

## Introduction: An Overview of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy

This study confronts the issue of U.S. nuclear weapons policymaking with the goal of clarifying what this policy has been and identifying those forces that have been most important in shaping it. My goal is to investigate the nature of the relationship between those who have formulated U.S. nuclear weapons policy (the state) and those who are outside the state as members of society. Has U.S. nuclear weapons policy been democratically controlled, with input from society, or has it been determined by a policy elite insulated from the demands of society? I will argue that strategy, devised by central state decision-makers, not bureaucratic interests, was the dominant factor driving the development of U.S. nuclear weapons policy

In order to accomplish this I look at the state, society, and limited nuclear war. I argue that the history of U.S. nuclear weapons policy is best explained by viewing the state as a coherent whole, with the resulting strategy a reflection of state interests rather than bureaucratic or parochial interests. Furthermore, I will show that the relationship between the various levels of U.S. nuclear weapons policy, specifically the disjunction among them, is best explained as an attempt by the state to maintain autonomy from society rather than as a result of conflicting bureaucratic interests.

I confront two "common wisdoms," one that concerns the substantive aspects of U.S. nuclear weapons policy, and the other that concerns understandings of nuclear policymaking within the U.S. For the former, I will investigate the history of U.S. nuclear weapons policy from 1960 to 1993, with particular attention to the relationship between the three levels of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. For the latter, I will address the assumption that the state is autonomous from society in the formulation of nuclear weapons policy. Of particular interest is the existence of the catch-22 faced by state policymakers. If they embraced

limited nuclear options and war-fighting nuclear strategies, societal forces became agitated and threatened state autonomy. This is linked to societal perceptions of the likelihood and dangers of nuclear war. On the other hand, if state policymakers did not embrace these controversial nuclear plans, they were unable to procure those weapons needed to fulfill such a strategy. This study documents that catch-22.

### The Three Levels of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy

The literature in security studies has not always recognized the three levels of nuclear weapons policy or the importance of the relationship between them. The first level, *declaratory policy*, is the nuclear weapons policy state policymakers publicly express. This is most often articulated by the president or the secretary of defense, and can be found in major policy addresses or in the Defense Posture Statements issued annually by the Department of Defense. Declaratory policy has several different audiences, including U.S. allies, the Soviet Union, and the American public. It is the latter audience that is of particular interest for this study.

The second level, *force development policy*, indicates the actual capabilities that exist within the U.S. nuclear arsenal. This level is operationalized by looking at the specific characteristics and force structure of U.S. nuclear forces. It is crucial because it indicates the actual capabilities of the strategic nuclear arsenal.

Finally, the third level is *action policy*, the highly classified targeting plans contained within the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). The SIOP contains U.S. nuclear strategic targeting plans, and is issued by the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Though highly classified, enough leaks and insider accounts have occurred to follow the operationalization of the SIOP and its evolution over the years.<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between these three levels of policy is complex and has varied over time. The three levels have very often been different from each other. *It is the relationship between these three levels of policy that is the substantive focus of this study. It is my hypothesis that the state has pursued disjunctions between these levels to enhance its autonomy from society.*

The following table summarizes the levels of U.S. nuclear weapons policy and the primary forces that go into shaping each level. Of particular interest is the disjunction between action and declaratory policy. Many have believed that U.S. nuclear weapons policy has always embraced Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). MAD maintains that nuclear deterrence rests on one side's ability to destroy a significant

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Proximate Influence</i>	<i>Operationalized</i>
Action	Joint Chiefs Military Civilian Decision-Makers	SIOP
Force Development	President Congress Military	Force Characteristics
Declaratory	President Secretary of Defense	Annual Defense Posture Statement Major Policy Addresses

percentage of the other side's population and industry after withstanding an initial strike. Such targeting aims at populations and cities. The last decade or so has seen the increasingly common recognition that this was not the case. Though U.S. declaratory policy has often embraced such a posture, action policy has rarely embodied MAD targeting. Briefly, U.S. action policy, which became coordinated under the SIOP in 1960, has since the early 1950s called for a much higher level of counterforce targeting than a MAD strategy calls for.<sup>2</sup> This strategy is often referred to as NUTs, or Nuclear Utilization Theory. This will be documented in the case studies that follow.<sup>3</sup>

