



THE PURPOSES OF ARMS CONTROL

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In this paper, I review three major purposes for arms control negotiations — disarmament, stability, and advantage. In the first part of the paper, I compare the three purposes against the causes of war literature to show that each provides a defensible rationale for reducing the chances of war. While scholars debate which approach to arms control is correct, historically, policymakers have embraced arms control pluralism, pursuing agreements that can advance multiple arms control objectives simultaneously. In the second part of the paper, I demonstrate how the Nixon administration's negotiation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty combined these multiple purposes.

After a post-Cold War interlude, arms control among the great powers is once again in vogue. Foreign policy debates increasingly turn on considerations of arms control: whether to scrap the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), whether to continue the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) process, whether to include China in negotiations to limit armaments, and how to minimize the expansion of North Korea's nuclear arsenal. Unfortunately, these debates are riven by differing assumptions concerning the ultimate purpose of arms-control efforts. For example: Should the United States take preventive military action to limit North Korea's nuclear capability? Should it instead seek mutual strategic stability with a newly nuclear North Korea? Or should the United States redouble its efforts to eliminate all nuclear weapons, everywhere?¹ Proponents of each course of action can credibly lay claim to the mantle of "arms control." But which is correct? How would we know good arms control if we saw it?

Robert Jervis observed, "If the main objective of arms control is to make war less likely, then any theory of arms control must rest on a theory

of the causes of war."² Why wars occur is a vast topic, however, and scholars remain divided over the causes of armed conflict.³ This division among scholars is reflected in the competing concepts of how arms limitation among great powers can reduce the chances of war. In this essay, I examine three key explanations for the cause of war — influence groups, weapons, and actors — and demonstrate how each leads toward a different approach to arms control: disarmament, stability, and advantage, respectively. I will show that absent a solid consensus on the purpose of arms control, historically successful arms-limitation agreements have managed to serve multiple purposes. My essay concludes with a brief account of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty: specifically, how its creators and supporters managed to advance the purposes of disarmament, stability, and advantage simultaneously over the lifetime of the treaty.

Recognizing the multiple motives that arms-control negotiations aim to serve is vital to understanding arms control's impact on international security for at least three reasons. First, scholars and commentators often cite the existence of arms-control negotiations as evidence

1 Uri Friedman, "John Bolton's Radical Views on North Korea," *Atlantic*, March 23, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/03/john-bolton-north-korea/556370/>; Vipin Narang and Ankit Panda, "War of the Words: North Korea, Trump, and Strategic Stability," *War on the Rocks*, Aug. 10, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/war-of-the-words-north-korea-trump-and-strategic-stability/>; "Global Zero Statement on North Korea Nuclear Crisis," *Common Dreams*, Aug. 9, 2017, <https://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2017/08/09/global-zero-statement-north-korea-nuclear-crisis>.

2 Robert Jervis, "Arms Control, Stability, and Causes of War," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 239, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2152010>.

3 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706903>.



that states are proceeding on a more cooperative path.⁴ Yet the pursuit of arms control is not always a cooperative exercise. States often employ arms-control negotiations as vehicles for advancing their own competitive agendas, all in the name of peace. Treating arms control as purely cooperative risks misunderstanding its impact on international politics. Second, given the paucity of documentary resources from key actors such as the Soviet Union, historians struggle to evaluate the success or failure of particular arms-control negotiations. Understanding the theoretical debates surrounding the purpose of arms control can provide new criteria for understanding whether an arms-control regime succeeded. Third, a historical reconstruction of the multiple meanings of arms control can help to clarify the importance of time as a variable in such arrangements — in particular, how different arms-control rationales may rely on different time horizons and how the purpose of a single agreement may change over time. The manipulation of differing timelines provides opportunities for building consensus on arms control between radically different policy agendas, with some arms controllers receiving benefits in the short term and others over the longer term. U.S. policymakers considering the future of arms control would do well to consider how previous administrations built their complex arms-control policies.

The study of arms control has produced a vast literature, but surprisingly little has examined the specific mechanisms whereby great powers can reduce the chances of war. As a result, scholars and experts often talk past each other — rather than to each other — in arms-control debates. Much of the existing literature describes the goals of arms control in generic terms such as “peace,” “stability,” or “security,” with little emphasis on how limiting specific weapons systems contributes to these hazily defined concepts.⁵ Other works insist that there is a single war-preventing logic of arms control, usually downplaying or ignoring other possible motives.⁶ Future research on arms control could benefit by placing these differing perspectives in dialogue with each other to foster

an understanding of how, exactly, arms control can reduce the chances of war.

Explanations for War and Arms Control

Analysts and advocates of arms control fall into three broad categories, depending on which explanation of the cause of war they embrace. The first category includes those who believe that war is caused by *influence groups*, especially the military-industrial complex, and the various structures of thought and culture promoted by those groups. The second category involves those who believe that war is caused by certain kinds of *weapons*, especially weapons that promote first-strike advantages or create conditions of offense-dominance. The third category consists of individuals who believe that war is caused by certain kinds of *actors* — countries that are especially aggressive, ideological, or revisionist. Each of these explanations for what causes war leads to a different understanding of the purpose of arms control. For those who believe that influence groups create war, the proper purpose of arms control is *disarmament*: reducing the overall level of weapons and dismantling the organizations and cultures that produce them. For those who believe that dangerous weapons cause war, the purpose of arms control is *stability*, or limiting especially dangerous offense-dominant weapons while bolstering deterrence by allowing the procurement of defense-dominant weapons. For those who believe that pernicious actors cause war, the purpose of arms control is *advantage*: preventing dangerous countries from acquiring weapons technologies while preserving a favorable balance of power for trustworthy, status quo countries. Determining which of these three approaches to arms control best prevents conflict is difficult given the lack of consensus on the causes of war.

Influence Groups and Disarmament

One prevalent explanation for the cause of

4 Emanuel Adler, "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control," *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 101–45, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300001466>; Jeffrey W. Knopf, *Domestic Society and International Cooperation: The Impact of Protest on US Arms Control Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Steven Pifer, "Arms Control, Security Cooperation, and U.S.-Russian Relations," Brookings Institution, Nov. 17, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/arms-control-security-cooperation-and-u-s-russian-relations/>.

5 Steve Weber, *Cooperation and Discord in U.S.-Soviet Arms Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Knopf, *Domestic Society and International Cooperation*; Jozef Goldblat, *Arms Control: The New Guide to Negotiations and Agreements* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 10–11; Marie Isabelle Chevrier, *Arms Control Policy: A Guide to the Issues* (New York: Praeger, 2012), 5–6.

6 Jervis, "Arms Control, Stability, and Causes of War"; Marc Trachtenberg, "The Past and Future of Arms Control," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 203–16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20025364>; Michael Krepon, *Better Safe Than Sorry: The Ironies of Living with the Bomb* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 40–43; James H. Lebovic, *Flawed Logics: Strategic Nuclear Arms Control from Truman to Obama* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

war is the impact that war-promoting influence groups, often described as the “military-industrial complex,”⁷ have on governments. Critics of the military-industrial complex have identified several mechanisms whereby pro-war interest groups create the conditions for war to occur. First, critics claim that the drive for profits causes the military-industrial complex to lobby politicians directly for confrontational policies, which justify purchasing more weapons and also make war more likely.⁸ Second, critics claim that the activities of the military-industrial complex shape the thinking of elite decision-makers, normalizing violence and creating the psychological and emotional space for extreme anti-social behavior — like war — to occur.⁹ Third, critics argue that the military-industrial complex promotes structures of class, race, and gender that influence broader attitudes toward violence, providing rationales for conflict that leaders and citizens alike deploy to justify war.¹⁰ Both directly and indirectly, military-industrial interest groups explain why governments and societies wage war rather than seek peaceful solutions.

For those who argue that war is the result of pro-war interest groups, the primary purpose of arms control is *disarmament*. While arms-control agreements often reduce the number of weapons

available to states, proponents of disarmament argue that the more important function of such agreements is to tame adverse military-industrial complexes and to dismantle old attitudes and cultures of war.¹¹ In addition to achieving anti-militarist objectives, the promotion of disarmament agreements provides opportunities to create new coalitions in favor of international and social justice while also freeing resources from wasteful military competition to pursue these peaceful agendas.¹² By contributing to the dismantlement of militarist interest groups, arms-control agreements can advance the cause of peace.

Historically, disarmament has been an influential determinant of arms-limitation policies in great-power countries, especially through its widespread public appeal. The international disarmament movement can trace its roots to various reform efforts of the late 19th century.¹³ Pro-disarmament organizations were especially active during the interwar period, and their aspirations were first given significant form through the League of Nations’ efforts at international disarmament.¹⁴ After World War II, international disarmament efforts refocused on eliminating nuclear weapons, with major waves of anti-nuclear protests in the 1950s and 1980s.¹⁵ The second wave of nuclear disarmament advocacy found willing partners in

7 Dwight Eisenhower, "Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People," The American Presidency Project, Jan. 17, 1961, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/234856>.

8 Seymour Melman, *Pentagon Capitalism: The Political Economy of War* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970); Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

9 Norman Cousins, *Who Speaks for Man?* (New York: Macmillan, 1953); "The Russell-Einstein Manifesto," July 9, 1955, <https://pugwash.org/1955/07/09/statement-manifesto/>; Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth and the Abolition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 3–96; Harald Müller, "Out of the Box: Nuclear Disarmament and Cultural Change," in *Stable Nuclear Zero: The Vision and Its Implications for Disarmament Policy*, ed. Sverre Lodgaard (New York: Routledge, 2017), 55–72.

10 William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 142–45; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Curve of American Power," *New Left Review* 40 (July-August 2006): 77–94; Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1987): 687–718, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174209>; Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, "Revisiting Ruddick: Feminism, Pacifism and Non-Violence," *Journal of International Political Theory* 10, no. 1 (2014): 109–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1755088213507191>; Slavoj Žižek, *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (New York: Verso Books, 2005).

