Conceptual Metaphor and U.S. Strategic Defense

by

William M. Flanik

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This dissertation asks how it was possible for national missile defense (NMD) in the US to have been revived in the early 1980s and approved for deployment in 2002, despite chronic concerns about its feasibility, cost, and rationale. I argue that the survival, revival, and eventual deployment of strategic defense from 1983-2002 were facilitated by conceptual metaphors—the mental constructs that connected missile defense discourse to other meanings like SHIELD, VISION, JOURNEY, ROGUES, and PROLIFERATION. These metaphors worked in both a cognitive sense and a rhetorical sense. In cognitive terms, metaphors shaped the decisionmaking of policymakers, predisposing them to support NMD. On the rhetorical front, these same metaphors made it difficult for policymakers to offer socially acceptable arguments against missile defense. Thus, policymakers were ‘rhetorically coerced’ into expressing support for NMD.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABM</td>
<td>Anti-ballistic Missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMD</td>
<td>Ballistic Missile Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMDO</td>
<td>Ballistic Missile Defense Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMDS</td>
<td>Ballistic Missile Defense System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Center for Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Committee on the Present Danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Conceptual Metaphor Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEW</td>
<td>Directed Energy Weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOT&amp;E</td>
<td>Director of Operational Test and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSB</td>
<td>Defense Science Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMD</td>
<td>Ground-based Midcourse Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPALs</td>
<td>Global Protection against Limited Strikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICBM</td>
<td>Inter-continental Ballistic Missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>Intermediate Nuclear Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INUS</td>
<td>Individually Necessary, Unnecessary but Sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>Mutually Assured Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDA</td>
<td>Missile Defense Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIRV</td>
<td>Multiple Independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMD</td>
<td>National Missile Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPD</td>
<td>National Security Presidential Directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSD</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>Patriot Advanced Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALT</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Limitation Talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDI</td>
<td>Strategic Defense Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDIO</td>
<td>Strategic Defense Initiative Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>START</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THADD</td>
<td>Terminal High Altitude Area Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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Introduction

In December 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush gave Russia the required six-month notice of American withdrawal from the Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. The Treaty, ratified in 1972, had survived six presidencies and endured a decade past the Cold War. It enshrined the consensus of the arms control community that ballistic missile defenses were costly, unworkable, and injurious to strategic stability. In announcing the withdrawal, Bush argued that Treaty constraints were preventing the US from developing effective defenses.\(^1\)

In December 2002, the President issued National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD)-23, ordering the Pentagon to field “a set of missile defense capabilities…drawing on the best technologies available” by 2004.\(^2\) Because these technologies were nascent at best, deployed defenses would, according to NSPD-23, “serve as a starting point for fielding improved and expanded capabilities later.” The capabilities would also “evolve to meet the changing threat and to take advantage of technological developments;” consequently, the systems that would be built, and their locations, would “change over time.”

It is highly unusual—and against the usual Pentagon acquisition regulations—to field a weapons system still under development, before its basic performance requirements and benchmarks, architecture, reliability, cost, and effectiveness are known.\(^3\) As missile defense skeptics have long feared,\(^4\) the result has been “a constantly shifting situation where missile


\(^3\) Samson 2008 and 2010, chap. 3.

defense programs are being explored and being put out into the field before they have demonstrated through realistic testing that they will work.”

To justify the extraordinary rush to deployment, NSPD-23 cited a “changed security environment” populated by “rogue states” (i.e., North Korea, Iraq, and Iran) that compensate for their conventional inferiority with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs). By “holding a few of our cities hostage,” “rogue states” could stymie U.S. and allied intervention, “leaving them free to support terrorism and to pursue aggression against their neighbors.” Importantly, the US can’t count on offensive retaliation to deter “rogue states,” because their leaders “are more risk prone” and “see WMD as weapons of choice, not of last resort.”

The Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency (MDA) met NSPD-23’s deadline; MDA fielded a set of operational missile defense technologies in September 2004.

