Consideration*, 172.

²⁶¹ *Consideration*, 183.

²⁶² Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 359.

defense and arms control,"²⁶³ charging him not only with "asinine" viewpoints but dishonesty. As Thomas Graham explained, it was a "tragic story" that the former friends "ceased speaking to one another altogether as a result of the...confirmation battle," and that "bitterness remained for more than twenty years later."²⁶⁴ When the stakes were as high as votes for confirmation with a SALT II debate pending, unfortunate personal attacks were the price of disagreements over particulars in a democracy.

Nitze explained to the ASC that the differences over weapons were not the primary issue. Growing on the vine of the substantive root of their differing judgments was Warnke's impenetrability. Nitze insisted that an agreement must be understandable to the Senate and American people. He said that either Warnke has not "understood what this thing is about or else he has not made it clear to me or to anybody else what is in the back of his mind; and I still don't think I understand what is in the back of his mind."²⁶⁵

The question kept returning to the meaning of superiority. Even Nitze admitted it was not easy to be precise.²⁶⁶ Warnke's definition of it and what to do in response to the Soviets gaining it, were at the core of why Warnke's clarity and consistency mattered. Combining superiority and integrity was also a tactically advantageous way to persuade the audience of Warnke's unsuitability. Warnke's contrast to himself, if not the agreed meaning of superiority, was clear.

The bewildering impression left from such direct comparisons between the old and new Warnke was also, conveniently, the calculated intention of an old friend of Nitze's. Senator Jackson opened his line of questioning with a biographical sketch.

²⁶³ Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 359.

²⁶⁴ Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 77.

²⁶⁵ *Consideration*, 192.

²⁶⁶ *Consideration*, 195.

He reintroduced Nitze as a scholarly professional with unparalleled understanding of strategic doctrine. "Intellectually honest" with "no axe to grind," only a deep concern about U.S. security when most thought "all you had to do was to get communists out from under the bed; you didn't need to worry about national defense, just get them out from under the bed." Nitze was a "great civil libertarian" who stood up and was counted, and "I think the issue of integrity and honor is a proper matter before this committee. I am not raising that now in reference to Mr. Warnke. I am simply pointing out that Mr. Nitze is a distinguished and credible witness."²⁶⁷

The seed laid, Jackson germinated it by asking if Nitze recalled Warnke expressing views similar to those given in the last few weeks prior to the nomination. Of course Nitze did not so recollect. Jackson asked if Nitze thought Warnke was worried about the Soviet buildup before, and Nitze replied that he did not think so.

Jackson then moved on to SALT. Far from Warnke's view that "the numbers game is not worth playing" and a "mindless exercise," both Jackson and Nitze agreed that SALT was about numbers if nothing else. Finally, Jackson gave the doctrinal test by saying, "Warnke has for many years held the view that an assured destruction capability is the only legitimate U.S. strategic force objective. I wonder if you could comment on the implications of this view for SALT...what logical consequences flow" from that view with respect to what kind of agreement one would negotiate, and do the "Soviets share that view"?²⁶⁸ With communists lurking if no longer under the domestic bed then in Soviet nuclear ICBM's equipped with MIRVs, the doctrinal assumptions of the negotiator were viscerally imperative.

²⁶⁷ *Consideration*, 198-199.

²⁶⁸ *Consideration*, 199.

The central question was, what is assured destruction? In other words, how much was enough? Together Jackson and Nitze tried to ascertain Warnke's mind. Nitze acknowledged that in McNamara's day 400 weapons against industrial targets might have been enough. He described Warnke as thinking anything beyond that was "cosmetic and not the essence of deterrence."²⁶⁹ The question then became whether, if trends continued, a difference of 10,000 mattered in comparison to 400? Was that meaningful superiority? Nitze said it was, but thought Warnke would say it was not a meaningful difference. Or at least that was what Nitze believed to be Warnke's view during the times he spoke on assured destruction.²⁷⁰ Jackson tactfully, or tactically at that point, yielded the floor to his waiting teammate, Senator Nunn.

Armed with a clear idea of where he was headed, Nunn began with a quote from the 1972 Buckley-Warnke debate. In 1972 Warnke had said "the only way we can deal with the U.S.S.R. is by nuclear arms with the concept of assured destruction." In the debate he also argued that if the Russians are not deterred from striking first because "they think we won't make a second strike because we are afraid of a third strike, then there is no possibility of deterrence. But that, I submit, would be insanity on the part of the Soviet leaders, and I am not prepared to ascribe insanity to them. If I did, I would lose my own sanity, I think we all would."²⁷¹

In other words, the idea of self-deterrence was simply not plausible. Any capability to retaliate, no matter how small, would deter. With that quote in mind, Nunn then read the portion of his own exchange with Warnke the week prior. Warnke had then admitted a definition of jeopardy as the inability to retaliate if the Soviets had a capability

²⁶⁹ *Consideration*, 200-201.

²⁷⁰ *Consideration*, 201.

²⁷¹ *Consideration*, 201.

of taking out only a percentage of U.S. missiles, because something less than a capability to disarm would deter the United States from a second strike. That was self-deterrence, even with the capability to use submarines in response.

The comparison seemed obvious. Nunn asked Nitze if in his professional opinion that represented a change of position, and Nitze replied indeed it did. Would Nitze say that "the dialogue put to Mr. Warnke squarely in favor of the Jim Schlesinger theory of being able to respond...with less than an attack on their cities, therefore, he is basically endorsing the Schlesinger theory which was debated here for 2 years?" Nitze replied "Oh, as I read the transcript, there were other places where he specifically so endorsed it."²⁷² Yet what seemed clear to confused observers was Warnke's inability to see or admit a change. That was the important issue.

What mattered now was less the credibility of the deterrent than the nominee. Nunn declared dramatically, "What I am trying to get at basically is, what kind of thinkers do we have here to negotiate with the Soviets?" It was a "very substantial change of position, and is the equivalent of endorsement of counterforce on our side if the Soviets have counterforce."²⁷³

That was it. The long-time champion of assured destruction as being enough to deter, and agreements as the solution to increasing Soviet capabilities. had on the stand endorsed all he had stood against for years. Nunn thought that the "gross inconsistencies" made Warnke's credentials for either post questionable.²⁷⁴ Even more important, the question hanging in the air was who had Carter nominated?

²⁷² *Consideration*, 202.

²⁷³ *Consideration*, 202.

²⁷⁴ *Consideration*, 202.

Lest the media miss it, Nunn made sure the implications of the change were clear. He said that "the people for a long time thought" Nitze and Warnke were on opposite sides of the strategic debate. Now before two committees over two weeks he had switched sides. As Nitze argued that Warnke's recently stated negotiating objectives were impossible to meet, Nunn clarified, "you mean what he has done, he has circled you on the right, hasn't he...it should be the liberals that are opposed to him rather than those who are 'hawks,' right?"²⁷⁵

Nunn made sure the change would not go unnoticed. He paused for a somber moment to observe, "I think the news media have been very, very interested for a long time in the whole counterforce argument." Counterforce was a hot topic "batted back and forth; yet we have someone who has appeared before this committee for the most significant negotiating role we have, and we went into considerable dialog in several questions, not just mine, where a man who had totally opposed counterforce came before this committee and endorsed it last week." Nunn thought it was ignored in the media, saying that "if the American people are going to understand something in advance about the SALT agreement...these kinds of dialog" were a necessary service to meaningful debate. He lamented that "diametrically opposing positions can be portrayed before a congressional committee on important matters of this concern with no real media coverage so that the American people can make their judgment."²⁷⁶

Educating the people about strategic doctrine was what the long-term domestic effort was all about. Nunn's teammate Jackson then interceded to drive home the point.