11 Lela B. Costin, "Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3–4 (1982): 301–15, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(82\)90039-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(82)90039-5); Elmar Schmähling, "Conclusion: A New Way of Thinking for a Future Security Regime," in *Life Beyond the Bomb: Global Stability Without Nuclear Deterrence*, ed. Elmar Schmähling (New York: Berg, 1990), 189; Sverre Lodgaard, *Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World?* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 219–22.

12 Frazer and Hutchings, "Revisiting Ruddick: Feminism, Pacifism and Non-Violence"; Kyle Harvey, *American Anti-Nuclear Activism, 1975–1990: The Challenge of Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 12–41; Ian Harris and Charles F. Howlett, "Educating for Peace and Justice in America's Nuclear Age," *Catalyst: A Social Justice Forum* 1, no. 1 (2011): 20–51, <https://trace.tennessee.edu/catalyst/vol1/iss1/6/>.

13 I.S. Bloch, *Is War Now Impossible? Being an Abridgement of 'The War of the Future in Its Technical, Economic, and Political Relations'* (London: Grant Richards, 1899); Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1911); Charles Chatfield and Peter van den Dungen, eds., *Peace Movements and Political Cultures* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1988); John Chambers, *The Eagle and the Dove: the American Peace Movement and United States Foreign Policy, 1900–1922* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

14 Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (New York: Little, Brown, 1943), 54–57; Andrew Webster, "From Versailles to Geneva: The Many Forms of Interwar Disarmament," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29, no. 2 (2006): 225–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390600585050>; Waqar H. Zaidi, "Aviation Will Either Destroy or Save Our Civilization: Proposals for the International Control of Aviation, 1920–45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 1 (January 2011): 150–78, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022009410375257>; Michael Pugh, *Liberal Internationalism: The Interwar Movement for Peace in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

15 Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb, Volume One: One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement Through 1953* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Lyn Smith, *Voices Against War: A Century of Protest* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2009), 173–210.



Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, who saw the elimination of nuclear weapons as a long-term objective.¹⁶ More recently, nuclear disarmament has regained strength via the “Global Zero” movement.¹⁷ Disarmament has thus been an important goal of great powers’ arms limitation throughout the modern period.

Proponents of disarmament arms control often

advocates of disarmament for its “elimination of an entire category of weapons systems,” even though the treaty limits only land-based missiles of ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers, and for only two countries at that.²⁰ Whatever the treaty’s perceived shortcomings, many disarmament advocates see the INF as a good first step toward the more comprehensive elimination of nuclear weapons.

Proponents of disarmament arms control often take a long-term view of the purpose of arms control...

Although it rests on a coherent explanation of the cause of war, arms control with the goal of disarmament has its critics. Many proponents of arms control for the purpose of strategic stability and advantage argue that seeking disarmament may make war more likely if the effort dismantles the military capabilities necessary for deterrence.²¹

Others question whether martial interest groups really drive international conflict or whether military-industrial complexes instead emerge as a response to preexisting political differences among states,²² in which case finding a solution to existing political differences would have to precede disarmament.²³ The empirical record on the successes of disarmament is mixed. On the one hand, significant disarmament negotiations in the interwar period failed to prevent the outbreak of World War II, while the “long peace” of the Cold War was marked by high armaments on all sides.²⁴ On the other hand, proponents of disarmament

take a long-term view of the purpose of arms control, recognizing that dismantling militarist influence groups and redirecting resources toward pursuing social justice will take time.¹⁸ As a result, despite their expansive explanation of the cause of war, proponents of disarmament often support more limited arms-control measures, as long as those measures can be understood as part of a progressive program for dismantling weapons and militarist interest groups more generally.¹⁹ For example, the 1987 INF Treaty is often praised by

16 Daniel Calingaert, *Soviet Nuclear Policy Under Gorbachev: A Policy of Disarmament* (New York: Praeger, 1991); Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Random House, 2006); Ken Adelman, *Reagan at Reykjavik: Forty-Eight Hours That Ended the Cold War* (New York: Broadside Books, 2014).

17 See the Global Zero website: <https://www.globalzero.org/>.

18 Angela Kane, “The ‘Step-by-Step’ Process of Nuclear Disarmament: Quo Vadis?” United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, April 24, 2013, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/20130424/>; Randy Rydell, “A Strategic Plan for Nuclear Disarmament: Engineering a Perfect Political Storm,” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 1, no. 1 (2018): 49–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2017.1410386>. But also see: John Carl Baker, “A First Look at a 21st Century Disarmament Movement,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Dec. 16, 2016, <https://thebulletin.org/2016/12/a-first-look-at-a-21st-century-disarmament-movement/>.

19 Jeffrey A. Larsen, “Strategic Arms Control since World War II,” in *Arms Control: History, Theory, and Policy, Volume I: Foundations of Arms Control*, ed. Robert E. Williams Jr. and Paul R. Viotti (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 220–46; Scott Ritter, *Dangerous Ground: America’s Failed Arms Control Policy, from FDR to Obama* (New York: Nation Books, 2010), 8–12.

20 Jeffrey A. Larsen and James M. Smith, *Historical Dictionary of Arms Control and Disarmament* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 7; Susan Willett, *Costs of Disarmament — Rethinking the Price Tag: A Methodological Inquiry into the Costs and Benefits of Arms Control* (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2002), 44; Strobe Talbott, “U.S.-Russia Arms Control Was Possible Once — Is It Possible Still?” Brookings Institution’s *Order From Chaos* blog, Dec. 12 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/12/12/u-s-russia-arms-control-was-possible-once-is-it-possible-still/>.

21 Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), 2–5; Kenneth N. Waltz, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better,” *Adelphi Papers* 21, no. 171 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981), <https://doi.org/10.1080/05679328108457394>; Harlow A. Hyde, *Scraps of Paper: The Disarmament Treaties Between the World Wars* (Lincoln, NE: Media Publishing, 1988).

22 Albert Wohlstetter, “Is There a Strategic Arms Race?” *Foreign Policy* 15 (Summer 1974): 3–20, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1147927>; Barry Buzan and Eric Herring, *The Arms Dynamic in World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Andrew Kydd, “Arms Races and Arms Control: Modeling the Hawk Perspective,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 2 (April 2000): 228–44, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669307>.

23 Michael E. O’Hanlon, *A Skeptic’s Case for Nuclear Disarmament* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 82–91.

24 Robert G. Kaufman, “The Perils of Arms Control: The Lessons of Naval Arms Limitation during the Interwar Years,” in *Arms Control: History, Theory, and Policy, Volume I: Foundations of Arms Control*, ed. Robert E. Williams Jr. and Paul R. Viotti (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 247–64; John Lewis Gaddis, “The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System,” *International Security* 10, no. 4 (Spring 1986): 99–142, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/446174>.

can credibly argue that disarmament negotiations in the interwar period never went far enough to impede militarism and an arms race and that the nuclear disarmament movement played an important role in regulating and ultimately ending the U.S.-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War.²⁵ Proponents of disarmament argue that facing such a mixed empirical record, and mindful of the horrible consequences should deterrence fail, the safest path forward is for states to dismantle their weapons and tame hawkish interest groups.²⁶

Weapons and Stability

A second prevalent theory of what causes war relates to the nature of weapons technologies and, especially, their impact on the offense-defense balance. This explanation for war begins with the structural condition of anarchy, in which states procure weapons for security and bargaining purposes.²⁷ Among the available weapons, some are useful primarily for defensive purposes and others are more useful for offensive purposes. The distribution and balance of these competing types of weapons can have a profound impact on the likelihood of war. In cases where the balance favors the defense, attacking a neighbor is expensive and difficult, thus strengthening deterrence and making states less likely to fight each other. In cases where the balance favors the offense, however, attacking a neighbor appears *less* costly, which in turn weakens deterrence and makes states *more* likely to fight each other.²⁸ An offense-dominant military balance can generate crisis instability, where the significant advantage of striking first can push states to escalate conflicts quickly in order to avoid

the disadvantages of being attacked.²⁹ Relations between states in offense-dominant environments are also more likely to be poisoned by “security dilemmas,” in which states procuring offensive weapons for self-defense undermine the security of their neighbors, triggering arms races that ultimately undermine the security of both parties.³⁰ For these reasons, offense-defense theorists maintain that the balance of offense-defense capabilities determines the likelihood of war.

For those who worry that the technological balance between offensive and defensive weapons is a primary driver of war, the proper purpose for arms control is *stability*, or promoting a defense-dominant international environment. By prohibiting or limiting the deployment of offensive weapons while allowing the deployment of defensive ones, arms control can shape the offense-defense balance, strengthen crisis stability, ameliorate security dilemmas, strengthen deterrence, and ultimately prevent war.³¹ In the nuclear era, defense dominance has become closely associated with the strategy of mutually assured destruction, in which (paradoxically) “defensive” forces are aimed primarily at the destruction of the adversary’s country, maintaining deterrence by rendering any meaningful victory in war impossible. By making offensive war impossible, nuclear deterrence effectively privileges the defender, even if no material defense is possible.³² Capabilities that might undermine mutual vulnerability by threatening an adversary’s nuclear forces directly — whether accurate, fast-striking offensive missiles or effective missile defense systems — are deemed to be “offensive” or “destabilizing,” because the “use them or lose them” dilemma they

25 Cecelia Lynch, *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb, Volume Three: Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

26 Manpreet Sethi, “Making NFWF Attractive, Stable and Sustainable,” in *Stable Nuclear Zero: The Vision and Its Implications for Disarmament Policy*, ed. Sverre Lodgaard (New York: Routledge, 2017), 14–29.

27 James D. Fearon, “Cooperation, Conflict, and the Costs of Anarchy,” *International Organization* 72, no. 3 (Summer 2018): 523–59, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818318000115>.