The United States has never had a MAD targeting policy. According to Aaron Friedberg:

The United States has never adhered to a doctrine of mutually assured destruction. Indeed, by any reasonable definition of the word, the U.S. has never had a strategic nuclear doctrine. Or, perhaps more precisely, the United States has had a strategic doctrine in the same way that a schizophrenic has a personality...<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, Robert Jervis, wrote:

First, American procurement and targeting policies have never followed the strictures of Mutual Assured Destruction. Instead the U.S. has not consistently shunned postures that provided at least some capabilities for defense. Similarly, American weapons have always been aimed at a wide range of Soviet military targets as well as at Soviet cities.<sup>5</sup>

Policymakers have also noted this disjunction, though not as often as scholars. In 1956 Paul Nitze criticized the gap between the declaratory policy of massive retaliation announced by John Foster Dulles in 1954 and the actual targeting. He wrote, "[T]he more we can bring our action policy and our declaratory policy into line with each other the more effective both become."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, a report by the Commission on the Organization of the Government of Foreign Policy (The Murphy Commission) offered explicit recognition of this disjunction in 1975. Henry Rowen wrote:

The existence of large gaps between policy and operational behavior is a common phenomenon. High officials place great weight on policy statements. They do so because formulating policy goals and communicating them to the public, to Congress, and not least, members of the bureaucracies, is one of their principle responsibilities. Officials in the Executive Branch are also responsible for the execution of policies...the aspect of policy over which presidents and other high officials have greatest control is making speeches and issuing policy statements. Just about everything else is harder to do.<sup>7</sup>

More recently, former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown wrote " [T]he declaratory policies of Western governments must mirror actual nuclear policies more closely than has been the case in the past."<sup>8</sup>

### State-Society Relations

The second "common wisdom" that appears in the literature posits that nuclear weapons policy (dubbed "high politics") lies in a privileged sphere of public policy. According to this view, strategic nuclear policy is insulated from domestic politics. The Realist paradigm in international relations reflects this common wisdom. Realists have never paid explicit attention to the role of domestic politics in the formulation of foreign policy. In this sense, this is a crucial case study because it seeks to test the degree of state autonomy from society where autonomy has been assumed to exist. If the state is not autonomous from society in this issue area, we may begin to question state autonomy in other issue areas as well. This common wisdom has also resulted in a paucity of literature concerned with the domestic political context of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Security issues have been left to scholars within international relations.

Because of the above concerns, the theoretical focus of this study will be on notions of the state, state structure, and state autonomy. The United States is often seen as a “weak state,” unable to pursue policy without the interference of society. However, scholars assert that for national security policy the United States is a strong state not significantly constrained by society. I begin this investigation with the strong suspicion that the state does not enjoy the wide degree of autonomy that has often been assumed to exist within this policy area and that this autonomy has been gradually decreasing over time. Furthermore, I will investigate the mechanisms used by the state as it seeks to achieve and maintain autonomy from society. Also of concern is the resistance that the state encounters in its quest for autonomy. Even if the state is autonomous from society, or has been for a large part of the nuclear age, such autonomy is not automatic—it is not inherent to security issues as has often been assumed.

Although I focus primarily on the internal workings of the state and the state’s relationship to society, external factors are important as well. I will use the nuclear balance between the United States and the Soviet Union as the external context for the exploration of the case studies. External factors may determine the degree to which domestic political factors become important for U.S. nuclear policymaking. Here I focus on the impact the nuclear balance has had on the relative importance of domestic political factors for the formulation of U.S. nuclear strategy. I will consider whether state autonomy was easier to maintain in times of U.S. superiority.