²⁷⁵ *Consideration*, 203.

²⁷⁶ *Consideration*, 203-204.

This committee, the Washington lawyer said,

has rendered a great service here in going into-and in some detail- the whole philosophy of deterrence, raising most of the key questions relating to deterrence and to strategic doctrine. I must say that I am as amazed as the Senator from Georgia with the responses that we got from Mr. Warnke. It is very clear to me that there is a total change in approach without any analysis or explanation to indicate when that change occurred...I can't find the rationale or basis for the change.²⁷⁷

The tactical focus on Warnke's credibility so seamlessly interwoven with the strategic focus on strategic doctrine finally culminated in its desired political effect. Warnke, past or present, negotiator or advocate, could not be trusted. The political cartoon by Warren King distributed earlier in February, of doves descending on Warnke for his revised views, had by the hopes and through the deliberate tactics of the hawks become a potential reality. Suspected as a "superdove" before the nomination, and exposed as one in hawk's feathers to win confirmation, Warnke's supporters could not but feel a little disillusioned and his opponents a little vindicated. Few were convinced that an assured destruction apostle could transform into a genuine counterforce convert overnight.

The philosophical and tactical climax may have passed, but the political effects continued to ricochet as the last witness took the stand and Jackson closed on the issue of strategic doctrine. As was now typical, Admiral Moorer objected on both substantive and personal grounds. Warnke's defense positions were proven inadequate, and his present transformation was suspect. Had someone who discounted the utility of nuclear weapons, the importance of superiority, and the need for an increased defense effort suddenly converted? Jackson centralized the matter around the undeniably basic issue,

²⁷⁷ *Consideration*, 204.

the "substantial change of view" between Warnke's Foreign Relations and Arms Services Committee testimonies and his past record.

Jackson pivoted the question of change around the matter of strategic doctrine. As one conversant in arguments about various doctrines, Jackson asked, what did he understand Warnke's position to be? Moorer thought that based on his past recommendation, the basic thrust was that of minimum deterrence. He elaborated that "my primary concern now lies in the uncertainty as to just where Mr. Warnke does stand."²⁷⁸ That was all Jackson needed from Moorer, and he bid him thanks as he addressed the Chairman, "that is all."²⁷⁹ The spontaneous response could not have been better orchestrated.

A last plea entered in the printed record from another colleague of Jackson's illustrated the synthesis between the philosophical debate and the political stakes. Jackson asked to officially submit as part of the record a letter from another friend, the "distinguished scholar," former Under Secretary of State, and co-chair of the CPD, Eugene V. Rostow. One line from Rostow's letter got the desired point across that Warnke was "still the prisoner of Robert McNamara's theory of Mutual Assured Destruction. That theory was dubious in its heyday. It is now obsolete," and its living practitioner could not be trusted to negotiate.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ *Consideration*, 232.

²⁷⁹ *Consideration*, 233.

²⁸⁰ *Consideration*, 266.

The Comma Controversy, the Warnke Vote, and the Real Paul Warnke

If there was any doubt that Warnke's past record and present testimony were too inconsistent to confirm him as negotiator, it dissolved on the Senate floor in what became known as the comma controversy. Warnke's past record alone may not have been enough to block his nomination, but his change of positions created enough doubt to cause a crisis of confidence in him as the designated negotiator. The crisis emerged just in time to dominate the Senate floor debate that began in earnest on March 4.

A typographical error in Warnke's written responses to Jackson's nine allegations of inconsistency became the center of the constructed controversy. The thirty-seven page document was written to address the "overall contention that until my testimony at the confirmation hearings, I am not taking a forthright public position on the nature of the Soviet threat or the significance of perceptions of superiority" and to "corroborate the consistency of my positions."²⁸¹ It had the opposite effect. The sentence that caused such a stir came from his SALT I testimony in 1972. He had then testified "that the continuation of the missile numbers game is in fact a mindless exercise, that numerical superiority, which is not translatable into either any sort of military capability or any sort of political potential has no purpose." In his written response, the comma disappeared, leaving the sentence to read, "there is no purpose in either side achieving a numerical superiority which is not translatable into either any sort of military or any sort of political potential." The original 1972 sentence implied that superiority was categorically impossible. Without the comma, the 1977 sentence implied that some kinds of superiority could be desirable or had political utility. Senator Robert Griffin was the first to seize on the discrepancy and to build his speech on the Senate floor around its

²⁸¹ Paul C. Warnke, letter to Senator John C. Stennis, February 28, 1977, PCWP1 23:10.

implications.²⁸² He interpreted the 1972 original to mean that Warnke had "clearly argued that the "numbers game" is a "mindless exercise" because numerical superiority isn't important either militarily or politically." Griffin continued that "in the 1977 alteration, however, the 'mindless exercise' phrase has vanished and--for want of a comma--Warnke is suddenly qualifying his lack of concern about numerical superiority. He now finds no purpose in numerical superiority unless it has political or military value."²⁸³

In Griffin's view, the dropped comma constituted charges of a false conversion and demonstrated Warnke's "shocking willingness to tamper with the public record." Citing Warnke's past unconcern, he said but "now, with his confirmation as our chief negotiator pending, Warnke has changed his tune....now he wants the Senate to believe that he was worried back in 1972 about the numerical disparity between the U.S. and Soviet Union."²⁸⁴ By eliminating a comma, Warnke "as if by magic---is transformed" from a man who "shrugs off Soviet superiority to one who is worried about it."²⁸⁵ It was "one thing to change your mind and then to acknowledge" doing so, but "ethics demand that you not rewrite the public record to gild your past views--or to pretend your mind hasn't changed after all." If Warnke's misrepresentation of his past record was an indication of the "way he would deal with the Senate if confirmed, it is well that we learn it now," and he urged the Senate to deny Warnke both positions.

²⁸² Senator Robert P. Griffin, "The Warnke Nomination: A Growing Crisis in Confidence," Statement on U.S. Senate Floor, March 4, 1977, PCWP1 23:17.

²⁸³ Senator Robert P. Griffin, "The Warnke Nomination: A Growing Crisis in Confidence," Statement on U.S. Senate Floor, March 4, 1977, PCWP1 23:17.

²⁸⁴ Senator Robert P. Griffin, "The Warnke Nomination: A Growing Crisis in Confidence," Statement on U.S. Senate Floor, March 4, 1977, PCWP1 23:17.

²⁸⁵ Senator Robert P. Griffin, "The Warnke Nomination: A Growing Crisis in Confidence," Statement on U.S. Senate Floor, March 4, 1977, PCWP1 23:17.