28 Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Stephen van Evera, “Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War,” *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998): 5–43, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539239>; Charles L. Glaser, “When Are Arms Races Dangerous? Rational Versus Suboptimal Arming,” *International Security* 28, no. 4 (Spring 2004): 44–84, <https://doi.org/10.1162/0162288041588313>.

29 Albert Wohlstetter, “The Delicate Balance of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs* 37, no. 2 (January 1959): 211–34, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1959-01-01/delicate-balance-terror>; Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 221–59.

30 Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978): 167–214, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2009958>; Glaser, “When Are Arms Races Dangerous? Rational Versus Suboptimal Arming.”

31 Schelling and Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*; Jervis, “Arms Control, Stability, and Causes of War”; Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, “What Is the Offense-Defense Balance and Can We Measure It?” *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998): 44–82, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539240>.

32 Jack S. Levy, “The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis,” *International Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (June 1984): 219–38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2600696>.



create generates strong incentives to shoot first in a crisis.³³ Stability arms control thus contributes to the cause of peace by limiting those weapons that might undermine the defense-dominance of great-power politics.

Historically, stability has been an important objective of many great powers' arms-limitation agreements. Some negotiations in the interwar period sought to tailor offensive and defensive forces to establish a more secure balance of power. For example, the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty placed limits on both battleship numbers and fortified bases in order to create a defense-dominant environment in the Pacific.³⁴ Before its disbandment, the World Disarmament Conference

of the League of Nations also placed a high priority on limiting offensive arms.³⁵ The formal logic of stability took off in the 1950s with the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology. Classical arms-control theorists including Thomas Schelling, Morton Halperin, and Hedley Bull argued that arms-control negotiations could construct a stable balance of terror between the superpowers.³⁶ In this view, deterrence could be reinforced by restricting access to damage-limiting capabilities, like large and accurate intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and ABM defenses.³⁷ By reducing incentives to limit damage through preemptive attack, this approach to arms control would disincentivize countries from engaging in

33 Donald G. Brennan, "Strategic Alternatives: I," *New York Times*, May 24, 1971, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/05/24/archives/strategic-alternatives-i.html>; Henry D. Sokolski, ed., *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/PUB585.pdf>.

34 Emily O. Goldman, *Sunken Treaties: Naval Arms Control Between the Wars* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994), 80–109.

35 Department of State, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy 1931–1941* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 180–81.

36 Bernard Brodie, ed., *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, 1946); Schelling and Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*; Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age* (New York: Praeger, 1961); Donald G. Brennan, ed., *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security* (New York: George Braziller, 1961); Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1965), 158–74.

37 Thomas C. Schelling, "Abolition of Ballistic Missiles," *International Security* 12, no. 1 (Summer 1987): 179–83, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538923>; Richard L. Garwin and Hans A. Bethe, "Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems," *Scientific American* 218, no. 3 (March 1968), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396336808440897>; Herbert F. York, *Race to Oblivion: A Participant's View of the Arms Race* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970): 170–233.

intentional war while also reducing the danger of accidental escalation in a crisis.³⁸ By the late 1960s, stability had become entrenched as one of the most important objectives of superpower arms control, with widespread condemnation — among experts and the public — of ABM systems as well as large and accurate ICBM deployments.³⁹ Crisis and arms-race stability remain a touchstone for contemporary debates on arms-control policy.⁴⁰

Unlike disarmament, the policy prescriptions of stability arms control prefer immediate and permanent solutions to pressing military-technical problems. This is because most proponents of stability arms control locate the problem to be solved in the specific technical characteristics of the weapons and their interaction with other weapons systems. For example, large surface-based ballistic missiles are inherently destabilizing because they can be effectively targeted and destroyed by other large surface-based ballistic missiles. By comparison, the technical capabilities of ballistic-missile submarines, and their relative invulnerability to other weapons, render them stabilizing, rather than destabilizing.⁴¹ As a result, proponents of stability arms control tend to see arms-control agreements as fixed commitments to limit inherently dangerous weapons, whose revision or abrogation would, in their view, be a mistake.⁴² To the extent that change occurs, it is primarily driven by the introduction of new, perhaps even more destabilizing, technologies.⁴³ Advocates of stability arms control also tend to be skeptical of partial measures, which they view as missed opportunities to control the entire military-

technical problem.⁴⁴ This approach's focus on producing self-contained, mutually beneficial, and timeless arms-control agreements is distinct from both disarmament and advantage arms control, which often consider individual agreements as components of larger programs to promote peace.

As with disarmament, stability arms control is not without its critics. First, a number of scholars have criticized the central claims of offense-defense theory, arguing that weapons cannot be readily divided into “stabilizing” and “destabilizing” camps, that it is too difficult for states to determine whether an adversary's deployments are stabilizing or destabilizing, or that states do not evaluate weapons types in crafting their foreign policy.⁴⁵ Absent the ability to classify weapons as stabilizing or destabilizing, it is difficult to imagine how states could reduce the chances of war by limiting destabilizing weapons. Second, proponents of the nuclear revolution thesis question whether the advent of nuclear weapons has rendered the military balance largely superfluous, creating instead a relatively stable realm of nuclear peace between the great powers. If nuclear weapons automatically eliminate the possibility of war, then negotiations to tailor the specific makeup of armaments may not matter much in reducing the chances of war.⁴⁶ Finally, deterrence skeptics call into question whether armed forces, especially nuclear forces, are really an effective tool for preventing war. If even “stabilizing” weapons cannot prevent war, then perhaps broader disarmament is preferable to cooperative tinkering of armed forces.⁴⁷ As with disarmament, the empirical record remains

38 Thomas C. Schelling, "Meteors, Mischief, and War," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 16, no. 7 (1960): 292–300, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1960.11454123>.

39 Knopf, *Domestic Society and International Cooperation*, 158–98; Donald MacKenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: A Historical Sociology of Nuclear Missile Guidance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990): 213–32; Kenneth Kitts, *Presidential Commissions and National Security: The Politics of Damage Control* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 73–100.

40 James M. Acton, "Reclaiming Strategic Stability," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Feb. 5, 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/02/05/reclaiming-strategic-stability-pub-51032>; James E. Doyle, "Renewing America's Nuclear Arsenal: Options for the 21st Century," *Adelphi Papers* 56, no. 462 (2016): 49–68; Stephen J. Cimbala, *Nuclear Deterrence in a Multipolar World: The U.S., Russia and Security Challenges* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 33–46.

41 Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 234–42.

42 Igor Ivanov, "The Missile-Defense Mistake: Undermining Strategic Stability and the ABM Treaty," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 5 (September/October 2000): 15–20, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2000-09-01/missile-defense-mistake-undermining-strategic-stability-and-abm-treaty>.

43 Stephen J. Majeski, "Technological Innovation and Cooperation in Arms Races," *International Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (June 1986): 175–91, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600675>.

44 Raymond L. Garthoff, "SALT I: An Evaluation," *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (1978): 1–25, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2009965>.

45 Keir A. Lieber, "The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory," *International Security* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 155–91, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30133878>; Jack Snyder and Keir A. Lieber, "Correspondence: Defensive Realism and the 'New' History of World War I," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 174–94, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40207106>; Stephen Walt, "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition," in *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner (New York: Norton, 2002), 197–230.

46 Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better"; Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Trachtenberg, "The Past and Future of Arms Control."

47 Stephen J. Cimbala, *The Past and Future of Nuclear Deterrence* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 11–30; Ward Wilson, "The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence," *Nonproliferation Review* 15, no. 3 (2008): 421–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700802407101>; Sethi, "Making NWFW Attractive, Stable, and Sustainable."



ambiguous, with scholars deeply divided over whether the offense-defense balance has driven great powers to war and whether effective engineering of the offense-defense balance through arms control has made the world a safer place.⁴⁸

Actors and Advantage

A third common explanation for how wars start suggests that some actors are simply more prone to war than others. Scholars have advanced several reasons for why some states may be more likely to cause war. First, some states may be ideologically or culturally predisposed toward war. Nazi Germany is the most obvious and grotesque example,⁴⁹ but during the Cold War scholars criticized the United States and the Soviet Union as ideologically driven and especially war-prone.⁵⁰ Second, some states may be institutionally predisposed toward war, particularly if their leaders find international military disputes useful for distracting from domestic difficulties.⁵¹ Since the Cold War ended, much attention has been given to “rogue states,” whose rejection of liberal internationalism and unstable domestic politics are said to pose a significant threat to world peace.⁵² Third, the anarchic structure of international politics may drive some states to grow more aggressive over time. Scholars of power-transition theory maintain that war becomes more likely as newly rising great powers seek to revise the distribution of goods in their favor, while hegemony attempt to preempt the emergence of new rivals.⁵³

Under any of these conditions, peace may depend primarily on the ability of relatively peaceful status quo states to maintain a preponderance of military power, to deter aggressive adversaries from attacking.⁵⁴

If some states are particularly prone to war, and international peace depends primarily on arraying sufficient forces to deter them, then arms control can contribute to peace primarily through promoting the military *advantage* of status quo powers. To accomplish this goal, states can structure arms-control agreements to place stricter limits on their adversaries than on themselves, or they can seek to construct symmetrical arms-control regimes that limit weapons technologies more advantageous to their adversaries.⁵⁵ Although

[A]dvantage arms control views the value of individual arms-control agreements through the prism of their contribution to a larger peace-promoting agenda...

it is tempting to write off advantage arms control as a cynical ploy, it rests on a clear logic of preventing war: Limiting particularly dangerous actors' access to advanced weapons technology can strengthen deterrence by reinforcing the military advantages

48 William Mulligan, "The Trial Continues: New Directions in the Study of the Origins of the First World War," *English Historical Review* 129, no. 538 (2014): 639–66, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/ceu139>; "New Light on 1914?" H-Diplo/ISSF Forum, No. 16, Sept. 5, 2017, <https://issforum.org/forums/newlight1914>; Vally Koubi, "International Tensions and Arms Control Agreements," *American Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 1 (1993): 148–64, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111527>.