### What Is U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy—MAD vs. NUTs

During the 1960s and early 1970s there was widespread belief that U.S. nuclear targeting embraced MAD.<sup>9</sup> A pure policy of MAD would target population, or countervalue targets. Advocates of such a posture hold that the United States can maintain an effective and credible nuclear deterrent only by holding populations hostage. Opponents of this posture endorse NUTs. They argue that MAD, because of the condition of mutual vulnerability, is not credible and that the United States must have limited and flexible nuclear options. These latter options would include the targeting of nuclear forces and other military targets. Advocates of such postures claim that this type of targeting makes for a more credible nuclear deterrent and can, in case deterrence fails, enable policymakers to keep nuclear war limited. Though this study will not seek to evaluate this debate, the differentiation of these

two strategies is crucial for understanding the development of U.S. nuclear strategy.<sup>10</sup>

For advocates of MAD, there is little discussion of fighting a nuclear war, of "winning" or "prevailing." Deterrence rests on the threat of the destruction of civilization. Advocates of MAD do not move beyond thinking about what will deter. Instead, once nuclear weapons are used this policy has failed. No other options are endorsed by MAD advocates.

This debate, however, is sometimes confused because MAD is often used not to describe a set of policies or strategies (though this is the meaning of term that is of interest within the study) but instead is used to describe a condition that is simply a fact of the nuclear era. Jervis, in differentiating between MAD as a policy and MAD as a condition, notes:

Not only does MAD mean different things to different people, but the term is used sometimes for description and sometimes for prescription. It may also refer, either descriptively or prescriptively, to different aspects of policy, to declaratory policy, procurement policy, or war planning. Since the elements are not always consistent, one aspect of policy may be accurately described as MAD while others might not be.<sup>11</sup>

Jervis shows that MAD may exist at some levels and not at other levels of U.S. policy. Second, he points out the descriptive rather than the prescriptive nature of some discussions of MAD. As used in its descriptive sense, MAD does not differentiate one type of targeting policy from another. Rather, it says that if nuclear weapons were used, mutual destruction would be assured no matter which type of nuclear targeting is adopted. From this perspective, MAD is a condition that cannot be avoided, despite the best efforts of nuclear strategists to devise war fighting plans that might keep a nuclear war limited. Targeting or war planning that attempts to keep a nuclear war limited is misguided in its attempt to deny the essence of the nuclear age. For those who see MAD as a condition of the nuclear age, MAD is usually, though not always, advocated as a policy.<sup>12</sup>

Those who advocate NUTs strategies believe that nuclear weapons could be used as military tools. Unlike advocates of MAD, NUTs advocates see nuclear weapons has having more utility than simply deterrence. They reject MAD as both policy and condition. They usually argue that MAD really did not address what would happen should nuclear war occur. It is not my claim that NUTs advocates desire

to fight a nuclear war any more than those who advocate MAD. Instead, they argue that NUTs strategies could better deter the outbreak of nuclear war and could contain such wars should deterrence fail. The deterrence is seen to be enhanced through this kind of strategy by making a nuclear response more credible. After all, if NUTs advocates did not think that the use of nuclear weapons would result in the destruction of the planet, nuclear response would seem more credible.

As will be documented below, NUTs strategies shared the belief that nuclear wars could be fought short of total destruction. However, NUTs strategies have manifested themselves in various ways over the course of the nuclear age. Despite the different terms, all NUTs strategies share a desire to target nuclear weapons against counterforce targets, and thus required accuracy. In addition, they all require that options be developed to use only small parts of the nuclear arsenal to meet contingencies short of all-out nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. These policies are referred to as damage limitation, flexible options, limited nuclear options, and the countervailing strategy. Though these each emphasize a different part of the overall NUTs agenda, they all believe that nuclear weapons could be employed as rational instruments of state policy. The details of these policies will emerge in the case studies below.

Those who advocate counterforce NUTs options disagree with MAD advocates.<sup>13</sup> Advocates of counterforce options are skeptical that countervalue targeting is an effective and credible nuclear deterrent against an opponent's actions that are less than an attack on the U.S. homeland. The credibility of the United States extending deterrence to European allies had been the driving force behind the acquisition of limited counterforce nuclear options. It has never seemed credible to say that we would trade New York for Bonn if the Soviet Union attacked Western Europe.<sup>14</sup>