This all amounts to a fascinating puzzle. Despite spending, on average, over $8 billion per year for the past decade, no one in the Pentagon believes that the national missile defense (NMD) system now in place will actually work. What’s more, the U.S. intelligence community and the Defense Department—even MDA itself—all acknowledge that the “rogue state” threat to the U.S. homeland is far less pressing than other threats. And in its rush to deploy an ineffective and perhaps irrelevant system, Washington has incurred significant opportunity costs: it has reneged on a key arms control agreement, skirted its own policies on weapons acquisition, and provoked Russia and China—the only two states that do have the capability to threaten the American homeland with ballistic missiles.

The mystery broadens with historical perspective. Twice before, once in the late 1960s and again in the early 1980s, major NMD programs have been announced, only to peter out because of technological obstacles, high cost, and contentious strategic rationales. These are, of course, the same issues missile defense faces today. Yet NMD persists.

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6 Analysts typically distinguish four classes of ballistic missiles: 1) short-range: under 1000 kilometers; 2) medium-range: between 1,000 and 3,000 km; 3) intermediate-range: between 3,000 and 5,500 km, and 4) intercontinental-range: greater than 5,500 km (Siracusa 2008, 69). Short and medium-range missiles are categorized as “theatre” missiles; they may carry conventional or nuclear warheads. Intermediate and intercontinental-range missiles are called “strategic” missiles. Due to their limited lift capacity, strategic missiles are intended to carry nuclear warheads only.
As I’ll show, it remains possible to justify missile defense; indeed, since the mid-1990s, it has enjoyed significant bipartisan support. (Even the editors of America’s major newspapers now endorse limited strategic defenses.\(^8\)) But it seems to me that something other than, or perhaps in addition to, rational strategic assessment induces this support. What could that ‘something’ be? More precisely, how and why was NMD revived in the early 1980s and approved for deployment in 2002, despite continual concerns about its feasibility, cost, and rationale? That question will guide my research.

Technical viability, expense, and strategic motivation are the main issues in U.S. national missile defense policy. After a brief overview of missile defense technologies, I cover each of those issues in some detail. I then outline my own explanation for the resurgence of NMD as well as the structure for the rest of this study.

**National vs. Theatre Defenses**

Understanding missile defense begins with distinguishing the different technologies and programs. The collection of systems that the MDA has fielded is called the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Currently, the BMDS includes land and sea-based rocket interceptors that are fed targeting data from land and sea-based radars.\(^9\) There are four operational interceptor programs: Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), Aegis BMD, and Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) [See Fig. 1.1].

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\(^8\) Pratt 2011.

\(^9\) MDA is also working on a new generation of satellites for early warning and tracking.
Theatre and strategic missiles have different performance characteristics and operate in different environments. With the exception of “boost-phase” intercept technologies\textsuperscript{10} (which the Defense Department is researching but has not deployed), weapons designed to counter theatre missiles can’t defeat strategic missiles, and vice versa. BMDS interceptor programs are categorized accordingly into “theatre” and “national” (or “strategic”) defenses.

PAC-3, THAAD, and Aegis BMD are theatre programs. They target warheads from short and medium-range missiles during their brief “terminal” phase of flight, after the warheads re-enter the atmosphere. (Depending on how close they are to an adversary’s launch site, Aegis interceptors can also target missiles in their “ascent” phase, after their rockets have burned out and prior to the midcourse phase). At present, the US discounts the possibility of a short or medium-range missile attack from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, or an offshore platform. Therefore, theatre defenses are intended to protect U.S. forces deployed abroad, as well as the forces and territory of American allies.

On the other hand, the GMD program is for national, or strategic, defense. National defenses are intended to protect U.S. territory from strategic missiles. The GMD is

\textsuperscript{10} Boost-phase defenses are designed to destroy missiles during the one to five-minute window after they have lifted off and before their payload separates from their rocket booster.
configured to protect all 50 states from one or two unsophisticated intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs) launched from North Korea or Iran. GMD targets warheads with kinetic interceptors in warheads’ “midcourse” phase of flight, after they have separated from their rocket boosters and are coasting through space. Strategic defense now consumes the largest portion of MDA’s budget (though that will probably change soon as the Obama administration emphasizes theatre defenses). It is the most controversial objective, because national defense has had far less technological success than theatre defenses.