49 MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 2000).

50 George F. Kennan ["X"], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (1947): 566–82, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/1947-07-01/sources-soviet-conduct>; Robert Strausz-Hupé et al., *Protracted Conflict: A Challenging Study of Communist Strategy* (New York: Harper, 1959); William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Co., 1959).

51 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871–1918* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997); Darren Filson and Suzanne Werner, "Bargaining and Fighting: The Impact of Regime Type on War Onset, Duration, and Outcomes," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2 (2004): 296–313, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00071.x>.

52 Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (1994): 45–55, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/1994-03-01/confronting-backlash-states>; Robert Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy: Containment After the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000); Alyson Bailes, "The Changing Role of Arms Control in Historical Perspective," in *Arms Control in the 21st Century: Between Coercion and Cooperation*, ed. Oliver Meier and Christopher Daase (New York: Routledge, 2013), 15–38.

53 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987); Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

54 Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War: And the Preservation of Peace* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 566–74; Glaser, "When Are Arms Races Dangerous?" 44–84; William Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 28–57, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887109000021>.

55 Gloria Duffy, "US Thinking About Arms Competition and Arms Control," in *Strategic Power: USA/USSR*, ed. Ken Booth, William Kincade, and David Jones, (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 144–50; Lisa Baglione, *To Agree or Not to Agree: Leadership, Bargaining, and Arms Control* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 4–5.

of the status quo powers.

Historically, advantage has been a chief objective of many arms-limitation arrangements. Early efforts to leverage arms control for advantage occurred at the conclusion of major wars, including Sparta's destruction of Athens's walls and navy, Rome's disarmament of Carthage after the Punic Wars, and the limitations on German military power in the Treaty of Versailles.⁵⁶ Interwar naval arms control was also heavily influenced by calculations of relative military and industrial advantage, especially the United States and Great Britain's imposition of a 10-to-six ratio in naval strength regarding Japan.⁵⁷ Although all of the signatories of interwar naval arms limitation agreements pursued advantage within the formal negotiated limits, the Germans and Japanese also sought advantage by cheating on their arms-control commitments.⁵⁸ During the Cold War, a number of U.S. political scientists, including Donald Brennan, William Kintner, and Robert Pfaltzgraff, developed more formal arguments concerning how the United States might employ arms control to limit Soviet military advantage, though these ideas never received the same level of attention as those of stability arms-control advocates like Schelling, Halperin, and Bull.⁵⁹ Although proponents of advantage arms control had limited impact on the emerging field of political science, their ideas had a stronger influence over U.S. arms-control policy: U.S. leaders privately evaluated arms-control proposals on the basis of the relative advantages they afforded to the United States and the Soviet Union.⁶⁰

Furthermore, although the evidence on Soviet motives is limited and mixed, there is also reason to believe that the Soviet leadership continued to seek some margin of nuclear superiority over the United States in arms-control negotiations.⁶¹ To date, much of the discussion concerning arms-limitation negotiations with North Korea centers on the importance of denying its unstable regime the military advantages of possessing nuclear weapons or long-range missiles.⁶²

Like disarmament, and unlike stability, advantage arms control views the value of individual arms-control agreements through the prism of their contribution to a larger peace-promoting agenda: in this case, promoting the military advantage of status quo powers over war-prone revisionist powers. While stability arms control characterizes specific weapons technologies as inherently stabilizing or destabilizing, advantage arms control proceeds by emphasizing the role of various weapons technologies within the structure of long-term competition. For advocates of advantage arms control, agreements may dictate the pace of arms competition, allowing status quo states to put off competition until more favorable circumstances arise. They may push competition into environments more conducive to status quo states, for example by forcing revisionist land powers to compete primarily at sea, or vice versa. They may also shape competition to promote the relative military-technical advantages of status quo states, for example, by shifting competition from quantitative arms racing to qualitative arms racing.⁶³

56 Stuart Croft, *Strategies of Arms Control: A History and Typology* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 67–90.

57 Thomas Buckley, "The Icarus Factor: The American Pursuit of Myth in Naval Arms Control, 1921–36," in *The Washington Conference, 1921–22: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability and the Road to Pearl Harbor*, ed. Erik Goldstein and John H. Maurer, (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994), 131–34; John Kuehn, "A Turning Point in Anglo-American Relations? The General Board of the Navy and the London Treaty," in *At the Crossroads Between Peace and War: The London Naval Conference of 1930*, ed. John H. Maurer and Christopher Bell, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2014), 16–17.

58 Joseph Maiolo, "'I Believe the Hun Is Cheating': British Admiralty Technical Intelligence and the German Navy, 1936–39," *Intelligence and National Security* 11, no. 1 (1996): 32–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684529608432342>; David Evans and Mark Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887–1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 223–37.

59 Donald Brennan, "On the Use of Nuclear and Gas Weapons in Limited War," folder 24, Box 9, Henry A. Kissinger Papers, Part II (MS 1981), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; William Kintner, "Arms Control and National Security: A Caveat," in *Arms Control for the Late Sixties*, ed. James E. Dougherty and J.P. Lehman, Jr. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1967), 31–42; Robert Pfaltzgraff, "The Rationale for Superpower Arms Control," in *SALT: Implications for Arms Control in the 1970s*, ed. William R. Kintner and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), 3–30.

60 Letter, Moorer to Goodpaster, Jan. 24, 1969, folder SALT January–May [1969] Volume I [2 of 2], Box 873, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, May 23, 1969, folder SALT January–May [1969] Volume I [1 of 2], Box 873, NSC Files, Nixon Library; and Conversation Among Nixon, Laird, and Joint Chiefs, Aug. 10, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*) 1969–76, Vol. XXXII, *SALT I, 1969–1972*, ed. Erin R. Mahan (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2010), Document 190, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d190>.

61 Aleksandr Savelyev and Nikolay Detinov, *The Big Five: Arms Control Decision-Making in the Soviet Union* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 7–9; interview with retired Gen.-Col. Adrian Danilevich, in *Soviet Intentions 1965–1985, Volume II: Soviet Post-Cold War Testimonial Evidence*, ed. John Hines, Ellis Mishulovich, and John Shull (BDM Federal, 1995), 29–33, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb285/>; John Battilega, "Soviet Views on Nuclear Warfare: The Post-Cold War Interviews," in *Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, ed. Henry Sokolski (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 160.

62 Robert Litwak, *Preventing North Korea's Nuclear Breakout* (Washington, DC: Wilson Center, 2017).

63 John D. Maurer, "The Forgotten Side of Arms Control: Enhancing U.S. Competitive Advantage, Offsetting Enemy Strengths," *War on the Rocks*, June 27, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/06/the-forgotten-side-of-arms-control-enhancing-u-s-competitive-advantage-offsetting-enemy-strengths/>.

Because the mix of political, military, economic, and cultural factors driving long-term competition changes over time, proponents of advantage arms control tend to see arms-limitation agreements as temporary tools whose utility may expire as the larger structure of competition changes. Unlike disarmament arms controllers, advantage arms controllers do not necessarily see arms-control agreements as progressive building blocks toward a larger, peaceful goal. Rather, many advocates of advantage arms control view long-term competition as a normal part of great-power relations in which states compete for marginal military advantages over time. Arms-control agreements are seen as instrumental in shaping this competition, to be concluded and discarded as convenient.⁶⁴ Peace is a product of this competitive interaction rather than an end result of a transformative process.

While it is difficult to imagine a state concluding an agreement that places it at a disadvantage, scholars studying competitive arms control have suggested a number of scenarios under which advantage arms limitation might occur. First, a state seeking stability might be tricked into an arms-control agreement that undermines its relative security. Cold War theorists of competitive arms control were constantly concerned that the Soviet Union might trick the United States into such an agreement.⁶⁵ Second, a leader in a weak political position might agree to a disadvantageous arms-control agreement in order to secure the domestic political benefits of the agreement. Some observers have viewed Gorbachev's dramatic arms-control concessions in this light.⁶⁶ Third, adversaries might

conclude an arms-control agreement that promotes different relative advantages for each side. For example, while the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty codified a 10-to-six U.S. advantage in battleship tonnage over Japan, the U.S. agreement not to fortify its bases in the Western Pacific provided Japan with a substantial advantage in Northeast Asia.⁶⁷ Finally, adversaries might have different calculations about the long-term implications of an arms-control agreement, with each side seeking to advance its own competitive advantage.⁶⁸ The practice of negotiating limitations on complex weapons systems opens up possibilities for creative misunderstandings, generating opportunities for states to seek advantage through arms control.⁶⁹

Like both disarmament and stability, the basic assumptions underlying arms control for advantage have been subject to ample criticism. First, many scholars question whether factors such as regime type, ideological orientation, or power transition theory adequately explain the outbreak of war.⁷⁰ Even among those who accept that these factors might explain why wars begin, debates rage over which regimes, ideologies, or positions are most prone to war.⁷¹ Second, analysts remain uncertain over how much relative advantage in military capabilities actually improves deterrence when compared with other factors such as the relative interests or resolve of the adversaries involved, or their ability to communicate those interests and resolve to each other.⁷² This is especially the case where nuclear weapons are involved: Some scholars argue that even a small nuclear arsenal makes deterrence easy, rendering the balance

64 Andrew Marshall, *Long-Term Competition with the Soviets: A Framework for Strategic Analysis* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972); Richard Nixon, 1999: *Victory Without War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 79–81.

65 Robert Strausz-Hupé, "Arms Control and the Atlantic Alliance," in *The Prospects for Arms Control*, ed. James Dougherty and John Lehman Jr. (New York: McFadden-Bartell Book, 1965), 242–48; William Van Cleave, "Political and Negotiating Asymmetries: Insult in SALT I," in *Contrasting Approaches to Strategic Arms Control*, ed. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1974), 9–29.