MAD and NUTs are ideal types. Strategies and policymakers rarely advocate a pure counterforce or pure countervalue strategic nuclear policy. Instead, these are opposite ends of a continuum, with most policies falling somewhere between these two. Nevertheless, the emphasis and underlying beliefs of varying strategies usually embrace one of these schools. For clarity, I will treat these as ideal types throughout this study. In the case studies that follow, the tension between these two ways of thinking about nuclear weapons will become apparent. Of particular interest is the belief that U.S. nuclear weapons targeting policy has embraced MAD as a policy. There is a lingering misconception that

the United States has not traditionally targeted Soviet nuclear weapons. The belief holds that the United States has traditionally targeted Soviet populations and industry—primarily countervalue rather than counterforce targeting. In fact, at each point when declaratory policy embraced counterforce limited nuclear options (1962, 1974, 1980), the press, Congress, and many interested observers greeted these public declarations as radical departures in U.S. nuclear weapons policy. However, these announcements were more evolutionary than revolutionary.

Declaratory policies of MAD do not talk about the use of nuclear weapons, and thus tend not to frighten the public. They do not make nuclear war seem likely. Talk of counterforce options, limited nuclear war and the like brings the horror of nuclear war all too close to home. As one observer put it, a “rationalized nuclear doctrine appeared more usable” and thus took away the sugar coating from our policy and alarmed forces in society as they began to think about the horror of nuclear war.<sup>15</sup>

The predominant explanation for the disjunction between action and declaratory policy draws on the bureaucratic politics model. Some of these explanations seek to legitimize the disjunctions between these levels of policy by claiming that it would be impossible to achieve coherence in such a complex policy area.<sup>16</sup> The very size of the national security state makes such explanations intuitively appealing, and make disjunctions or lack of policy coordination appear to be the natural unavoidable state of affairs. Others claim that the disjunction is intentional, designed to mislead the American people.<sup>17</sup> Finally, one interpretation posits that cognitive psychology offers an explanation for the lack of continuity between the various levels of nuclear policy.<sup>18</sup>

Some assert that disjunctions between force levels, targeting, and doctrine should not exist. The idealized version of how these levels of policy should be made posits that civilian inputs determine targeting, and that all three levels should be the same.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the existence of this disjunction poses several problems for nuclear weapons policy. First, it has at times affected the ability of the state to procure those weapons that it views as necessary for the U.S. nuclear arsenal to fulfill targeting plans. It is difficult for the state to procure increased counterforce capabilities when declaratory policy embraces a countervalue logic. Second, and perhaps more important, the inconsistencies among these different levels of nuclear policy affect the ability of the public and Congress to influence the course of nuclear weapons policy.



## The Myth of MAD

It is useful here to outline briefly the type of misperceptions held by the press, politicians, and scholars about nuclear weapons policy. The most important period is the early 1960s when Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara initially rejected MAD as declaratory policy. Later, he embraced it at the declaratory level while leaving action policy dedicated to limited counterforce options. In assessing the weapons build-up of this period, Graham Allison and Frederic Morris conclude, “[A]merican strategic forces in the nineteen-sixties were being driven by something other than official strategic doctrine and estimates of enemy capabilities seems inescapable.”<sup>20</sup> They reached this conclusion because they misperceived U.S. policy as MAD. They write, “[B]y the end of Robert McNamara’s tenure as Secretary of Defense, the primacy of ‘assured destruction’ as the central American strategic objective had been established.”<sup>21</sup> By failing to recognize that MAD was declaratory and not action policy, the authors are forced to figure out why the United States had acquired so much more nuclear capability than required by a pure MAD posture. Because McNamara appeared to move away from MAD in the early 1960s, Allison and Morris conclude that the United States had an excess of capabilities because decisions for the force development level had already been made. Had Morris and Allison recognized that U.S. action policy had been dominated by counterforce targeting, regardless of McNamara’s shifts in declaratory policy, the U.S. nuclear force posture would have been better explained. This will be further documented in chapter 4.