**Policy Issues**

It’s national missile defense, or NMD, that is the main focus of this study. NMD is the longest, largest, and most expensive military research program in American history. It poses important policy questions: Is the program justified by the ballistic missile threat from “rogue states,” or the possibility of an accidental launch from another nuclear power? Will deployment boost U.S. security by enabling it to project military force abroad without fearing ‘blackmail’ from WMD? Or will NMD weaken American security by antagonizing allies and encouraging adversaries to modernize and increase their strategic forces? What technologies should the final system architecture include, and how should the Pentagon assess their effectiveness? Could a final system provide reliable defenses, and if so, could it do so at a reasonable cost? How stringent should Congressional oversight be?

These policy questions are addressed in depth elsewhere. My focus isn’t whether strategic defense is desirable, but how and why it was resuscitated in the early 1980s and accepted for deployment in 2002.

To grasp NMD’s importance, and to see why its revival is so interesting, it helps to examine feasibility, cost, and necessity concerns in more detail.

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11 By “unsophisticated” missiles, I mean rudimentary missiles without advanced countermeasures to fool the defense. Countermeasures are discussed below.
12 The latter have begun to prove themselves on the testing range, though their operational effectiveness is still in doubt (Samson 2010). On the other hand, there is “no unambiguous empirical evidence that kinetic kill for ICBM defense will work” (CRS 2005, 11).
13 Graham 2003, xxvi.
14 See, for example, Glaser 1990, chap 4; Lennon 2002; and Samson 2010.
Technological Barriers

The core issue is whether national missile defense is technologically possible. Since the defense community began studying missile defense in the 1940s, the consensus has been that it’s exponentially easier—not to mention cheaper—to attack with ballistic missiles than it is to defend against them.\(^{15}\) Though very difficult (Eisenhower likened it to “hitting a bullet with a bullet”),\(^{16}\) it is possible to identify a warhead on a booster rocket in the atmosphere, in space, or in the atmosphere after re-entry, discriminate it from other material, intercept it, and destroy it. But for the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that this can be accomplished in actual battlefield conditions—and very unlikely that it can be done with the high reliability an effective ‘shield’ requires.\(^{17}\) For over a generation, that has been the consensus in the scientific community outside the U.S. government.

It is therefore unsurprising that DOD itself is pessimistic about national missile defense. In 2005, Thomas Christie, then the Pentagon’s Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E),\(^ {18}\) guessed that GMD might have a twenty percent chance of destroying an incoming warhead.\(^ {19}\) Christie was speaking in his official capacity. In March 2008, after his retirement, he told a reporter that he and his office had had “no confidence that [the GMD] would operate in an effective manner.”\(^ {20}\) In 2006, the Director of MDA acknowledged only a “better-than-zero chance” of a successful ICBM intercept.\(^ {21}\)

The Pentagon’s pessimism stems partly from GMD’s poor test record. According to Philip Coyle, another former DOT&E, the GMD hasn’t been tested under realistic operational circumstances.\(^ {22}\) These conditions include darkness, poor weather, the presence

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\(^{15}\) The whole of nuclear deterrence theory, of course, springs from offense dominance: if one cannot defend against an attack, one must deter it by threatening retaliation.

\(^{16}\) Bruce-Briggs 1988, 102.

\(^{17}\) See, for example, Sessler et al. 2000. If Washington’s goal is to limit damage from small strikes when deterrence fails—and if total protection is not required—then NMD need not be 100% effective to be useful (Glaser and Fetter 2001, 68). However, as pointed out below, even the Pentagon doubts that extant technologies can perform at a significantly lower threshold.

\(^{18}\) The Office of Operational Test and Evaluation is tasked with annual assessments of the technological progress of all major weapons systems under development. It reports to the Secretary of Defense.

\(^{19}\) Kurlantzick 2005, 45.


\(^{21}\) Peoples 2006, 427.

\(^{22}\) Coyle 2009.
of multiple targets, and basic countermeasures that adversaries can be expected to deploy. (Not only is midcourse interception inherently difficult, but adversaries capable of building crude ICBMs can—and will, according to a 1999 National Intelligence Estimate—equip them with simple countermeasures that greatly complicate defense.) Despite testing in scripted, unrealistic circumstances, as of April 2012 the system has achieved intercepts in eight of sixteen flight tests.