It was a perfect opening for Jackson to seal the case beyond reasonable doubt. On the Senate floor Jackson said that Warnke's "failure to acknowledge he has revised his earlier dovish views on national security has shattered my confidence," and he announced he would vote against Warnke's confirmation:

I cannot vote to confirm a man who has shattered my confidence that I know where he stands, that I know what he believes. I do not know where he stands and I do not know what he believes. And I don't expect to be able in the future to place complete confidence in the explanations he will be called upon to make when we have before us a treaty whose meaning derives as much from the negotiating record as a necessarily incomplete and partial language.²⁸⁶

Carter's pledge of confidence and Warnke's change of position were the tactical grounds for denying Carter his chosen negotiator in the politically constructed crisis of confidence.

While Warnke explained the mistakes as unintentional, his detractors extrapolated the meaning of the typographical error as portentous for SALT II. Whatever the transcription read, he said he meant that the Soviet missile launcher lead of 1972 did not give them a military advantage. Explaining in a letter to Chairman John Stennis (D-MS), "I specifically stated [in 1972] that numerical superiority which is not translatable into either any sort of military capability or any sort of political potential has no purpose."²⁸⁷ Warnke said that he did not mean to imply that no future Soviet modernization could threaten our deterrent. Still insisting that his views were "basically unchanged," Warnke reaffirmed his basic thesis that neither would allow the other to achieve meaningful superiority.²⁸⁸ Hubert Humphrey (R-MN) said "I've never heard so much fuss" about a

²⁸⁶ United Press International UP-063, February 23, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁸⁷ Paul C. Warnke, letter to John C. Stennis, March 7, 1977, PCWP1 23:11.

²⁸⁸ Even this letter, though, was evidence of outside help. A draft of it appeared in Warnke's papers in handwritten form, but it was not in Warnke's own unmistakable, and seldom discernible, cursive. Stennis was not privy to what Warnke's supporters really wanted to say, that "in the proverbial mountain out of a molehill context, a comma has been blown out of all proportion." And "in order to bring the debate back

dropped comma "since I was in the eighth grade!" Calling for Warnke's withdrawal, Senator James McClure (R-ID) said "the record is replete not just with misplaced commas, but with misplaced confidence."²⁸⁹ Senator Howard Baker (R-TN) wanted "someone so credible that they'd accept his word on any agreement--someone like Barry Goldwater."²⁹⁰ In his speech on the Senate floor, Senator Nunn said that SALT agreements were controversial enough by themselves, but "when you take a person who is so controversial and you place him in charge of an agreement that is this difficult anyway, then I think the chances of having a SALT II agreement are diminished."²⁹¹ As Griffin had said, if this was what Carter could expect of the SALT II ratification debate, it was better to know it now.

In the immediate politics of the vote, the misplaced confidence was not so much about Warnke as about controlling SALT II. A vote against Warnke should read as a warning to Carter that any "effort to whisk through a SALT II agreement...will face a tough challenge from hardliners in the Senate."²⁹² The *Washington Post* could not fathom a rationale for why they wished to "cripple him by stacking up forty or more

onto a level which would be meaningful in the context of my suitability" for both posts, "I would like to reaffirm my views which have been basically unchanged over the years." Paul C. Warnke, letter to John C. Stennis, March 7, 1977, PCWP1 23:11; Unsigned, handwritten draft, undated, PCWP1 23:12.

²⁸⁹ United Press International, March 7, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

Historian Robert Strong noted of the controversy that the important question of the meaning of superiority being reduced to "proper punctuation in a single sentence of testimony delivered five years" ago exemplified the "trivialization of policy debates" common in Washington. Strong, *Working in the World*, 31.

It was that, but it was also much more. The philosophical meaning of superiority had strategic implications. If it mattered, assured destruction was not enough. If it did not matter, Warnke had nothing to worry about. This philosophical debate was behind the political effort that the comma controversy was only an illustration of, infused as it was with the manifold implications of determining in a democracy how much was enough for a credible deterrent. And it was why Warnke's credibility was so necessary a focus for those concerned about the meaning of superiority as the SALT II treaty negotiations and ratification debate loomed.

²⁹⁰ Unknown wire service, Phoenix, Arizona Press Conference, March 5, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁹¹ James Wieghart, "Placing a warning label on the Warnke vote," (*New York Daily News*, March 9, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁹² James Wieghart, "Placing a warning label on the Warnke vote," (*New York Daily News*, March 9, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

votes against him," viewing the "weeklong assault on Warnke" as shedding "all pretense of being a reasoned debate."²⁹³

President Carter had a theory for why the opposition wished to cripple his chosen candidate. In another press conference held on March 9, Carter responded to a question about the effect of the debate over Warnke's qualifications on negotiations by confidently asserting, "I don't believe that the exact vote in the Senate on Warnke's confirmation will have a major effect on future negotiations with the Soviets on SALT."²⁹⁴ For a President who had in early February said Warnke's nomination was crucial to the success of his administration, the comment could be interpreted as acknowledging the strength of the effort against Warnke. Still, Carter held out hope for a strong vote and maintained "complete confidence" in Warnke. He theorized that "the attacks on Warnke are primarily by those who don't want to see substantial reductions in nuclear weapons in the world." While Carter hoped the fact that any treaty would have to be approved by a "two-thirds vote after complete and open debate" would reassure the skeptics,²⁹⁵ the skeptics used the Warnke vote to presage that debate.

The opposition's efforts had their intended effect in time for the Senate vote on March 9. For the less contentious post of director, the Senate approved Warnke 70-29. For the crucial post of negotiator, Warnke barely passed by a vote of 58-40. The pro-Warnke vote was eight short of the two-thirds majority needed for treaty ratification.

²⁹³ *Washington Post*, "The Warnke Arithmetic," March 9, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

²⁹⁴ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1977, Book 1-January 20-June 24, 1977* (United States Government Printing Office, 1977), "The President's News Conference of March 9, 1977," 348.

²⁹⁵ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1977, Book 1-January 20-June 24, 1977* (United States Government Printing Office, 1977), "The President's News Conference of March 9, 1977," 348.

Jackson's tactics had successfully mustered even more than the symbolic one-third of Senators against him. Doubts about Warnke's competence and character denied him the overwhelming support Carter had hoped for and promised.

Interpretations of the vote came swiftly. Supporters found Warnke's flexibility a mark of a good negotiator and took his explanations at face value. But a Senate aide told *Congressional Quarterly* (CQ) that the changes in position were "responsible for the debate's emphasis on Warnke's credibility rather than on strategic policy," and that both sides "credited the size of the vote against confirmation to the credibility issue." Jackson took credit for the victory by saying, "I don't think there were more than 25 votes against him three weeks ago." Those persuaded against confirmation, Jackson said, "had come to doubt his intellectual honesty."²⁹⁶

It was an accurate boast. In the ASC's informal report, the consensus of the individual views was that Warnke's past record alone was enough to cause doubt, since the attitudes he took to SALT were crucial. But it was his "obvious change in position since the nomination and his unwillingness to acknowledge that change," in the words of Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC), that compelled denying confirmation. None were convinced that Warnke had reformed overnight. Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) said dramatically, "the American people are entitled to ask: 'Will the real Mr. Warnke please stand up.' They are entitled to know which is the real Paul Warnke" Carter had nominated.²⁹⁷ Senator Jake Garn (R-UT) illustrated Jackson's success in making that the decisive barometer in approving Warnke by concluding, "Jackson has presented the best

²⁹⁶ "Carter Assurances Secure Victory on Warnke." In *CQ Almanac 1977*, 33rd ed., 323-328. Washington, DC: *Congressional Quarterly*, 1978. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal77-1202662> (accessed August 16, 2016).