Similarly, Stephen Van Evera, in criticizing changes in U.S. declaratory policy in the early 1980s, warned of the danger of abandoning MAD for counterforce targeting. He wrote:

“Assured Destruction” leaves much to be desired as a nuclear strategy, and the world of “mutual assured destruction” (“MAD”) which it fosters leaves much to be desired as well. But 1914 warns that we tamper with MAD at our peril: any exit from MAD to a counterforce world would create a much more dangerous arrangement, whose outlines we glimpsed in the First World War.<sup>22</sup>

Van Evera claims that the United States was abandoning MAD for NUTs, and that such a move was dangerous considering the offensive doctrines that he believed were responsible for World War I. However, he exaggerates the extent to which the United States had relied on a

policy of MAD in the past. Edward Luttwak displays similar reasoning in his attempt to account for the perceived decline of the United States from strategic nuclear pre-eminence. He writes that it was "by deliberate policy that the United States allowed its once great advantage to wane, and this policy was not dictated by budgetary stringencies but was rather the result of a pervasively influential and dogmatic belief in the theory of 'assured destruction.'"<sup>23</sup>

Rand analyst Carl Builder wrote in 1979:

For almost twenty years of public discussion, the strategic thinking in our country has been tightly gripped by a marvelously logical concept called Assured Destruction. An idea that was originally intended only as a yardstick for "How much is enough?" soon became the cornerstone of U.S. strategic policy.<sup>24</sup>

This leads Builder to conclude that counterforce capabilities had become a nonsubject in U.S. strategic discourse.

Richard Betts notes the prevalence of the myth of MAD in his review of the Council on Foreign Relations' edited volume *Nuclear Weapons and World Politics*. Though he commends a piece in the volume by Michael Mandelbaum, he points out that Mandelbaum offers a flawed assessment of how much the United States actually emphasized MAD in its targeting plans. He notes "[T]he disquieting extent to which so much of the essays' reasoning hinges on MAD is underlined not only by doubts about Soviet adherence to the conception, but by the fact that it has never been exclusively embraced by the United States either."<sup>25</sup>

Many scholars have compared the supposed U.S. adherence to MAD to the nuclear strategy advocated by the Soviet Union. Such assessments, usually put forward by hawks, argued that U.S. adherence to MAD in combination with a Soviet belief in war-fighting made for a dangerous nuclear relationship. For example, Richard Foster notes:

There are basic asymmetries in the strategic doctrine and objectives between the United States and the Soviet Union that give the Soviet Union a superior strategy as well as strategic superiority. The Soviets speak of survival and victory in nuclear war, while Americans speak only of a nuclear stalemate, based on a prediction of mutual assured destruction of the superpowers in the event of nuclear war. Thus, the Soviets are assuring their survival: the United States may be assuring its own destruction—or capitulation.<sup>26</sup>

Many cited the myth of MAD to show that the Soviet Union pursued an aggressive nuclear policy. This may have provided further domestic political motivations for the myth of MAD.

Scott Sagan, in his book on U.S. nuclear policy, writes of the “two myths about MAD.”<sup>27</sup> The first one is the myth documented above, namely the misperception that action policy was driven by MAD. In addition, Sagan refers to the “experts’ myth about MAD,” which is the belief that MAD was mere rhetoric used either to placate the public or to somehow cap Air Force requests for additional intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).<sup>28</sup> He argues that MAD did inform actual U.S. strategy and notes that although counterforce was the emphasis during the McNamara period, destroying cities was also seen as a high priority. In addition, a major part of U.S. strategy continued to involve holding cities hostage, either as counter-recovery targets or as a way to destroy Soviet society.

This is a question of nuance. A pure policy of MAD would not have counterforce targeting. The fact that the actual capabilities of a U.S. arsenal built for counterforce purposes also can be consistent with MAD is not necessarily evidence of the desire for targeting cities as part of nuclear strategy. Instead, it is better seen as evidence that the collateral damage (the killing of populations) involved in “surgical” strikes is indeed difficult to limit and that we do in fact live in a MAD world. It is also evidence that a huge nuclear arsenal designed for counterforce purposes can also be used to destroy cities. Here, the distinction between MAD as a policy and MAD as a condition becomes important. The evidence cited by Sagan in support of his view that MAD did inform U.S. targeting policy might be better attributed to the fact that we live in a MAD (again, MAD as a condition rather than as a policy) world. His point is instead best seen as recognition that the destruction of cities would be inevitable, even if not desired, if a nuclear exchange were to take place.