66 Baglione, To Agree or Not to Agree, 87–110

67 John H. Maurer, "Arms Control and the Washington Conference," in *The Washington Conference, 1921–22: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability and the Road to Pearl Harbor*, ed. Erik Goldstein and John H. Maurer (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994), 286–89.

68 Donald Brennan, "On Common Understanding in Arms Control and Communication to Develop it," Jan. 25, 1961, folder 1, Box 10, Henry A. Kissinger Papers, Part II (MS 1981), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

69 Eric Grynawski, *Constructive Illusions: Misperceiving the Origins of International Cooperation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 28–40.

70 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 29–40; Richard Ned Lebow and Benjamin Valentino, "Lost in Transition: A Critical Analysis of Power Transition Theory," *International Relations* 23, no. 3 (2009): 389–410, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2F0047117809340481>; Peter Harris, "Problems with Power-Transition Theory: Beyond the Vanishing Disparities Thesis," *Asian Security* 10, no. 3 (2014): 241–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2014.983634>.

71 Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War," *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (2002): 297–337, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3078607>; Brian Lai and Dan Slater, "Institutions of the Offensive: Domestic Sources of Dispute Initiation in Authoritarian Regimes, 1950–1992," *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 1 (2005): 113–26, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00173.x>; John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

72 Robert Jervis, "Deterrence and Perception," *International Security* 7, no. 3 (Winter 1982-1983): 3–30, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538549>; Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 496–526, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010184>; James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audience Costs and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (September 1994): 577–92, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944796>.

of capabilities largely superfluous, while others maintain that even marginal advantages in the relative nuclear balance can have outsized effects on the success or failure of deterrence.⁷³ Third, critics maintain that arms-control negotiations are ineffective in modifying the balance of military capabilities, and instead simply ratify the preexisting balance.⁷⁴ In the face of this criticism, it is difficult to determine whether arms control for advantage really makes war less likely.

Jervis' admonition that one's theory of arms control ought to emerge from one's theory of war thus presents a serious problem. The multiple, competing explanations for war call for multiple, competing approaches to arms control. The theoretical bases of these competing explanations for war are diverse, focusing on different causal mechanisms and generating very different policy prescriptions. Indeed, these competing approaches to arms control rest on such different theoretical foundations that proponents of each often downplay or even ignore the existence of the others. Yet given the diversity of explanations for war, each approach can credibly claim the mantle of "arms control," and none can be easily rejected as obviously false. This cacophony of arms-control purposes creates serious challenges for policymakers.

Purpose and Policy: The ABM Treaty, 1972–2001

While scholars may agree to disagree about arms control, political leaders can enjoy no such luxury. In order to conduct effective negotiations, a government must develop an arms-control policy to guide its negotiators. Absent a clear and uncontested understanding of the purpose of arms control, how can such a policy be constructed? In theory, one might expect a government to select from the approaches outlined above and to pursue it as the primary objective of negotiations. In

practice, however, leaders often produce arms-control policy that seeks to compromise among the competing goals. This sort of compromise allows leaders to build the domestic coalitions necessary to prevail in the "two-level game" of arms control, where leaders must conclude international and domestic bargains at the same time.⁷⁵ It also allows leaders to hedge their bets between competing theories. Analyses assuming a single, obvious rationale for arms control have generally viewed these sorts of compromises as a dilution of true purpose.⁷⁶ Once one accepts that arms control can have multiple purposes, however, it becomes easier to appreciate that these compromises serve as the building blocks of success. A key example is the 1972 ABM Treaty, a single agreement that ultimately came to embody the hopes and fears of all three approaches to arms control — disarmament, stability, and advantage.

The idea of a treaty to limit anti-ballistic missiles originated in the Johnson administration in the mid-1960s. Already facing the double challenge of waging the Vietnam War while advancing the Great Society program, President Lyndon Johnson was eager to avoid an ABM arms race with the Soviets, which threatened to be both costly and politically unpopular. Johnson also feared that conservatives would punish him politically if he unilaterally limited America's ABM deployments. So, Johnson and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara sought to negotiate a bilateral agreement with the Soviet Union limiting these missiles, an approach that would avert the costs of their deployment while also bolstering the U.S. strategy of assured destruction, which sought to convince the Soviets of the futility of further arms racing.⁷⁷ The Soviets initially rebuffed Johnson's proposal for arms limitation but ultimately agreed to talks. Soviet willingness to begin Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) came too late for Johnson, who, by 1968, was already on his way out of office.⁷⁸

Unlike Johnson, incoming President Richard Nixon remained committed to deploying some kind

73 Colin S. Gray, "Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory," *International Security* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1979): 54–87, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2626784>; Robert Jervis, "Why Nuclear Superiority Doesn't Matter," *Political Science Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (Winter 1979–1980): 617–33, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2149629>; Todd Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Matthew Kroenig, "Nuclear Superiority and the Balance of Resolve: Explaining Nuclear Crisis Outcomes," *International Organization* 67, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 141–71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43282155>.

74 Robert Kaufman, *Arms Control During The Pre-Nuclear Era: The United States and Naval Limitation Between the Two World Wars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Colin S. Gray, *House of Cards: Why Arms Control Must Fail* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

75 Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 427–60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027697>.

76 Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1994), 146–226; Steven Miller, "Politics over Promise: Domestic Impediments to Arms Control," *International Security* 8, no. 4 (Spring 1984): 67–90.

77 James Cameron, *The Double Game: The Demise of America's First Missile Defense System and the Rise of Strategic Arms Limitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 79–107.

78 Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 10–11.



of ABM system. Nixon had wooed conservative voters in 1968 with promises of restoring America's strategic superiority over the Soviet Union, including some form of ABM deployment.⁷⁹ Moreover, Nixon appointed a cadre of competitive arms controllers to the Defense Department and National Security Council staff who saw ABM technology as a crucial area of U.S. advantage that should be fully exploited. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and Deputy Defense Secretary David Packard believed that U.S. advantages in precision manufacturing, advanced electronics, and digital computing would ultimately allow the United States to deploy an ABM system far superior to anything that the Soviets could produce.⁸⁰ In March 1969, Laird proposed that the United States deploy an ABM system known as "Safeguard" — which included a dozen major ABM sites across the United States — that was capable of providing a limited defense of U.S. cities and strategic forces from a Chinese or Soviet attack.⁸¹ In addition to its own merits, many within the defense establishment saw Safeguard as a first step toward an even

blended arms-control purposes for multiple reasons. The first and most obvious was that policymakers were unsure as to which logic was best or whether some combination of them might be preferable. For example, in approaching SALT, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger was of two minds. In a May 1969 memo to Nixon on SALT options, Kissinger outlined the major U.S. objective in arms-limitation negotiations with the Soviet Union as such: "An agreement could freeze or codify strategic relationships in a manner which preserves 'equality' at worst and a U.S. edge at best." Kissinger sought an agreement that would broadly stabilize the arms race while allowing for U.S. advantages on the margins, the better to strengthen "an American President's resolve in a crisis."⁸² In doing so, Kissinger personally combined both the stability and advantage approaches to arms control.

Arms-control purposes are further blended through the domestic policy process as officials with differing preferences build coalitions to support their own views and compromise with

The division between proponents and opponents of ABMs initially led the Nixon administration to an impasse regarding SALT.

more capable ABM system.⁸² From the beginning, conservatives in the Nixon administration were determined to use ABM technology to promote U.S. military advantage over the Soviet Union.

For Nixon, the test would be finding ways to exploit those advantages while also bolstering strategic stability. The Nixon administration

other coalitions to produce policy. On the issue of anti-ballistic missiles, Nixon could not do as he pleased because his government was deeply divided over the merits of ABMs.

While proponents in the Defense Department and White House insisted on moving forward with ABM deployments, opponents in the State Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, including Secretary of State William Rogers and agency Director Gerard Smith, insisted that any ABM deployment would undermine the strategic equilibrium with the Soviet Union. Rogers and Smith instead promoted a stability approach to arms control, arguing that the United States should seek an agreement with the Soviets to ban ABMs as soon as possible.⁸⁴

79 John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 133–34; Sandra Scanlon, *The Pro-War Movement: Domestic Support for the Vietnam War and the Making of Modern American Conservatism* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 52–54, 94–97.

80 Notes of National Security Council Meeting, Feb. 14, 1969, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXIV, *National Security Policy, 1969–1972*, ed. M. Todd Bennett (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2011), Document 7, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d7>; Memo, Wheeler to Laird, Feb. 26, 1969, folder Anti-Ballistic Missile System [Feb-Mar 1969], Box 843, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting, Jan. 27, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 129, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d129>; Memcon, Nixon, Laird, et al., Aug. 10, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 190, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d190>.

81 Paper prepared in the Department of Defense, undated, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXIV, Document 14, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d14>.

82 Memo, Wheeler to Laird, Feb. 26, 1969, folder Anti-Ballistic Missile System [Feb-Mar 1969], Box 843, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

83 Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, May 23, 1969, Document 1, in *The Secret History of the ABM Treaty, 1969–1972*, ed. William Burr, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 60, Nov. 8, 2001, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB60/>.

84 See, for example, Smith's comments on Feb. 19, 1969, in minutes of National Security Council meeting, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXIV, Document 8, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d8>.

The conflict between advocates of advantage arms control in the Defense Department and proponents of stability arms control at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency would define the Nixon administration's approach to SALT.⁸⁵

The division between proponents and opponents of ABMs initially led the Nixon administration to an impasse regarding SALT. Proponents of advantage arms control, like Laird, Packard, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Earle Wheeler, argued that any SALT agreement would need to allow the full 12-site Safeguard deployment. Meanwhile, stability arms controllers, including Smith and Rogers, called for an immediate freeze on all ABM construction.⁸⁶ Internal debates about the wisdom of ABM deployment quickly spilled into public view as congressional opponents of the missiles organized to block the first phase of Safeguard's deployment. Constant leaking from the administration, as well as awkward public controversies between government officials, repeatedly undermined Safeguard's chances.⁸⁷ After a bruising congressional battle, funding for the first phase of Safeguard squeaked through the U.S. Senate in August 1969 on a 50-50 split, with Vice President Spiro Agnew casting the tie-breaking vote.⁸⁸ Challenged by Congress and unable to control his subordinates, Nixon's strategic arms policy was off to an inauspicious start.