²⁹⁷ *Consideration*, 289.

case against Mr. Warnke on this issue, and I must say that he has persuaded me."²⁹⁸ The Senate simply did not share Carter's complete confidence in a man whose agility at ambiguity overshadowed his forthright clarity. Jackson had kept his promise that he would "weaken Warnke's role as negotiator to the point of uselessness by holding the vote in favor to 60 or less."²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ *Consideration*, 291-292.

²⁹⁹ Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis*, 208.

CHAPTER V

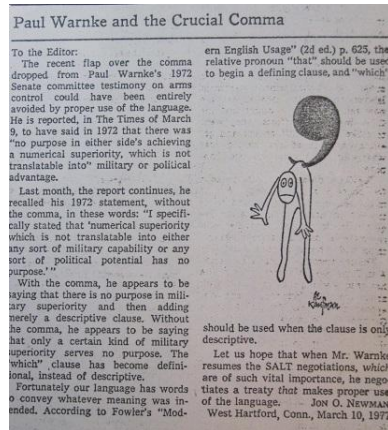
CONCLUSION

So what did Warnke really believe? Did it matter? Could he have avoided the month-long controversy and its repercussions if he had just acknowledged he had changed his positions?

The media thought so. Yet if Jackson's ultimate goal was to reeducate the public on strategic doctrine, commentators remained oblivious as Warnke himself continued to dominate attention. In a letter to the editor of the *New Yorker*, John Newman thought the "flap over the [dropped] comma" could have been avoided by a proper use of the English language, yet he still hoped that Warnke negotiated a treaty that made such proper use.³⁰⁰ The *Corpus Christi Caller* affirmed Warnke's past stands alone warranted hesitation, but they found along with the defense hardliners that "more troubling is the manner in which he responded to questions." Warnke "gave the appearance, correctly or not, of a man trying almost desperately to wriggle off the hook." Had Warnke "simply acknowledged past views and explained the subsequent changes...it would have left us with a much more reassuring impression of the man."³⁰¹ Instead, the emblazoned impression was of a man responsible for his own demise, as A. L. Kaufman's simple and succinct cartoon of a figure hanging from a comma accompanying Newman's letter implied:

³⁰⁰ Jon O. Newman, "Paul Warnke and the Crucial Comma," letter to the editor, March 10, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³⁰¹ *Corpus Christi Caller*, "Warnke makes it," March 12, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.



A. L. Kaufman, the *New Yorker*, March 10, 1977

SALT II would be under "microscopic scrutiny"³⁰² as a result of the Washington lawyer's efforts, but Jackson's and Nunn's success in demonstrating the inadequacy of assured destruction went unnoticed.

The Senate vote analysis made it clear that what the nomination was truly about and what Warnke stood for were never really in doubt. The individual votes broke down along strategic and political lines. Supporters of Warnke were also supporters of an amendment to a 1976 procurement authorization bill to stop research on counterforce programs. Of the 29 senators who voted to pass the amendment, 28 voted for Warnke. Most were Democrats. Of the 36 who voted against the amendment, 10 of the 12 that decided to vote for Warnke were also Democrats. The remainder who split their votes for the amendment also did so for the nomination, with Democrats supporting their new President's choice and Republicans voting against.³⁰³ The vote reflected what the debate was fundamentally all about, the perennial debate between assured destruction and

³⁰² *Corpus Christi Caller*, "Warnke makes it," March 12, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³⁰³ Pat Towell, "Warnke Said to Alter Views on Arms Policy," *Congressional Quarterly*, February 26, 1977, in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* v. 35 (Jan-Mar 1977), 348.

counterforce in rhetoric and capabilities as the requirements for deterrence in the nuclear age.

The media may have remained oblivious to the philosophy behind the vote, but the vote did illustrate the politics of strategy in a democracy. Jackson and Nunn voted against Warnke only for negotiator, splitting their votes and refraining from attaching individual views to the informal committee report.³⁰⁴ Senators Byrd, Griffin, and Stennis refused him for both.³⁰⁵ The CQ's speculation that Jackson did not relish going into battle against his new president likely accounts for Jackson's focus on the credibility issue. He could avoid a direct policy challenge while still using the hearings to create a controversy.³⁰⁶ Hearings would establish the legislative record, and media coverage would ensure its national attention. As his biographer Kaufman chronicled, it was a tactic Jackson often repeated to great success.³⁰⁷

Yet it was also not the best showmanship. A personal friend wrote Warnke on March 15 that he was "more than a little righteously indignant over the last several weeks" over the "posturing that has been going on...the thing that bothers me most about the Senator from Washington is that he really knows better." He had noticed that Jackson talked rationally about the energy crisis of the early 1970s, but "when it finally hit he was in the forefront demagogging about bad guys in the oil industry. It was a poor show and I

³⁰⁴ Pat Towell, "Warnke Said to Alter Views on Arms Policy," *Congressional Quarterly*, February 26, 1977, in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* v. 35 (Jan-Mar 1977), 348.

³⁰⁵ Thomas Graham, Jr. to Paul Warnke, memorandum with attached Senate nomination voting results, March 10, 1977, 23:19.

³⁰⁶ "Carter Assurances Secure Victory on Warnke." In *CQ Almanac 1977*, 33rd ed., 323-328. Washington, DC: *Congressional Quarterly*, 1978. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal77-1202662> (accessed August 16, 2016); Duncan L. Clarke, *The Politics of Arms Control: The Role and Effectiveness of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 182-184.

³⁰⁷ Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, 150, 256.

have never forgotten the contrast."³⁰⁸ The *Washington Post* gave such assessments public coverage by quoting one of Warnke's supporters who likened Jackson's desire to find inconsistencies in Warnke's positions to "George Santayan's definition of a fanatic as a man who redoubles his efforts as he loses sight of his goals."³⁰⁹

U.S. News & World Report illustrated the paradoxical nature of Jackson's tactical efforts by asking "which Paul Warnke has the President chosen?" in late March.³¹⁰ The article asked if it was the "old Warnke," whose stubborn opposition "would seem to automatically disqualify him," or the "new Paul Warnke," who was a "changed man" with an open mind? Carter's choice was a mistake because "his dovish record and inconsistency" disqualified him as the "best man" for instilling the "full confidence of a two-thirds majority of the Senate, which--by that margin--must ratify any treaty that Warnke negotiates."³¹¹ Warnke's inconsistency was the central factor in making of his nomination the controversy Jackson needed not only to shape SALT, but strategic doctrine, which, paradoxically, was nowhere in the newspapers to be found.