Scholars are not alone in misassessing the announced changes in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a shift from MAD to NUTs. The press misperceived the degree to which there was a revolutionary rather than evolutionary change in U.S. strategic policy. In *Time* magazine, Burton Pines wrote, “the U. S. has relied on what policymakers term ‘mutual assured destruction (MAD).’”<sup>29</sup> He goes on to say, “[I]n addition, Soviet military literature has been emphasizing a ‘war-fighting’ nuclear doctrine—something missing from U.S. strategy.” This misperception stems from Pines’ belief that McNamara “flirted with the concept of counterforce but abandoned it mainly because it was too costly, given

the state of technology in that era."<sup>30</sup> Pines misperceives the shift in U.S. policy because of the mistaken belief that McNamara had abandoned counterforce in actual U.S. war plans. Other popular newsweeklies made similar observations. One wrote that PD-59 represented "a departure from the former strategy of...an all-out attack against major Soviet population centers." Another wrote, "[U]ntil now, the United States has relied on a Strangelovian concept in which it would respond to a 'first strike' with an all-out attack that annihilated major Soviet cities and industrial areas as well as military centers."<sup>31</sup>

Such misperceptions were not limited to the press. Members of Congress have operated under similar delusions. Representative Ron Dellums (D-CA) greeted the change in declaratory policy in 1979 by saying that the targeting of "populations and industrial bases, which has been our historical targeting approach" was a dangerous shift in U. S. policy.<sup>32</sup> Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI), of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, noted during hearings on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) treaty, "some years back, it was understood that the policy we had in the United States was a policy of mutually assured destruction (MAD)."<sup>33</sup> Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-WY) wrote that "over the past fifteen years, at least four American Presidents, and their leading defense advisers, have built weapons and cast strategic plans well nigh exclusively for the purpose of inflicting damage upon the enemy's society."<sup>34</sup> These misperceptions are not easily explained by political party or view toward defense. Both hawks (such as Wallop) and doves (such as Pell and Dellums) made this mistake.

Policymakers who should have known better have also misrepresented U.S. nuclear weapons policy. After having been involved in changes that took U.S. nuclear weapons policy away from a posture of MAD, Henry Kissinger, in a September 1979 speech, said, "[I] believe it is necessary that we develop a military purpose for our strategic forces and move away from the senseless and demoralizing strategy of massive civilian extermination."<sup>35</sup> And in as late as 1985, President Reagan told a group of correspondents from *The New York Times* that "[T]he only program we have is MAD—Mutual Assured Destruction. And why don't we have MAS instead—Mutual Assured Security."<sup>36</sup>

Members of the military made such assertions as well. Retired Admiral Thomas Moorer and other retired flag officers condemned the United States for adhering to "the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) which has shaped the U.S. policy since the 1960s" and warned against the "adherence to the obviously bankrupt doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)."<sup>37</sup>

## Case Studies

This study considers three periods of U.S. nuclear strategy. The first is the period beginning in 1960 and the changes in policy implemented by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The second is the announcement of selective nuclear options by Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger in 1974. The third is the announcement of the countervailing strategy and Presidential Directive 59 by the Carter administration and its implementation in the Reagan administration. In the last chapter, I also will look at later events in order to bring the story up to the beginning of 1993.

I will not focus on the period before 1960 for two reasons. First, historians and political scientists have extensively explored this period. Second, the nature of U.S. nuclear policymaking, including institutional changes within the defense establishment, mark the previous period as an anomaly. U.S. nuclear plans became coordinated within the SIOP in 1960. Before this, the problems that policymakers faced for the coordination of U.S. nuclear policy were different from those after 1960. A brief summary of the three cases follows:

## City-Avoidance

The first case study will focus on the changes in U.S. strategic nuclear weapons policy that took place during the Kennedy administration, largely during the tenure of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. In 1962, McNamara told U.S. allies at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and then said in a commencement address at the University of Michigan that the United States would avoid targeting cities. The goal was to keep a nuclear war limited and civilian damage to a minimum. McNamara expressed the hope that by moving U.S. targeting policy toward a no-city posture, the Soviet Union would be encouraged to do the same. An abandonment of the nuclear policy of massive retaliation announced by John Foster Dulles in 1954, this shift was in part an attempt to add credibility to U.S. strategic nuclear policy.