Congressional opposition to Safeguard shaped the U.S. position on SALT. By the fall of 1969, the intensity of congressional opposition convinced advantage arms controllers like Laird and Packard that the United States would not be able to deploy the full 12-site Safeguard system in the near future. Not coincidentally, they began to promote a much more stringent ABM agreement that would, in effect, confine the Soviets to the level of ABM deployment that the U.S. Congress would allow — the two ABM sites authorized in the first phase of Safeguard.⁸⁹ The Defense Department's shifting priorities lined up with the State Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency's continued advocacy of a zero- or low-level ABM agreement.⁹⁰ As a result, the initial U.S. proposals on SALT in April 1970 sought to limit ABMs to very low levels, with only one or two bases allowed per side.⁹¹ The Soviets immediately accepted, in principle, the idea of maintaining low-level ABM deployments, setting the basic terms for the ABM Treaty that would be concluded in Moscow two years later.⁹²

The ABM "compromise" in the Nixon administration was itself the result of some creative misunderstanding between advocates of advantage and stability arms control. While Smith and Rogers saw the ABM limitations as preventing widespread proliferation of a destabilizing weapons technology, Laird and Packard saw these

85 Disarmament was not seriously considered as an arms-control rationale by the U.S. government in the early 1970s. The ABM Treaty's disarmament rationale was developed *after* the agreement had been concluded.

86 Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, "NSSM 28, Substantive SALT Issues and NATO Aspects," June 10, 1969, folder NSSM-28 2 of 2 [2 of 3], Box H-140, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Paper Prepared by the Interagency SALT Steering Committee, undated, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXII, Document 14, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d14>; Minutes of a National Security Council meeting, June 25, 1969, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXII, Document 22, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d22>; Memo, Laird to Kissinger, July 3, 1969, folder SALT June-July [1969] Volume II [1 of 2], NSC Files, Nixon Library; "Alternative I," folder Review Group SALT [part 1] 7/7/69, Box H-039, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library.

87 Minutes of National Security Council Meeting, March 5, 1969, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXIV, Document 16, fn. 3, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d16>; Beecher, "Pentagon Drafts Revised Proposal on Missile Shield," *New York Times*, March 2, 1969; "The Negotiator and the Confronter," *Time*, April 4, 1969; Beecher, "Administration Gets Study of Global Nuclear Strategy," *New York Times*, May 1, 1969; *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXIV, Editorial Note 25, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d25>; Memo, BeLieu to Nixon, June 11, 1969, folder Sentinel ABM System Vol. III 6/1/69, Box 844, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

88 Finney, "ABM Debate Aims at Ten Senators Still Undecided," *New York Times*, July 9, 1969; Averill, "ABM Debated Behind Locked Senate Doors," *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1969; *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXII, Editorial Note 18, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d18>; Letter, Nixon to Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and Kissinger, Aug. 7, 1969, folder Sentinel ABM System Vol. III 6/1/69, Box 844, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

89 William Hyland, *Mortal Rivals: Superpower Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1987), 44-45; Memo, Knight to Baroody, Oct. 7, 1969, folder Issue Areas — General, 1969 (2), Box A74, Laird Papers, Ford Library; Minutes of Defense Program Review Committee, Oct. 22, 1969, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXIV, Document 96, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d96>; Memo, Lynn to Kissinger, Oct. 23, 1969, folder Sentinel ABM System Vol. III 6/1/69, Box 844, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Minutes of Defense Program Review Committee Meeting, Nov. 13, 1969, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXIV, Document 100, fn. 7, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d100>; Memorandum for the Record by Packard, Dec. 8, 1969, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXIV, Document 106, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34/d106>. Despite this change, the Joint Chiefs of Staff remained committed to U.S. ABM superiority: Memo, Wheeler to Laird, Dec. 31, 1969, folder ABM-System 1-70 - 3-70 Vol. III Memos and Misc. [2 of 2], Box 840, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

90 Memo, Lynn to Kissinger, Jan. 31, 1970, folder ABM-System 1/70 - 3/70 Vol. III Memos and Misc. [1 of 2], Box 840, NSC Files, Nixon Library; "Task Y-1 ABM/MIRV Options," March 13, 1970, folder ABM-System Vol. IV 2-70 - 30 Apr 70 Memos and Misc. [1 of 3], Box 841, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Lynn to Kissinger, March 20, 1970, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 6/20/70, Box H-005, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Spiers to Rogers, "Preparation for SALT II," March 6, 1970, DEF 18-3 AUS (VI), 1970-1973 SNF, RG59, USNA; "ABMs: Should SAMs Be Counted As ABMs," folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT Options 4/6/70, Box H-005, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library.

91 Memcon, Nixon et al., April 11, 1970, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXII, Document 69, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d69>; Memo, Kissinger to Smith, April 13, 1970, folder SALT Talks (Vienna) Vol. VIII 4/9/70 - 5/10/70 [1 of 2], Box 877, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

92 Memo, Laird to Kissinger, April 27, 1970, *FRUS* 1969-76, Vol. XXXII, Document 73, fn. 3, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d73>.



limitations as necessary to prevent unlimited Soviet deployments, which, for political reasons, the United States would not be able to match. We know that advocates of advantage arms control in the Defense Department continued to see ABM technology as an area of relative U.S. advantage because they continually attempted to push the envelope on ABM deployments. Although by late 1969 Laird and Packard had despaired of further ABM deployments by the United States, at least in the short term, Senate debate in the summer of 1970 suggested that Congress might fund a more extensive ABM deployment if it were limited to defending ICBM fields in the Midwest. This, in turn, rekindled Laird and Packard's interest.⁹³

The realization that Congress might fund more than two ABM sites caused Laird and Packard to have serious buyer's remorse over the April 1970 SALT proposals limiting ABM deployments, which the Soviets had already accepted. In 1971, in the face of deadlock with the Soviets over how to limit offensive forces, the Defense Department began insisting that any SALT agreement provide the United States with a four-to-one advantage in ABM bases, driven by Laird and Packard's conviction that Congress would eventually fund four ABM sites.⁹⁴ The U.S. and Soviet SALT delegations spent the better part of a year wrangling over this new ABM proposal, with the U.S. delegates eventually falling back to two-for-one, while the Soviets continued to

insist on the April 1970 proposal for equal bases.⁹⁵ By that point, the Defense Department had already moved on from its interest in Safeguard ABM "bases" and was, instead, proposing a new ABM modality in which several short-range interceptors would be co-located with each ICBM silo, resulting in the distributed deployment of thousands of interceptors and hundreds of networked radars. True to form, Laird and Packard pushed for a new ABM arms-control proposal under which the United States would be able to deploy such an expansive ABM system while the Soviets would remain limited to their single ABM facility in Moscow.⁹⁶ This was too far even for Nixon, who, along with Kissinger, had concluded that anything other than ABM equality would be non-negotiable with the Soviets.⁹⁷ As a result, the ABM Treaty concluded by Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev in May 1972 allowed each side two ABM bases, later reduced to a single base for each.⁹⁸ The Defense Department's efforts to reformulate the ABM negotiations have received little attention from historians because the final agreement dictated an equal number of bases. However, these behind-the-scenes efforts indicate that many within the U.S. government continued to view ABM technology as an area of U.S. relative advantage and sought to use the ABM Treaty as an opportunity for gaining strategic advantage over the Soviets.

Even in establishing numerical parity, the 1972

93 Letter, Drell to DuBridge, Dec. 23, 1969, folder ABM-System 1-70 – 3-70 Vol. III Memos and Misc. [2 of 2], Box 840, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Lynn to Kissinger, Jan. 5, 1970, folder ABM-System 1-70 – 3-70 Vol. III Memos and Misc. [2 of 2], Box 840, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Letter, DuBridge to Kissinger, July 1, 1970, folder ABM-System Vol. VI, May 1970 – July 30, 1971 [2 of 2], Box 842, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

94 Letter, Laird to Kissinger, Oct. 21, 1970, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) Vol. XIII Oct. 70 – Dec. 70 [2 of 3], Box 880, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

95 Memo, Wayne Smith to Kissinger, Feb. 28, 1971, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 3/2/71, Box H-007, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Davis to Kissinger, March 4, 1971, folder SALT Backup 1970–71 [2 of 2], Box 886, NSC Files, Nixon Library; National Security Decision Memorandum 102, March 11, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 138, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d138>; Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, June 30, 1971, folder NSC Meeting SALT 6/ 30/71, Box H-031, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; National Security Decision Memorandum 140, Nov. 15, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 212, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d212>.

96 Paul Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision* (New York: Grove/Atlantic, 1989), 317–18; Memo, Wayne Smith and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, Oct. 30, 1971, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 11/3/71, Box H-009, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Packard to Kissinger, Nov. 6, 1971, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 11/3/71, Box H-009, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, Jan. 12, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 225, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d225>; Memo, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, Feb. 4, 1972, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) (sic) Vol. 17 Jan - Apr 1972 [2 of 3], Box 882, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

97 Memcon, Brown to Kissinger, Aug. 30, 1971, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) Vo. 17 Sep-Dec 71 [2 of 2], Box 882, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Smith to Nixon, Sept. 28, 1971, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) Vo. 17 Sep-Dec 71 [1 of 2], Box 882, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Wayne Smith and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, Oct. 30, 1971, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 11/3/71, Box H-009, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Memo, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, folder Verification Panel Meeting – SALT 2/ 9/72 [1 of 2], Box H-010, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library.