Expense

Offense dominance makes NMD technologies expensive as well as unreliable. The second key issue, then, is cost. Adjusting for inflation, Washington has spent approximately $185 billion on missile defenses since WWII. (By contrast, the Manhattan Project cost about $30 billion in today’s dollars.) In 2003, a group of defense economists pegged future costs for acquiring, upgrading, operating, and maintaining the BMDS between $800 billion to $1.2 trillion in 2003 dollars. This is equivalent to lifecycle costs for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, which is slated to produce nearly 2,500 ultra-modern combat aircraft for the American and allied militaries. President Barack Obama requested $10.6 billion for missile defense for FY 2012. In budgetary terms, missile defense is now the Department of Defense’s (DOD) second-largest weapons program, just behind the aforementioned Joint Strike Fighter program, which has been plagued by severe cost overruns and schedule slips.

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24 See also Sessler et al. 2000.
26 This amount is derived from Graham 2003, xxvi; and data from Missile Defense Agency, “Historical Funding For MDA FY85-10,” available at <http://www.mda.mil/global/documents/pdf/histfunds.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2011. It’s difficult to distinguish funding for NMD from monies for theatre defense, so the budget figures in this section include both, thus overstating somewhat the profile of strategic defense in the military budget.
30 DOD 2011.
31 Sullivan 2010.
The expense of missile defense is not determined by offense dominance alone, however. A lax acquisition process may also play a role. In January 2002, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld exempted missile defense from laws intended to hold program managers accountable for performance, cost, and budgetary transparency. That May, he announced that detailed testing results would henceforth be classified. Defense analyst Victoria Samson describes the results. Unlike the acquisition process for all other weapons programs, the BMDS did not have to start off with a projected timeline of development from start to completion; the overall lifetime costs of the programs were not required; [and] milestones where missile defense programs would be assessed were not created. ... Officials instead had the option of exploring missile defense systems essentially as they saw fit, and it would be only at some unclear time in the future that the decision would be made whether to continue with a program. Instead of completing development, program officials could get an initial version up and running, get that out in the field, and then upgrade it in blocks.

Congress and the Government Accountability Office have complained that the extraordinary flexibility granted to MDA makes oversight very difficult. In turn, lax oversight may have contributed to technological setbacks and cost overruns.

In an absolute sense, there is no question that the US can afford to spend roughly $10 billion a year on BMDS. The total defense budget exceeds one-half-trillion dollars, excluding homeland security and “overseas contingency operations” (i.e., Afghanistan and Iraq). The real issue is opportunity costs, especially given mounting federal budget deficits and recent calls for large reductions in defense spending. And costs are not just monetary; there are arms control and diplomatic tradeoffs as well. For instance, the 2007 row with Russia over U.S. plans to station interceptors in Central Europe suggests that even an inchoate defense can endanger arms control agreements. Frosty relations with Russia and China could easily reduce U.S. security.

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32 See CRS 2005; and Samson 2008 and 2010, chap. 3.
33 See Burns and Brune 2003, 211; CRS 2005, 17; and and Graham 2003, 391.
Security Rationales

Given the rush to deploy a faulty national defense at a high cost, it might seem that Americans are gravely threatened by strategic missiles. But this isn’t the case. Of the countries that now have both WMD and ICBMs, only China and Russia would conceivably threaten the US with strategic missiles. American retaliatory capability should almost certainly deter both. Accidental or unauthorized Russian launches remain a concern, though the intelligence community considers this “highly unlikely.”38 A U.S. expert on Russian nuclear safeguards likens an accidental launch to “a car starting itself, opening the garage door, and backing down the driveway onto the street.”39 Another expert with first-hand knowledge of Russian nuclear command and control mechanisms described some of them as more robust than their American counterparts.40 Proposals to intercept unintentional launches have been around since the Cold War, but the Pentagon never considered such capability “a military requirement.”41 The GMD, in any event, isn’t designed to cope with Russian countermeasures—or the countermeasures that China began to deploy in 2002 in response to U.S. missile defense.42 Regardless of whether a launch was accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate, the GMD would be overwhelmed by a single Russian SS-18 ICBM (currently deployed with 10 independently-targetable warheads43), to say nothing of a full launch from a strategic submarine.