The announcement met with much opposition, both at home and abroad. Many interpreted this as indicating that the United States was contemplating fighting a limited nuclear war. Critics complained that the announcement of the no-city doctrine made it sound as if the United States were seeking to gain a disarming first strike capability against the USSR. This did not sit well with the public. As Peter Wagstaff concludes, "[T]he illogical public description of the cities-avoidance theory simply served to conceal the uncomfortable subject of limited strategic war and its ramifications from the public."<sup>38</sup>

McNamara backed away from the rhetoric of city-avoidance in favor of flexible response and MAD. By 1964 the Military posture statement did not refer to city-avoidance. However, despite the public adherence to a policy of MAD, the SIOP contained targeting plans that were consistent with city-avoidance that had been abandoned at the declaratory level. Thus, this case study focuses on a period when the gap between declaratory and action policy was particularly pronounced. It is during this period that the myth of MAD planted firm roots.

### Limited Nuclear Options

No major executive branch official saw it as desirable to talk again about limited nuclear options until Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger renewed this debate. In the winter of 1974 he announced that the president needed a more refined set of nuclear options.<sup>39</sup> Schlesinger acknowledged that the United States had previously targeted the USSR's military operations. This acknowledgment came as a surprise to some who had thought that the SIOP had embraced countervalue targeting and MAD as McNamara indicated during this early years as secretary of defense.

There are many reasons for this declaratory shift. Davis writes that while "no single objective lay behind the new doctrine, a remarkably widespread consensus in favor of change developed within the government."<sup>40</sup> This widespread consensus developed around the idea that not only should counterforce targeting be an important part of both the SIOP and declaratory policy but a president should have multiple and flexible options in the event he chooses to use nuclear weapons.

### PD-59 and Forward

Though it was the Reagan administration that heard much of the public outcry for its emphasis on counterforce targeting, moves toward this began in 1977. This culminated in the summer of 1980, when President Jimmy Carter signed Presidential Directive 59 (PD-59) which called for the targeting of Soviet military and political assets.<sup>41</sup> In the public explanations of this policy, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown was careful to note that he did not view PD-59 as a radical departure from previous U.S. nuclear policy. Instead, he stressed that it be viewed as a refinement of previous U.S. targeting plans. He wrote in the fiscal year (FY) 1981 report:

For nearly 20 years, we have explicitly included a range of employment options—against military and nonmilitary targets—in our

strategic nuclear employment planning. Indeed, U.S. nuclear forces have always been designated against military targets, as well as those comprising war-supporting industry and recovery resources. In particular, we have always considered it important, in the event of war, to be able to attack the forces that could do damage to the United States and its allies.<sup>42</sup>

Though this renewed emphasis on counterforce targeting began in the Carter administration, it was the Reagan administration that began an all-out effort to procure the weapons systems necessary for such a targeting scheme. Debates over these systems, including the MX missile, were often acrimonious, as Congress and the public were reluctant to go along with the new declaratory policy emphasizing counterforce and limited nuclear options. This period thus provides an excellent case study for the relationship between the three levels of nuclear policy discussed above. It is during this time that the state had the most difficult time keeping U.S. strategic nuclear weapons policy relatively autonomous.

This last case study concludes with a consideration of U.S. nuclear weapons policy during the later 1980s and early 1990s. Here, I will show that though the Cold War was over, the historical pattern of U.S. nuclear weapons policy proved difficult to break.