That Warnke's views were never truly in doubt and were only part of the opposition's immediate tactic of gaining the desired votes can be seen from each side's activities after the nomination.

Few would be surprised to find that Warnke's fundamental views were always intact. Warnke had given an interview with the *New Republic* in October 1976, scheduled for publication in late March of the next year. Just before the sensitive time of the Senate vote in early March, the interviewer sent Warnke an edited transcript with

³⁰⁸ Jim James Ferguson, letter to Paul Warnke, March 15, 1977, PCWP1 11:6.

³⁰⁹ Lee Lescaze, "Warnke Hearings Skirt Basic Issues," *Washington Post*, February 27, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³¹⁰ Marvin Stone, "Why Not the Best?", *U.S. News & World Report*, March 21, 1977, PCWP1 23:19

³¹¹ Marvin Stone, "Why Not the Best?", *U.S. News & World Report*, March 21, 1977, PCWP1 23:19.

suggestions for substituting "a small number" for "four ballistic missile submarines as constituting a force sufficient for minimum deterrence."³¹² Warnke agreed the substitution would be wise but added, "as I indicated, I think that some of my comments, though I continue to adhere to them, might be considered indiscreet in the event of my confirmation."³¹³

The self-conscious advocate's interview appeared as scheduled with the aptly chosen title, "The Real Paul Warnke" on March 26.³¹⁴ To the question of what was enough, he confidently asserted that a fraction of the current arsenal could deter. Seeking advantage and insisting on being number one was only "chauvinistic bombast." To the question of what was behind the alarm about Soviet advantage, Warnke pleaded semantics: it "depends what you mean by superiority." A perception of superiority might grant political disadvantage even though militarily insignificant. That was why "poor-mouthing" U.S. capability was such a bad idea.³¹⁵ Just as he had been arguing for years, he said that Soviet missile superiority was a "kind of superiority without significance unless by our own rhetoric we give it superiority it does not deserve."³¹⁶ As for the Russian doctrine of a thinkable nuclear war, Warnke proposed educating them to the

³¹² Walter Miale, undated letter to Paul Warnke in late February 1977, PCWP1 11:6.

³¹³ Paul Warnke, letter to Walter Miale, March 1, 1977, PCWP1 11:6. It was also the same amount he said in his 1972 debate with James Buckley would be enough. Even after a Soviet first strike with MIRV equipped ICBMs that left the United States with 10 submarines, a "minimum of four warheads could still be directed at each of the 40 largest cities." Any other capability, i.e. counterforce and flexibility, was "self-deluding nonsense" and only meant they were more likely to be used. Warnke, *Strategic Sufficiency*, 34, 62, 74. Despite this public and private record, he continued to deny holding to a doctrine of minimum deterrence. Warnke, *Strategic Sufficiency*, 27-29, 75.

³¹⁴ "The Real Paul Warnke," (Paul Warnke, interview by Walter Miale, October 1976) *New Republic*, March 26, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³¹⁵ "The Real Paul Warnke," (Paul Warnke, interview by Walter Miale, October 1976) *New Republic*, March 26, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³¹⁶ "The Real Paul Warnke," (Paul Warnke, interview by Walter Miale, October 1976) *New Republic*, March 26, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

"real world," that nobody can win a nuclear war.³¹⁷ He declared that SALT was the perfect context in which to "move toward a policy of reciprocal restraint."³¹⁸ It seemed the only hindrance to reaching his goals was full disclosure of his convictions over time.

For personal reasons, and as previously arranged with President Carter, Warnke resigned from negotiator and director on Halloween of 1978 before he could implement his convictions, and just in time for the beginning of the SALT II ratification hearings.³¹⁹ In July of that year, *Congressional Quarterly* had asked Warnke if he was "afraid in light of the fact that Senator Jackson is on record opposing your nomination, and some other so-called hawks in the Senate...that you might become an issue" during ratification. Warnke thought he would not, but said "it was lucky that I was not a Treaty."³²⁰

Just after resigning, Warnke was asked at a press conference what it was like to "negotiate with the administration," and how he thought "his own position stood up in these contests." He replied, "I would say that the voice of ACDA has been heard and that we've won our share of arguments." He may have been reluctant to take the job at first, but he "grew to love it" and liked to think the "treaty is a little better because I've been a participant."³²¹ He conceded from experience that, "I don't think that it's as

³¹⁷ Paul C. Warnke, (transcript of Press Conference, October 30, 1978), U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, November 1, 1978, PCWP1 35:2.

³¹⁸ "The Real Paul Warnke," (Paul Warnke, interview by Walter Miale, October 1976) *New Republic*, March 26, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³¹⁹ Nicholas Lemann, "Why Warnke Quit," *Washington Monthly*, May 1979, 30, PCWP1 23:29; Duncan Clarke, "The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Under Paul C. Warnke: An Assessment," March 24, 1979, PCWP1 11:7.1.

³²⁰ Paul C. Warnke, interview by Pat Tyler for *Congressional Outlook*, July 24, 1978, PCWP1 35:2.

³²¹ Paul C. Warnke, (transcript of Press Conference, October 30, 1978), U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, November 1, 1978, PCWP1 35:2.

important for somebody to have both jobs [of director and negotiator] in the future."³²²

The concession would have pleased Jackson.

Warnke's resignation did not stop him from campaigning, but it did spark speculation and solicitation. An article written in 1979 asking "Why Warnke Quit" admitted that Warnke came "perilously close to the truth in his effort to get past the committee."³²³ The author admitted that "for a Warnke fan it was a little disillusioning," but "perhaps this had to be done to get the job done, and didn't indicate any true backing down." After all, Warnke maintained during the hearings that "I believe arms control is a desirable objective...I am an enthusiast for making the effort."³²⁴ In Carter's SALT II lobbying campaign, Warnke continued to speak on the theoretical vulnerability of Minuteman and the adequacy of surviving submarines and bombers. As he had during the hearings, Warnke maintained that neither could regain the elusive advantage in the nuclear age even as he affirmed the need to deny Soviet superiority.³²⁵ In 1982 Warnke received a solicitation from a sociologist seeking data on the "psychological forces motivating government officials" to follow different policies in office from what they previously publically espoused.³²⁶ With characteristic confidence Warnke replied that he did not qualify for the study.³²⁷ The effects of the controversy haunted his career throughout his continuing campaigns and unflinching convictions.

³²² Paul C. Warnke, (transcript of Press Conference, October 30, 1978), U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, November 1, 1978, PCWP1 35:2.

³²³ Nicholas Lemann, "Why Warnke Quit," *Washington Monthly*, May 1979, 30, PCWP1 23:29.

³²⁴ Nicholas Lemann, "Why Warnke Quit," *Washington Monthly*, May 1979, 30, PCWP1 23:29; Duncan L. Clarke, "The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Under Paul C. Warnke: An Assessment" (paper prepared for the International Studies Association Convention, Toronto, March 24, 1979), PCWP1 11:7.1.

³²⁵ Paul C. Warnke, "SALT: Its Contribution to U.S. Security and World Peace" (notes prepared for the Conference on U.S. Security and the U.S. Challenge, July 25, 1978), PCWP1 16:7.4.