The GMD targets future threats from North Korea and Iran, but these are quite nebulous. North Korea has an active nuclear weapon program and an ICBM program. Iran is also developing ICBMs, and apparently nuclear arms as well. However, there is no consensus on when Pyongyang or Tehran will be able to field a nuclear-armed ICBM. Prior estimates by the American intelligence community proved premature.44 There is also the question of intention: assuming they could, would these “rogue states” strike the US with strategic

39 Hentz 2003, 296.
44 Thielmann 2003.
missiles? The intelligence community thinks it “a dubious proposition,” as doing so would ensure swift and total destruction of their regimes. The counter-argument, popular during both Bush administrations, is that “rogue” leaders are “irrational.” Washington can’t count on retaliation alone; a defensive “shield” is needed to deter them. Pyongyang and Tehran’s tenacious grip on power suggests that they are anything but suicidal. But even if they were, why would an untested and likely ineffective defense deter them and not Washington’s formidable, fully-tested retaliatory force? The problem with the ‘irrationality’ argument is that somehow these leaders who are too irrational to be deterred by the prospect of nuclear annihilation are evidently rational enough to factor into their reasoning the much more complex relationship of deterrence buttressed by American NMD.

In any event, if Washington felt a ballistic missile strike was imminent, it would probably attack pre-emptively rather than rely on partial defenses. “In other words,” as defense analyst Michael Mandelbaum notes, “in precisely the circumstance in which the advocates say a missile shield is needed, any rational president would act as if we didn’t have one.”

In March 2009, the National Intelligence Director testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on “Current and Future Worldwide Threats to the National Security of the United States.” His prepared remarks did not even mention strategic missiles from “rogue states.” In fact, the gravest threats are from theatre rather than strategic missiles. In July 2009, the MDA Director himself claimed that short and medium-range missiles constitute “ninety-nine percent of the threat today.”

It’s possible that non-state actors (e.g., terrorist networks) could acquire WMD, perhaps with help from “rogue states.” Even so, however, intelligence analysts doubt that non-state actors would (or could) use ballistic missiles to strike Americans, as non-missile

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45 Quoted in Robert Walpole’s (of the National Intelligence Council) 13 March 2002 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Strategic Forces Subcommittee, cited in Hartung et al. 2005, 2. The Bush administration disagreed, and described deterrence as an outmoded Cold War concept. See National Security Council 2002, Section V.
46 WPI 2005, 3.
47 Hentz 2003, 295.
49 Thielmann 2009, 3.
50 Thielmann 2003.
means are cheaper, easier to execute, less identifiable, and more likely to succeed. And if ballistic missiles were nevertheless used, it would be easier and less traceable to fire short-range missiles from ships off the U.S. coast.

Despite all this, it remains possible to justify NMD. Estimates of strategic missile threats could be too sanguine. Non-proliferation regimes and initiatives to secure fissile material in the former Soviet Union cannot be relied upon totally. Diplomacy has failed to denuclearize North Korea and Iran, and a full invasion of either country in either case is practically unthinkable, particularly after the U.S. experience in Iraq. Moreover, an ICBM attack against the US homeland, though improbable, could do catastrophic damage. More likely than an actual attack would be a scenario in which American forces are deterred from intervening in a situation involving a “rogue state” armed with strategic missiles and WMD. Perhaps it is prudent to invest in NMD as ‘insurance’ against these outcomes, despite cost and performance issues.

Still, it’s odd that NMD consumes such a large share of the defense budget when analysts without and within the government—including DOD itself—are stressing the gravity and likelihood of asymmetrical attacks. In 2004, for instance, the Bush administration requested $10.2 billion for missile defense and $46 million for sea port security. Yet the federal government itself feels that cargo containers are far more plausible delivery means for WMD than strategic missiles.