98 Memo, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, March 6, 1972, folder Verification Panel Meeting – SALT 3/8/71 [1 of 2], Box H-010, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Memcon, Kissinger and Dobrynin, March 17, 1972, in *Soviet-American Relations: The Détente Years, 1969-1972*, ed. David C. Geyer and Douglas E. Selva (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2007), 615–27; Telegram from the Department of State to the SALT Delegation, April 10, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 256, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d256>; Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, April 18, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 258, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d258>; Memo, Odeen to Kissinger, April 23, 1972, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) (sic) Vol. 17 Jan-Apr 1972 [1 of 3], Box 882, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Memcon, Brezhnev, Kissinger, et al., April 22, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 262, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d262>.

ABM Treaty contained several concessions to proponents of advantage arms control.⁹⁹ First and foremost, the United States was allowed to deploy an ABM base, which Laird and Packard hoped would provide the opportunity to gain real experience in operating ABM technology, if only on a small scale.¹⁰⁰ But even this small-scale deployment was not guaranteed: Stability arms controllers had argued on numerous occasions that the United States ought to push the Soviets for a zero-ABM agreement.¹⁰¹ The crux of the issue was not so much the immediate ABM deployment but, rather, the long-term implications of ABM research and testing. In addition to the perceived wastefulness of ABM deployments, stability arms controllers argued that a zero-ABM agreement would be easier to verify, since it would prohibit not only ABM deployments but also testing of ABM system components, making covert cheating by the Soviets all but impossible.¹⁰² Advantage arms controllers generally agreed that a treaty that allowed limited ABM deployment and testing would be harder to verify but argued that the United States needed to retain its basis for ABM testing to enable possible future deployments.¹⁰³ Rather than a simple ban on deployment and testing, the 1972 ABM Treaty allowed testing at specified ranges, with verification enabled by a series of definitions concerning “ABM

system components,” including the allowed power-aperture ratio for search radars and the permitted testing configuration of surface-to-air missiles.¹⁰⁴ The complexity and risk involved in this scheme demonstrate the value that advocates of advantage arms control placed on retaining ABM testing facilities — Laird, Packard, and others were willing to run higher risks of Soviet cheating if it meant the United States retained the ability to test and deploy new ABM technologies.

In addition to allowing deployment and testing of ABM system components, the ABM Treaty contained two other important concessions to advocates of advantage arms control. First, although the treaty banned testing and deployment of “exotic” ABM technologies, it did not ban research short of testing. As a result, even under the treaty the United States would be able to push the envelope of ABM technology, pursuing new sensors and interceptors considerably more advanced than the Safeguard components of the early 1970s.¹⁰⁵ Second, the ABM Treaty contained explicit withdrawal provisions, providing each party with the right to terminate the treaty should its “supreme interests” be on the line.¹⁰⁶ Stability arms controllers, as well as the Soviet SALT delegates, argued that such language was unnecessary, but advantage arms controllers in the National Security Council staff and Defense

99 Even recent archival work on the ABM Treaty has underplayed the importance of these concessions to competitive arms controllers. See, for example: David Tal, *US Strategic Arms Policy in the Cold War: Negotiations and Confrontations over SALT, 1969–1979* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 158–59; Cameron, *The Double Game*, 6–11; and Matthew J. Ambrose, *The Control Agenda: A History of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018) 45–46.

100 Letter, Laird to Jackson, Aug. 7, 1970, folder ABM–General (5) – July 1970 – July 1972, Box A50, Laird Papers, Ford Library; Memo, Wayne Smith and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, June 28, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 184, fn. 4, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d184>; Memo, Laird to Nixon, Aug. 2, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 187, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d187>; Memo, Kissinger to Nixon, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 8/9/71, Box H-009, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; National Security Decision Memorandum 127, Aug. 12, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 192, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d192>.

101 *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Editorial Note 6, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d6>; Memo, Smith to Rogers, May 9, 1969, folder Review Group SALT (NSSM 28) [part 1] 6/12/69, Box H-037, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library; Paper Prepared in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, June 11, 1969, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 16, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d16>; “Task Y-1 ABM/MIRV Options,” March 13, 1970, folder ABM-System Vol. IV 2-70 –30 Apr 70 Memos and Misc. [1 of 3], Box 841, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Letter, Smith to Nixon, March 8, 1971, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) Vol. XIV 1 Jan 71 – April 71 [1 of 3], Box 880, NSC Files, Nixon Library; Minutes of National Security Council Meeting, June 30, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 170, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d170>; Memo, Irwin to Tucker, Feb. 1, 1972, DEF 18, 1970–1973 SNF, RG59, USA.

102 “Report to the Verification Working Group on Net Assessment of NCA Defense Radar Limitations,” Feb. 25, 1971, folder SALT Talks (Helsinki) Vol. XIV 1 Jan. 71 – April 1971 [1 of 3], Box 880, NSC Files, Nixon Library.

103 Conversation Among Nixon, Laird, and Joint Chiefs, Aug. 10, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 190, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d190>; Memorandum for the Record, March 17, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 240, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d240>.

104 Paper Prepared in the Department of Defense for the Verification Panel Working Group, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 207, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d207>; Memo, Tucker to Laird, March 27, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 244, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d244>; National Security Decision Memorandum 164, May 1, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 271, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d271>; Treaty Between the United States and the Soviet Union, May 26, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 316, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d316>.

105 Memo, Laird to Kissinger, July 12, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 174, fn. 1, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d174>; Memo, Laird to Kissinger, July 20, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 181, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d181>; Memo, Wayne Smith and Hyland to Kissinger, Aug. 11, 1971, folder Verification Panel Meeting SALT 8/ 9/71, Box H-009, NSC Institutional Files, Nixon Library.

106 Treaty Between the United States and the Soviet Union, May 26, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 316, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d316>.



Department insisted on its inclusion, creating a backdoor for possible future abrogation.¹⁰⁷ As a result, while stability arms controllers could praise the ABM Treaty for placing limits on a dangerous technology in perpetuity, advantage arms controllers saw the treaty as a temporary measure designed to hold off Soviet deployments while the United States made progress on ABM technology, awaiting a more propitious domestic political environment when full ABM deployment would be possible.¹⁰⁸

The compromise at the heart of the ABM Treaty rested on the different time horizons of the proponents of stability and competitive arms control. Advocates of stability arms control insisted that ballistic missile defenses were, by nature, destabilizing. Their insistence on technology's unchanging nature meant that their time horizon was short: Because the technology's meaning was fixed, what was good for the moment was assumed to be good in perpetuity. By comparison, proponents of advantage arms control believed that the meaning of ABM technology might evolve organically as the technology itself matured and as the political context changed. The resulting ABM Treaty succeeded by juggling these differing time horizons: Stability arms controllers received concrete restrictions in the present, while advantage arms controllers satisfied themselves with possibilities for the future. By exploiting the two time horizons of the opposing schools of arms control, Nixon and Kissinger were able to build a historic compromise.

Imbued from its creation with multiple purposes, the ABM Treaty did not remain static in meaning but evolved over time. Originally a compromise between the stability and advantage schools of arms control, by the 1980s the ABM Treaty also gained a substantial disarmament logic, as proponents of disarmament embraced the treaty as a tool

for reducing nuclear arsenals. Nuclear disarmers argued that the mutual vulnerability enshrined in the ABM Treaty provided the context in which steep cuts to offensive nuclear forces could take place.¹⁰⁹ Much like advantage arms controllers, disarmers came to see the ABM Treaty as an important first

Imbued from its creation with multiple purposes, the ABM Treaty did not remain static in meaning but evolved over time.

step — however flawed — in a much longer contest, allowing them to join advantage and stability arms controllers in supporting the same arms-control regime, albeit for radically different reasons.

Around the same time, advantage arms controllers began questioning whether the moment had come for the United States to cast off the ABM Treaty and rush ahead in ABM technology. Advantage arms controllers in the Reagan administration tested the treaty's limits in order to pursue more advanced ABM technology through the Strategic Defense Initiative, arguing that the text of the ABM Treaty technically allowed the testing of certain "exotic" ABM system components, even if the negotiating record was ambiguous.¹¹⁰ Debate over the Strategic Defense Initiative between the disarmament, stability, and advantage factions was fierce. Nevertheless, the new "exotic" ABM technologies offered by the Strategic Defense Initiative were insufficiently mature to warrant testing or deployment. When Reagan left office, the ABM Treaty remained in place even as the United States continued to develop new ABM concepts

107 Memo, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, Dec. 16, 1971, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 216, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d216>; Memo, Tucker to Laird, March 27, 1972, *FRUS 1969–76*, Vol. XXXII, Document 244, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v32/d244>.

108 Nixon himself later admitted that the treaty was intended as a temporary measure. See: Nixon, 1999, 94–96.

109 Michael Krepon, "Dormant Threat to the ABM Treaty," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 41, no. 1 (1986): 31–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1986.11459309>; John Kogut and Michael Weissman, "Taking the Pledge Against Star Wars," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 42, no. 1 (1986): 27–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.1986.11459308>.