³²⁶ Dr. Jerome D. Frank, letter to Paul Warnke, July 1, 1982, PCWP1 11:9.

³²⁷ Paul C. Warnke, letter to Dr. Jerome D. Frank, July 9, 1982, PCWP1 11:9.

That Warnke's views were never really in doubt was further evidenced by the opposition's campaign that continued after him. The very next month after the Senate floor vote, the CPD published a pamphlet titled, "What Are the Soviets Up To?", the very question Jackson had said during the hearings was what the national debate was all about. Nitze, its author, warned that Russia was out to reduce America to impotence by the instrument of coercion and the doctrine of fighting and winning a nuclear war. SALT was no constraint to the Soviet drive for superiority. Nitze challenged Americans to understand that "to ignore Soviet intentions and capabilities in erroneous conviction that we have 'enough' to defend and time to strengthen is fatal."³²⁸ In the nuclear age, "enough is not enough [without] efforts to keep pace," for there was "no alternative to vigilance and a credible deterrent." This, he said, was the "prerequisite to negotiation of prudent arms control."³²⁹

Just a few months later in June, Soviet historian Richard Pipes of the CPD was still putting a warning label on the Warnke episode. In "Why the Soviets Think They Can Fight and Win a Nuclear War," Pipes cited Warnke's interview with the *New Republic*, wherein Warnke suggested that "we ought to be trying to educate [the Soviets] to the real world of strategic nuclear weapons, which is that nobody could possibly win." Pipes countered with a deprecating reference to the comma controversy by saying, "even after allowance has been made for Mr. Warnke's notoriously careless syntax, puzzling questions remain." More pointedly he asked, why did Warnke chastise Americans rather than Russians for what he regarded as a "primitive and unrealistic strategic doctrine?"

³²⁸ Committee on the Present Danger, "What is the Soviet Union Up to?", (April 4, 1977)," in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler (Washington: Pergamon Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1984), 10-15.

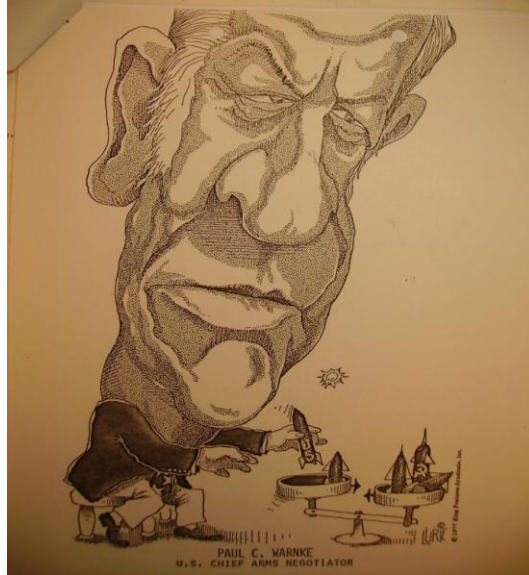
³²⁹ Committee on the Present Danger, "What is the Soviet Union Up to?", 13.

Most important, "even if Mr. Warnke refuses to take Soviet strategic doctrine seriously, it behooves us to take Mr. Warnke's views of Soviet doctrine seriously." This was because he "will head our SALT II team" and his thinking reflected the "school of strategic theory dominant in the United States."³³⁰

Just as the competing campaigns had always been about, the dividing issue came down to different approaches to negotiations based on opposing views of the nuclear revolution and the Soviet threat. It was in this context of the debate between the two schools of nuclear thought that the assumptions and doctrine of the negotiator mattered.

A caricature of Warnke he had received by a supportive cartoonist illustrated that all knew the assumptions of the negotiator mattered. The caricature showed Warnke, with blithe calculation, taking out missiles from the U.S. side of the strategic balance. That it was from someone sympathetic to Warnke's views further confirms that Warnke's views were never in doubt, which was precisely why they were so important for the upcoming SALT II negotiations:

³³⁰ Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight & Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary Magazine*, July, 1 1977, 21. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/why-the-soviet-union-thinks-it-could-fight-win-a-nuclear-war> (accessed August 16, 2016).



Ranan R. Lurie, letter to Paul Warnke, March 14, 1977, published June 17, 1977

Before the defense preparedness coalition held the treaty hostage to a change in strategic thinking in 1979, they held the negotiator captive to the rising national debate in 1977. What Warnke stood for was never in doubt, but mustering enough votes against him in order to strengthen Carter's negotiating hand by creating such doubts was, if personally unfortunate, tactically genius. Jackson himself claimed the victory when he stated that the hearings "marked an important turning point in the public debate over national defense policy."³³¹ His efforts in constructing a controversy set the media stage necessary for a reformation in the discourse of strategic doctrine and a revived commitment to modernization.

³³¹ Quoted in Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis*, 210.

The Strategic Revolution of Thinking in the Public Sphere

Paradoxically, the opposition's efforts against Warnke were as politically effective as they were historically obscuring. The grassroots orchestration against Warnke may have been "as phony as a three-dollar bill," but the vote was a test of principle.³³² The fuss over a comma may be indicative of the "trivialization of policy debates" in a democracy,³³³ but it had strategic implications for doctrine and arms control that many missed. In the words of Warnke's greatest defender Thomas Graham, a "valid debate over philosophy degenerated into an ad hominem controversy over specifics." Yet also in Graham's words, Jackson successfully seized on the "controversy to turn the Warnke nomination into a full scale debate on strategic policy, as well as a referendum on SALT II."³³⁴ It may have lost all pretense of a rational debate, but it stirred a national one that enabled a broader campaign to continue. The credibility of the negotiator rather than the deterrent may have dominated headlines, but without the vote against Warnke the opportunity for shaping SALT would have been lost. The immediate politics may have obscured the demonstration of assured destruction's inadequacy, but the significance of superiority could never again be credibly denied.

Despite the petty and the personal campaign against him, Warnke was sworn in on March 14, 1977. With his characteristic self-deprecating charm, Warnke said that "I have a feeling that this ends one of the longest-running soap operas."³³⁵ Even more significant for U.S. domestic politics, it was the beginning of a new era in strategic thinking. The media, and later historians and commentators, easily noted the effort to

³³² Nicholas Daniloff, United Press International, March 7, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

³³³ Strong, *Working in the World*, 32.

³³⁴ Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 77, 81.

³³⁵ Warren Brown, "Warnke Sworn In as Director of U.S. Arms Control Agency," *Washington Post*, March 15, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

control SALT II, but most missed the deeper concern about the inadequacy of U.S. strategic thought in the public sphere. The teamwork behind the anti-Warnke effort created a field of publicity ripe for the CPD's message to be heard, just in time for the SALT II ratification debates of 1979.