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52 See Hartung et al. 2005, 2, 7; and Thielmann 2009, 3. See also Falkenrath, Newman, and Thayer 1998. Compared with other means of dispersal, ballistic missiles are a particularly poor delivery vehicle for chemical and biological agents (Thielmann 2003, 6-7), so much so that whenever ballistic missile threats are discussed, analysts are nearly always referring to nuclear payloads.

53 Hentz 2003, 295.

54 For a prominent example, see Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States 1998.

55 This is close to the official position taken by leading Democrats like Bill and Hillary Clinton, Al Gore, John Kerry, and Barak Obama. These Democrats remain skeptical of NMD, however, and their support for research and development has not always extended to support for near-term deployment.

56 Department of Defense 2006.

57 See also Hoffmann 2006; and Homer-Dixon 2002.

58 Daily Kos, “Faith-based Missile Defense Collects Election Year Boost,” 12 March 2004, available at <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2004/03/12/19333/-Faith-Based-Missile-Defense-Collects-Election-Year-Boost>. Accessed 5 July 2012. Comparing the budget requests for missile defense and port security in absolute terms may overstate the discrepancy between them, because it would probably be cheaper to defend ports than it has been to build missile defenses. However, it’s very likely that the $46 million grant for port security is small relative to the need. For example, that figure only begins to cover the cost of scanning cargo containers for nuclear or radiological weapons, because the technology has proven unworkable. In July 2011, the Department of Homeland Security abandoned a screening technology program after investing $230 million in it. See “Homeland Security Cancels Troubled Radiation Detector Effort,” Global Security Newswire, 27 July 2011,
All of this leads to an obvious question: if NMD isn’t mostly about strategic threat, then how does one explain it?

Synopsis

I claim that the survival, revival, and eventual deployment of strategic defense from 1983-2002 were facilitated by conceptual metaphors—the cognitive constructs that connected missile defense discourse to other meanings like SHIELD, VISION, JOURNEY, ROGUES, and PROLIFERATION. These metaphors worked in both a cognitive sense and a rhetorical sense. In cognitive terms, metaphors shaped the decisionmaking of policymakers, predisposing them to support NMD. On the rhetorical front, these same metaphors made it difficult for policymakers to offer socially acceptable arguments against missile defense. Thus, policymakers were ‘rhetorically coerced’ into expressing support for NMD. A more detailed summary of my argument follows.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, NMD was politically moribund, and no technological breakthroughs suggested that population defense would work. In early 1983, however, President Ronald Reagan suddenly introduced his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), framing it as a JOURNEY driven by a VISION of an impenetrable national SHIELD that would replace offensive deterrence. Little had changed in techno-strategic environment, but the rhetoric of missile defense had shifted. Critics reacted by accepting the VISION, JOURNEY, SHIELD metaphors, even as they devoted most of their rhetoric to counter-framing Reagan’s VISION as an ILLUSION. But while ILLUSION worked logically, skeptics had ceded the rhetorical high ground to SDI supporters, who used VISION, JOURNEY, and SHIELD metaphors to craft more intuitive, emotionally appealing, and culturally resonant appeals. Proponents’ skillful framing deprived SDI skeptics of the resources to craft socially acceptable rebuttals. Reagan’s opponents were forced to argue for offensive deterrence, for example, which the


59 This study represents conceptual metaphors with small capital letters. See the Appendix to this chapter for an important note on how I identified conceptual metaphors in this study, and the notation system used to denote the different types of metaphor.
President and his allies had cast as a PRISON, INSANITY, and a “reign of terror.” Opponents, moreover, had to argue that the SHIELDS were provocative, that security is best reached through vulnerability to enemy missiles, and that America couldn’t build an “astrodome” defense despite all its technological genius. Therefore, despite much skepticism on both sides of the aisle, Congress was ‘rhetorically coerced’ into acquiescing to vastly increased funding for NMD under the rubric of Reagan’s VISION.

After the Cold War, the SHIELD concept continued to frame the ‘supply-side’ of the NMD debate, but the ROGUE STATE and PROLIFERATION constructs came to dominate the ‘demand side.’ These latter metaphors gained great currency from the Pentagon’s efforts to justify retaining a large, high-tech military after the Cold War. The dominance of the SHIELD, ROGUE STATE, and PROLIFERATION metaphors made it difficult for policymakers to oppose NMD. Once again, lawmakers were ‘coerced’ into approving NMD: it was difficult to object to a SHIELD that protects people from unstable and unpredictable ROGUES to whom WMD technologies inevitably and autonomously SPREAD.