### Methodology and Sources

My methodology is informed by the work that has focused on the use of case studies for developing theory in history and political science.<sup>43</sup> This controlled comparison research strategy will allow the examination of the relationship between the levels of nuclear policy by asking a series of questions of each case. This as an iterative process, informed by both induction and deduction. It is deductive in that it draws from existing theory to frame the cases examined and to posit the initial set of questions that informs the focused methodology. It is inductive in that new questions will be shaped as I investigate the cases. The conclusions drawn will be based on the application of these questions to each case. As such, there is not the clear demarcation between theory testing and theory formation associated with pure scientific approaches.<sup>44</sup> This approach is appropriate because of the lack of theoretical work previously done on the relationship between state and society as regards the formulation of U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

Case studies have yielded rich results for both the testing and the building of theory. However, because of the controversy surrounding

this methodology, the case study approach must be conducted systematically to provide for valid inference and analysis. This study addresses these concerns in several ways. First, the selection of cases is not capricious. By looking at three cases that span the years 1960 to 1993, I am looking at the entire universe of cases for the evolution of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Second, my approach utilizes what George and others have called a "process-tracing" procedure.<sup>45</sup> This approach pays special attention to decision-making procedures where the investigator "assembles bits and pieces of evidence into a pattern."<sup>46</sup> Such an approach does not focus on a specific point of data, but instead looks at an entire set of behaviors that encompass a specific decision-making process.

Finally, the focused nature of the case study process is of crucial importance.<sup>47</sup> This method has the researcher focus only on those aspects of the case that are relevant to the objectives of the study. I do not intend to present a comprehensive picture of the history of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Instead, I focus on the relationship between the three levels of this policy and state-society relations. Of crucial importance for the structured comparison methodology are well-defined questions used to inform each case study. These questions are asked of each case study and will delimit the amount of information considered for each case. The case studies are not complete and exhaustive accounts of the periods in question, but instead are used to explicate the theory of state behavior that I develop in this study. The questions to be posed of each case study are listed in chapter 3.

The sources used are varied. Many excellent secondary sources focus on the evolution of U.S. nuclear weapons policy, and I utilize many of these to inform my case studies. I use many previously classified documents. Some of these have been obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) by other scholars doing research in this field, and some have been obtained through my filing of requests through the FOIA. I have also relied on government documents. Of particular interest for my research has been the annual reports issued by the secretary of defense. In addition, I have relied on the testimony before Congress by Executive Branch officials on the evolution of U.S. nuclear weapons strategy.

Finally, I have conducted more than thirty open-ended interviews with former government officials who had a role in the formation of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. These interviews were all taped and conducted on a not-for-attribution basis, though subjects did agree that they could be quoted anonymously. I did this on a not-for-attribution basis to



ensure candor on the part of those interviewed. I interviewed both military and civilian officials, and decision-makers from the Department of Defense, Department of State, the National Security Council, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

### Overall Implications of the Study

This exploration has important consequences for our ideas on the relationship between democracy and the conduct of foreign policy and U.S. nuclear strategic policy. There have been times, particularly in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, when government declaratory policy began to match the war-fighting, limited nuclear options plans contained in the SIOP. Talk of counterforce and limited nuclear options led to the greatest domestic political turmoil concerning the formation of U.S. strategic policy that this nation has ever seen. Such concerns culminated in the movement for a nuclear freeze.

Descriptive and normative criteria are relevant here. For the former, there is no consensus as to whether U.S. nuclear weapons policy has indeed been responsive to public opinion. Bruce Russett has written that "evidence tends to support the hypothesis that in a democracy governments do tend in some sense to respond to the voice of the people."<sup>48</sup> Conversely, Robert Dahl asserts that our system has failed to allow citizens control over nuclear weapons policy. Dahl writes that an elite guardianship has maintained control over nuclear weapons policy. He concludes that nuclear strategic issues "have largely escaped the control of the democratic process."<sup>49</sup>

Nuclear weapons no doubt pose some of the most difficult policy questions that state and society must face. Acknowledging that nuclear weapons may be the most important question to face the populace does not, however offer guidance on the normative questions concerning whether nuclear weapons policy should be democratically controlled. Analysts have taken the extreme importance of this issue as evidence that nuclear weapons policy should be democratically controlled (as Dahl concluded) and, conversely, that society should not influence or control this policy. For those who have very little faith in the wisdom and capabilities of the populace, leaving matters as important as the future of the planet subject to the frivolous opinions of the masses is extremely dangerous. Conversely, others argue that because nuclear weapons confront us with the most important issue of our time, they must be subject to the control of those whose security is ultimately in question. I will return to these questions in the concluding chapter.