The Armed Services Committee during the SALT II debates viewed their primary role as reeducating the American people in strategic thinking. Still thinking that "doctrines of mutual assured destruction, minimum deterrence, and assured destruction" were enough, American citizens simply did not yet understand that "minimum deterrence was not credible."³³⁶ Senator Nunn took it upon himself to ring the bell for an increase in the defense budget. Stennis called for a bipartisan panel to select the next SALT negotiator. Nitze and Nunn concluded that a rejection of SALT II and at least 50 votes from Senators would best form a new consensus. Jackson, Nunn, and Tower sent a letter to President Carter calling for a "fundamental change in strategic and military doctrine and the resources to implement it," because a doctrine based on the destruction of civilians was simply not credible.³³⁷ There would be no more talk of MAD. There would be no treaty that restricted the United States to a MAD doctrine. The "ridiculous talk" of minimum deterrence being enough, and of "overkill" being too much, would be exposed as the "semantical flourishes" and rhetorical devices they were.³³⁸ Together, theirs was a clarion call for not only a renewed military buildup, but a new consensus that arms

³³⁶ U.S. Congress. Senate. Armed Services Committee. *Military implications of the Treaty on the limitation of strategic offensive arms and protocol thereto (SALT II Treaty): Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 96th Congress, 1st sess., 1979, 782.* Hereafter cited as *Military Implications*.

³³⁷ *Military Implications*, 841.

³³⁸ *Military Implications*, 1245.

control would be pursued simultaneously with modernization.³³⁹ The old school was gone, the new one was here.³⁴⁰

The campaign for a new consensus in strategic thinking and the call for a reformation in deterrence theory continued into the 1980s, this time with institutional support. Strategic theorists labeled the call for reform a "zealous attempt to discredit an imaginary doctrine" and charges of a hegemonic "dovish liberalism clinging to MAD" a revisionist political tactic.³⁴¹ After all, the President has always had both military and civilian targets to choose from, and the choice of surrender or holocaust was only a "pencil and paper threat."³⁴² Such writers had only the voice of a fading ink pen in dovish journals as CPD members gained office appointments in the new Reagan administration. Ever vigilant about an anemic deterrent based on impotent nuclear ornamentation, if not the anemic faith based on "ceremonial deism," CPD co-founder Eugene Rostow succeeded Warnke as director of the ACDA in 1978.³⁴³ For negotiator of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces talks, Reagan recruited Paul Nitze. Reagan even asked both Jackson and the CPD if he could crib from their speeches and pamphlets.³⁴⁴

³³⁹ *Military Implications*, 1370.

³⁴⁰ Prospects for ratification were dim. The SALT II Senate debate was pending and Warnke's resignation was drawing near. The *Congressional Quarterly* asked Warnke in July 1978 if he was "afraid in light of the fact that Senator Jackson is on record opposing your nomination, and some other so-called hawks in the Senate...that you might become an issue" during ratification. Warnke thought he would not, but said "it was lucky that I was not a Treaty" during his confirmation.³⁴⁰ After his resignation Warnke joked during his November 1, 1978, press conference that he thought the treaty "will do a lot better than I did." The treaty being "tainted as a product of [his] negotiations...is not going to disappear" anymore than he himself would, nor would the world be "safer for SALT by my resigning my job."

Paul C. Warnke, (transcript of Press Conference, October 30, 1978), U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, November 1, 1978, PCWP1 35:2.

³⁴¹ Nacht, "Delicate Balance of Error," (1975), 173; Philip K. Lawrence, "Nuclear Strategy and Political Theory: A Critical Assessment," *Review of International Studies* 11 no. 2 (1985), 112.

³⁴² William H. Kincade, "Missile Vulnerability Reconsidered," *Arms Control Today* (1981), 5.

³⁴³ Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 368, 373; Barry M. Blechman and Robert Powell, "What in the Name of God is Strategic Superiority?", *Political Science Quarterly* 97 no. 4 (1982-1983), 596; Jay Winik, "The Neoconservative Reconstruction," *Foreign Policy* 73 (1988), 137-138.

³⁴⁴ Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson*, 356, 383; Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 352, 393.

Strategic doctrine slipped away from the rhetoric of assured destruction, to be replaced by the language of war-fighting and counterforce. Carter's nomination of Warnke provided an opportunity for fomenting a national debate on strategic doctrine, while Reagan's election provided the opportunity to implement the renaissance in thinking. Thanks to the deliberate construction of a controversy through the team effort of Jackson, Nunn, and Nitze in 1977, Reagan presided over the official reversal of the reification of MAD in the public consciousness after the defeat of SALT II. Craftily combining the strategy of both schools, Reagan refused to poor mouth the U.S. deterrent and was committed to both a war-fighting declaratory policy and strategic modernization.³⁴⁵ Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger engaged in a conspicuously incautious rhetoric of nuclear war-fighting, and by the early 1980s, the language of war-fighting was the new conventional wisdom of deterrence in the nuclear age.³⁴⁶

None of the sea change in strategic thinking and reformation in public rhetoric was foreordained. Nor was the controversy Warnke's nomination provoked inevitable.

³⁴⁵ Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution, Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1989), 50.

Reagan's commitment to a war-fighting and defense rhetoric more than to an actual buildup may be the more accurate assessment of his administration. Jervis argues that the balance did not change as he took office, but Reagan did seem to follow Warnke's copybook rather than Nitze's by refusing to endow the counterforce imbalance with political meaning. "Thus even if one believes that deterrence comes from being able to deny the other side a military advantage from any move, asking who is "ahead" on measures like this yields answers that have meaning only if decision makers endow them with it." Jervis, 200. The balance did not change under his administration, but the "president's claims were an effective substitute for building large numbers of missiles." Jervis, 216.

Jervis' claims concur with Ben Martin's that any buildup actually began under Carter rather than Reagan. Reagan was the one who through his rhetoric and confidence affected the perception of deterrence and strength, which is what most agree deterrence is all about, including Nitze. Martin, "Has there been a Reagan Revolution in Defense Policy?" (1986), 175-181; Betts, 132-136, "Deterrence is in the eye of the beholder"; Nitze in his 1976 article said that "deterrence is a political concept," Paul Nitze, "Assuring Strategic Stability in an Era of Détente," *Foreign Affairs* 52 no. 2 (1976), 222.

Jervis argued similarly in a 1979 article that perceptions and willingness to risk determine whether a threat is credible. His reliance on the irreversibility of the nuclear revolution by the persistence of mutual vulnerability and hostages is the main premise sustaining his arguments and advocacy. As he said, the "nuclear revolution cannot be undone." Robert Jervis, "Why Nuclear Superiority Doesn't matter," *Political Science Quarterly* 94 no. 4 (1979-80), 631.

³⁴⁶ Robert C. Gray, "The Reagan Nuclear Strategy," *Arms Control Today* 13 no 2 (1983), 1-3.

Such thinking distorts how change occurs in a democracy; in this case, the evolution of strategic doctrine in the public sphere.³⁴⁷ The sea change was the result of a deliberate campaign for a new consensus between competing guiding concepts. Warnke's nomination controversy was deliberately constructed for the purpose of gathering votes. As this study argues, the desired blocking vote against confirmation would not have been possible if Warnke had not changed his position and then denied doing so.