Also, SHIELD offered a rhetorical focal point for NMD advocates. Both during and after the Cold War, advocates supported NMD with very different, sometimes contradictory, rationales—not all of which concerned population defense. Without the common vocabulary of the SHIELD, the case for missile defense would have seemed less coherent and appealing.

In sum, this is a story about how strategic defenses were ‘packaged’ and ‘sold’ to American policymakers and the American public through metaphor. Occasionally, metaphorical framing was deliberate; more often, policymakers used metaphor unreflexively. Its effects were profound in both cases. Going far beyond ‘mere description,’ metaphorical framing transformed strategic defense from a low-level research and development effort to one of the best funded and most controversial defense programs of the 1980s and 1990s.

**Structure and Overview**

This introductory chapter has introduced the research question and previewed my argument. It also briefly outlined U.S. missile defense technologies and policy issues. The rest of the

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story unfolds in eight chapters.

Chapter 2 recounts the history of strategic defense from 1944 to 2002. The narrative puts the research question in historical context. Technological obstacles, high costs, and controversial security rationales—the same issues in play today—have dogged NMD since the very beginning. Arms controllers could therefore institutionalize a consensus against ABMs by the early 1970s. In a shocking turnabout, Reagan upended this consensus and resuscitated strategic defense in the form of the “Strategic Defense Initiative,” popularly known as “Star Wars.” The program was both an expression of the President’s deep-seated convictions and a political ploy to increase his popularity and re-frame the Pentagon’s defense buildup. Widely panned at first, “Star Wars” later gained bureaucratic support as Reagan’s aides appropriated it for their own purposes (which often had little to do with strategic defense). Thanks to Reagan’s adroit framing, public approval of the SDI remained high, but elite support dwindled in the mid-to-late 1980s as it became clear that “Star Wars” could never realize Reagan’s vision. NMD’s prospects remained low in the George H.W. Bush administration until the performance of theatre missile defenses were hyped in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Around this time, the rogue state and proliferation metaphors gained wide acceptance. President Bill Clinton severely downgraded NMD upon taking office in 1993. However, Republican pressure, compounded by a surprise North Korean missile test in 1998, forced Clinton to compromise. George W. Bush came to office determined to withdraw from the ABM Treaty and deploy NMD, which he did in 2001 and 2002, respectively. The narrative the second chapter provides the information needed to critique the literature on strategic defense in Chapter 3. It also sets the stage for understanding the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 3 evaluates existing explanations of U.S. strategic defense policy, grouping them into “rationalist,” “psychological,” and “discursive” categories. Rationalist explanations encompass three causal drivers: strategic imperatives (realism), electoral politics (liberalism), and vested interests (emphasized by liberals and Marxists both). These factors may have been jointly necessary for the success of NMD from 1983-2002. But one more necessary condition is missing: none of the rationalist accounts sheds light on how or why strategic defense resonated with policymakers or the American public. Psychological and discursive approaches can explain NMD’s resonance. However, cognitive psychological accounts
should be broadened to include the public as well as elites, and schema theory has more explanatory power subsumed within a cognitive linguistics framework. Discursive explanations draw on feminism, constructivism, post-structuralism, and other post-positivist-leaning traditions. Discursive explanations claim that missile defense rhetoric resonated by evoking bedrock commonplaces in U.S. foreign policy discourse. This takes us a long way towards understanding NMD, but I argue that we get even more analytical traction by combining discursive and psychological approaches.

Chapter 4 builds this hybrid approach, which I call “metaphorical framing.” The approach draws on cognitive linguistics, especially conceptual metaphor theory, and dialogical constructivism. I use these literatures to argue that metaphorical framing affects decisionmaking at two levels: 1) the individual level, where metaphor shapes cognition, and 2) the social level, where metaphor factors into what Ronald Krebs and Patrick Jackson call “rhetorical coercion.”61 Though these levels and processes are interdependent, for analytical convenience I discuss them separately. At the individual level, metaphors constitute the concepts used when decisionmakers think about policy issues. Metaphor directly biases decisionmaking, predisposing actors to support policies consistent with underlying metaphors. At the social level, skillful metaphorical framing can deprive one’s opponents of the means to craft socially acceptable rebuttals. When this happens, opponents are “rhetorically coerced” into acquiescing to one’s claims.