110 Paul Nitze, *SDI and the ABM Treaty* (Washington, DC: State Department Bureau of Public Affairs, 1985), <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/sdi%20and%20the%20abm%20treaty%20Paul%20H.%20Nitze%20Department%20of%20State%20May%2030%2C%201985.pdf>; Kim Holmes and W. Bruce Weinrod, *Weighing the Evidence: How the ABM Treaty Permits a Strategic Defense System* (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 1987), <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/weighing-the-evidence-how-the-abm-treaty-permits-strategic-defense-system>; Donald Gross, "Negotiated Treaty Amendment: The Solution to the SDI-ABM Treaty Conflict," *Harvard International Law Journal* 28, no. 1 (1987): 31–68.

and components.¹¹¹

Over time, however, the ABM Treaty's appeal to advantage arms controllers diminished, much as its initial pro-advantage authors had intended. By the late 1990s, many proponents of advantage arms control believed that new ABM technology had matured to the point where it was ready for serious testing and deployment.¹¹² At the same time, evolving threats from the smaller missile arsenals of "rogue states" increased the incentive to develop even a small ABM system.¹¹³ These changes in context convinced many conservatives that the period in which the ABM Treaty contributed to U.S. national security had passed. In another example of the U.S. search for advantage in arms control, the Clinton administration initially attempted to modify the ABM Treaty to allow for further U.S. deployments.¹¹⁴ When Russia proved unwilling to modify the treaty to allow such deployments, the George W. Bush administration announced its intention to withdraw in December 2001, setting off a wave of ABM testing and deployment that continues today.¹¹⁵

The ABM Treaty's greatest long-term strength was its ability to encompass multiple arms-control agendas, which gave it significant staying power and even allowed additional rationales to be added to the treaty over time. However, it could not survive the wholesale defection of advantage arms controllers in the 1990s and, as such, was abrogated. Proponents of stability arms control saw leaving the ABM Treaty as a betrayal of its original principles, allowing an inherently dangerous technology back into the world.¹¹⁶ In some ways, however, abrogation of the ABM Treaty was not a betrayal of its founding principles but, rather, their natural culmination. From the advantage point of view, the treaty had stalled any Soviet or Russian ABM program, allowing continued U.S.

progress on ABM technology while waiting for a domestic political circumstance more favorable to deployment. Whether the ABM Treaty was a failure or success depends largely on one's perspective.

Conclusion

To understand the history or the contemporary practice of arms control, one must recognize that arms-limitation agreements often serve multiple and contradictory purposes. In the quest to prevent war, arms limitation may assist in disarmament, stability, or advantage, each of which is rooted in a plausible explanation for what causes war and each of which can credibly claim the mantle of "arms control." Absent consensus on which approach is most effective at preventing war, the formation of arms-control policy has been difficult. In practice, policymakers have juggled the differing time horizons of competing arms-control constituencies to produce compromises capable of advancing all three arms-control aims simultaneously, at least for a time. Recognizing the multiple purposes of arms control has critical implications for scholars and policymakers.

For scholars, recognizing arms control's multiple goals is important for expanding an understanding of arms control and international politics more broadly. Arms control is not always a cooperative enterprise: Such agreements have served as vehicles for promoting the relative military advantages of great and minor powers. Studies that treat arms control as a purely cooperative endeavor will inevitably capture only half of the picture. For political scientists, this may involve recoding cases in which the existence of arms-control negotiations is treated ipso facto as evidence of improving cooperation between states rather than a different

111 Thomas Friedman, "U.S. Formally Rejects 'Star Wars' in ABM Treaty," *New York Times*, July 15, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/15/world/us-formally-rejects-star-wars-in-abm-treaty.html>; Steven Pifer, "The Limits of U.S. Missile Defense," *National Interest*, March 30, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-limits-us-missile-defense-12503>.

112 James Lindsay and Michael O'Hanlon, *Defending America: A Plan for a Limited National Missile Defense* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001); James Dao, "Rumsfeld Outlines to NATO Fast Track for Missile Shield," *New York Times*, June 8, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/08/world/rumsfeld-outlines-to-nato-fast-track-for-missile-shield.html>.

113 Ivan Eland and Daniel Lee, "The Rogue State Doctrine and National Missile Defense," CATO Institute Foreign Policy Briefing No. 65, March 29, 2001, <https://object.cato.org/pubs/fpbriefs/fpb65.pdf>; "U.S. Withdraws From the ABM Treaty: President Bush's Remarks and U.S. Diplomatic Notes," *Arms Control Association*, Dec. 13, 2001, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_01-02/docjanfeb02.

114 Alexander Pikayev, "ABM Treaty Revision: A Challenge to Russian Security," *Disarmament Diplomacy* 44 (March 2000), <http://www.acronym.org.uk/old/archive/44abm.htm>.

115 Terence Neilan, "Bush Pulls Out of ABM Treaty; Putin Calls Move a Mistake," *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/13/international/bush-pulls-out-of-abm-treaty-putin-calls-move-a-mistake.html>; Wade Boese, "U.S. Withdraws From ABM Treaty; Global Response Muted," *Arms Control Today*, July 1, 2002, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_07-08/abmjul_aug02.

116 Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay, "Unilateral Withdrawal From the ABM Treaty Is a Bad Idea," Brookings Institution, April 30, 2001, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/unilateral-withdrawal-from-the-abm-treaty-is-a-bad-idea/>.

form of competition.¹¹⁷ For historians, this will require reconsidering the success or failure of arms-control negotiations in light of their ability to advance multiple agendas rather than a single logic.¹¹⁸ For both political scientists and historians, the flexibility of what arms control means may pose deeper questions concerning the nature of cooperation and competition in international politics and whether those concepts are mutually exclusive or interrelated.

Given the difficulties entailed in producing a unified theory of arms control, scholars would do well to consider lessons from the practical world of statecraft, where theoretical rigor is often less important than political necessity. This is especially the case when arms-control arrangements must be cobbled together out of multiple competing purposes, assembling the parallel coalitions required to prevail in complex two-level negotiations. Under these circumstances, one of the most important resources available to a would-be arms controller is *time*. Competing interests with different time horizons can be assembled into arms-control compromises in which each side gets what it wants but at different points. Furthermore, initial compromises on the meaning of arms control are open to reinterpretation and revision over time, as arms-control regimes gain new meanings and contexts. Recognizing that arms-control agreements can serve multiple purposes, and that these objectives might change over time, can lead to a better understanding of why some agreements last, why some end, and why those that end break down when they do. The longest-lasting arms-limitation agreements are likely to be those that can continue to embody multiple agendas while also adapting to new contexts. An agreement is unlikely to last when it no longer appears to serve a sufficiently large range of purposes and when leaders become disillusioned with the utility of arms control for achieving their objectives.

For policymakers, recognizing the existence of multiple arms-control agendas is both good and bad. The bad news is that understanding the policy implications of existing and notional arms-control agreements is extremely difficult, because agreements often serve several purposes and may have different meanings for different actors. As a result, the State and Defense Departments may have radically different understandings of a given agreement's purpose, while foreign interlocutors are likely to have views of their own.¹¹⁹ Balancing these competing views is tremendously difficult, especially in periods of significant international and domestic political confusion and rancor. As in the Cold War, the goal of enacting arms control is likely to remain very challenging.

The good news is that significant opportunities exist in the contemporary U.S. political scene for effective coalition building in favor of arms-control proposals, with figures as far apart politically as John Bolton, Bill Clinton, and Derek Johnson all calling for an arms-control solution to the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear arsenal.¹²⁰ There is strong reason to suspect that Bolton, Clinton, and Johnson each prefer an arms-control solution to the North Korean nuclear threat for different reasons.¹²¹ Nonetheless, the fact that three prominent figures with such different views about national security affairs have arrived at a similar policy aim, even in a period of tremendous partisan division, is surely cause for hope.

As the example of the ABM Treaty demonstrates, appeals to cooperation and normative leadership are unlikely to be sufficient to advance a successful policy of arms control. Proponents of arms-control solutions would do better to cast a "big tent" on any such policy and seek to justify their prescriptions to multiple constituencies based on multiple logics. In doing so, considerable advantage can be derived by emphasizing that each constituency can receive what it wants, just


117 Charles Lipson, "International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs," *World Politics* 37, no. 1 (1984): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010304>; Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985): 226–54, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2010357>; James D. Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation," *International Organization* 52, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 269–305, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898753162820>.

118 Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 1155–58; April Carter, *Success and Failure in Arms Control Negotiations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Ritter, *Dangerous Ground: America's Failed Arms Control Policy, from FDR to Obama*.

119 Rick Gladstone, "Trump and Kim May Define 'Korea Denuclearization' Quite Differently," *New York Times*, June 10, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/10/world/asia/trump-kim-korea-denuclearization-peace-treaty.html>.

120 Eli Watkins, "Bolton: US Still 'Waiting' for North Korea to Start Denuclearizing," *CNN.com*, Aug. 7, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/07/politics/john-bolton-north-korea/index.html>; "Bill Clinton Says America Should Be Rooting for Trump's Success on North Korea," *PBS News Hour*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/bill-clinton-says-america-should-be-rooting-for-trumps-success-on-north-korea>; "Global Zero Statement on North Korea Nuclear Crisis," *Common Dreams*, Aug. 8, 2017, <https://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2017/08/09/global-zero-statement-north-korea-nuclear-crisis>.

121 John Bolton, "John Bolton: Get Real, America. 'Agreements' with Rogue States Like North Korea Aren't Worth a Thing," *National Post*, April 26, 2017, <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/john-bolton-get-real-america-agreements-with-rogue-states-like-north-korea-arent-worth-a-thing>; Bill Clinton, "Joint Statement on Strategic Stability and Nuclear Security," Sept. 29, 1994, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=49179>; Derek Johnson, "'Security' Is Not 17,000 Nuclear Weapons," *Huffington Post*, March 26, 2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/security-is-not-17000-nuclear-weapons_b_5025023.

at different times. Some good work has been done concerning how “progress” on arms-control issues might be organized into timelines,¹²² which could provide different benefits to different arms-control constituencies at different times. Such an approach stands a chance of succeeding, even in the face of tremendous division over America’s proper role in the world. The future of arms control, much like its past, will depend on effective compromise between competing purposes. 

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122 Michael E. O’Hanlon, “Is a World Without Nuclear Weapons Really Possible?” Brookings Institution, May 4, 2010, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/is-a-world-without-nuclear-weapons-really-possible/>; Mitsuru Kitano, “How to Transcend Differences in Nuclear Disarmament Approaches,” *Arms Control Today*, September 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2018-09/features/transcend-differences-nuclear-disarmament-approaches>.