It was also not the nomination of an assured destruction apostle alone, but Carter's pledge and Warnke's apostasy. Warnke's refusal to acknowledge the change gave cause not to confirm Carter's confident pledge that once all considered what Warnke stood for, they would approve him overwhelmingly. As Jackson clearly said, Warnke's "failure to acknowledge he has revised his earlier dovish views on national security has shattered my confidence...I cannot vote to confirm a man who has shattered my confidence that I know where he stands, that I know what he believes."³⁴⁸ The strategic use of hearings with the expectation of media coverage, and the tactic of creating doubt to gather votes, was what made the nomination controversial. Warnke's concession to Nunn on the stand that assured destruction could not credibly deter the Soviets during a crisis was the apostasy that shattered all confidence.

³⁴⁷ For a good analytical summary of the political tactic of the "window of vulnerability" in U.S. strategic history, see Robert H. Johnson, "Periods of Peril: The Window of Vulnerability and Other Myths," *World Affairs* 61 no 4 (1983), 948, 951, 961-964; See also Richard Betts' analysis of the importance of the strategic balance in crises. He concludes that what matters more is not the military balance, but the beliefs, resolve, and interests of the political leaders. This conclusion is opposite that of the CPD and strategists such as Paul Nitze, who put much faith in actual capabilities and pay close attention to war scenarios. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*, 136, 174-190, 194, 208-233. Betts is in agreement with Robert Jervis who argues similarly and at great pains to prove that resolve and risk-taking rather than the details of the strategic balance determine political outcomes. Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, 38-44, 82-98, 103-104.

³⁴⁸ United Press International UP-063, February 23, 1977, PCWP1 36:2.

The feigned doubt that all knew what Warnke stood for resulted in an immediate tactical victory but has obscured history memory. The nomination is explained in the literature as controversial simply by assuming Warnke's past record of opposition to weapons and skepticism toward superiority made him an unacceptable negotiator.

Assumptions make incomplete scholarship. Jerry Sanders assumed the Warnke controversy was only part of the post-Vietnam foreign policy disputes over the use of force.³⁴⁹ In *The Politics of Arms Control*, Duncan Clarke understood that the opposition's primary quarrel was with Warnke's philosophy and their main fear was his access to the President, but he neglected the deeper doctrinal issues.³⁵⁰ Robert Strong assumed that Warnke was simply not in the mainstream of thought. He recognized the issue of superiority, but like Clarke, he failed to draw the necessary implications for strategic doctrine.³⁵¹ Patrick Glynn assumed that Jackson's exposure of Warnke's "antimilitary views in detail" was sufficient to lay down markers for the SALT II fight.³⁵² Jackson's own biographer William Kaufman highlighted Jackson's role in fortifying the opposition after Warnke's uneventful glide through the "dovish Foreign Relations Committee," but attributed his efforts, as did Sanders, to Post-Vietnam divisions on the use of force.³⁵³ Describing the anti-Warnke campaign as part of a broader effort to reinvigorate the anticommunist coalition, Richard Gid Powers attributed the controversy to Nitze's

³⁴⁹ Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 208.

³⁵⁰ Duncan Clarke, *The Politics of Arms Control*, 4.

³⁵¹ Robert Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2001), 14-15.

³⁵² Glynn, *Closing Pandora's Box*, 279.

³⁵³ Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 358-359.

"withering testimony" and Jackson's "grueling examination" of Warnke's past opposition to weapons.³⁵⁴

Powers, Strong, Glynn, and Kaufman each found Jackson's list of 13 weapons Warnke had opposed sufficient to indict him for being an ineffective negotiator and the sole cause of his slim Senate passage.³⁵⁵ The literature's focus on that single exchange while ignoring the rest demonstrated the inadequacy of their assumptions for what the hearings were about.

Without a close examination of the hearings commentators have failed to recognize the strategic use of the media and the tactical role of creating doubt about Warnke's credibility that created the desired controversy. It was not alone what Warnke symbolized that galvanized the opposition, but a personal tactic to win votes against him that gave the opposition a public forum and policy clout. All have thus overlooked that the tactical victory of gaining votes was a result not of Warnke's past record alone, or even that he had changed. It was the deliberate construction of a controversy based on Warnke's refusal to admit he had changed that made the nomination newsworthy and prepared the media ground for the successful efforts of the CPD.

Thomas Graham was the only one to understand how the charge of Warnke's dishonesty, more than even his private philosophy and public record, caused the degeneration into an unfortunate if effective ad-hominem. It was those means that led to the "full scale debate on strategic policy."³⁵⁶ Even Graham, though, did not grasp the extent and scope of the team effort to use the hearings to foment a reformation in

³⁵⁴ Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 376-378.

³⁵⁵ Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, 360; Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 377; Strong, *Working in the World*, 32; Glynn, *Peddlers of Crisis*, 279.

³⁵⁶ Graham, *Disarmament Sketches*, 77.

strategic thinking. Nor did anyone recognize the implications for U.S. strategic doctrine behind questions merging the meaning of superiority and Warnke's credibility.

Chronological analysis of initial and subsequent reactions to the nomination and in-depth analysis of both committee hearings demonstrate that Warnke's past record alone was insufficient. By tracing the philosophical motivations behind the scenes over previous years and the tactical development of the opposition once Carter announced Warnke's name, a different understanding emerges about the politics of negotiations and strategy in a democracy. The effort was not just about controlling SALT, but about the requirements of deterrence and the rhetoric of U.S strategic doctrine in the nuclear age. It was about reversing talk of MAD as enough for a deterrent to prevent its caricature from becoming reality under the terms of SALT II.

Warnke's nomination was the climax to a decade-long debate between two competing schools of thought on how much was enough to deter the Soviets in both rhetoric and capability. Behind the dramatic and personal politics of appointments and ratification was the philosophical thread of the meaning of superiority and the political implications of the counterforce imbalance. What better way to reverse the reification of MAD in the public sphere than to get its greatest champion to admit on the stand its insufficiency and the need for an equal counterforce capability? This was the philosophical genius of Nunn that without Jackson's political effort to gather votes might have gone unnoticed, and indeed has, both in the media's attention at the time and in subsequent literature afterward. It was not Warnke's record but his stubborn inconsistency in the hands of a skillful Washington lawyer and a sober Georgia Democrat that changed the strategic tide. Jackson's strategy and tactics, by demonstrating the

inadequacy of assured destruction and by gaining enough votes against Warnke to prove he could block SALT II, established a counterforce doctrine and capability as the criteria for a credible deterrent and a future treaty.

The decade-long debate between two schools of strategic thought culminated in the reversal of the reification of MAD and a reformation in strategic thought. The doctrinal debate did continue, but preparedness and war-fighting overtook restraint and assured destruction as both conventional wisdom and declaratory policy in the public sphere. Constructing a national controversy by creating doubt about the credibility of the SALT negotiator was, if not the most unfortunate, at least one of the most creative ways in U.S. history to educate the American people on the inadequacy of assured destruction and to gain support for modernization simultaneously with arms control. This paper resurrects the accomplishment of the preparedness school's efforts under the leadership of Senatorial representatives Jackson and Nunn during the Warnke hearings of 1977. Their deliberate construction of a controversy marked the end of a long-running soap opera but the beginning of a new era in strategic thinking to prevent the caricature of MAD from becoming a reality.

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