Research design and methods are covered in Chapter 5. Rather than examining the whole 1983-2002 period, I’ve selected two important ‘bookend’ cases from it. Each case lasts six years. Each is an example of NMD’s resurgence after a period of decline and disappearance from the policy agenda. The first case is the resurrection of NMD in the form of the SDI (1983-1988). The next case is the revival of strategic defense from 1997-2002. The explanatory factors are metaphorical frames: the coherent sets of conceptual metaphors that underlay policymakers’ discourse. Frame content and strength are identified and measured using discourse analytic methods borrowed from conceptual metaphor researchers. For each case, I analyze historically important texts from the executive branch, nearly all journal articles on missile defense from *Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, and Washington Quarterly*, and senators’ floor debates on strategic defense printed in the *Congressional...“rhetorically coerced” into acquiescing to one’s claims.

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61 Krebs and Jackson 2007.
Record. The outcome of interest is whether, how, and to what extent senators expressed support for NMD. I measure senators’ support mainly through roll call votes—not just the ‘yeas’ and ‘nays,’ but through a qualitative assessment of the amendments themselves. In addition to discourse analysis, I conduct historical process tracing for each case. I look for evidence that the causal mechanisms posited by rhetorical coercion theory actually took place. Senators’ floor speeches in the Congressional Record offer much data here, as do secondary accounts and newspaper articles.

The two case studies, Chapters 6 and 7, are the core of the dissertation. Chapter 6 covers the rise of the Strategic Defense Initiative from 1983-1988. Chapter 7 discusses the resurrection and planned deployment of strategic defense from 1997-2002. I’ve already summarized the findings above, so here I’ll just note that the cases support the metaphorical framing explanation, in both its socio-cognitive and rhetorical forms. The case studies also show that rhetorical coercion hinged on metaphorical cognition, and that rationalist counter-explanations either failed entirely to explain senators’ acquiescence, or did so only partially. In both cases, therefore, I conclude that metaphorical framing is the best explanation for NMD’s success.

The dissertation concludes by highlighting the contributions made to the academic literature on U.S. missile defense. I also discuss the implications of the analysis for NMD policy advocacy, as well as the field of International Relations. The concluding chapter also notes the main limitations of the study and charts avenues for future research.

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62 This outcome only offers partial leverage on the research question—obviously, factors in addition to one legislative chamber’s support affected the fate of strategic defense. Chapter 5 explains why I focus on the Senate in particular.
APPENDIX: Notational Scheme

This study distinguishes between conceptual and linguistic metaphors. *Conceptual* metaphors are theoretical postulates whose existence is inferred, in this study, from linguistic data. Conceptual metaphors are unobservable. On the other hand, *linguistic* metaphors are conceptual metaphors instantiated in language. They are observable in the lexical patterns of texts.63

The following extracts from my data will help clarify the distinction:

...they will build as many nuclear weapons as it will take to **punch a hole through** any defense we build.

I take it the Senator believes the MX missiles would then be safer and more **impregnable** to a Soviet attack…

...we have to keep a lot of nuclear weapons ready to retaliate in case [Soviet warheads] **get through**.

...modest funding enables us to continually assess the feasibility of ever deploying an **impenetrable** defensive shield…

The expressions “punch a hole through,” “impregnable,” “get through,” and “impenetrable” are linguistic metaphors. I posit these and similar expressions (there are many more in the corpus) to be linguistic instantiations of the conceptual metaphor DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION. For present purposes, we can call the linguistic metaphors ‘data’ and conceptual metaphors my interpretation of that data.64

The coming chapters feature dozens of conceptual metaphors, and even more linguistic metaphors. It’s important to keep the data (linguistic metaphors) separate from my reading of it (conceptual metaphors). To help readers distinguish the two, I denote conceptual metaphors with small capital letters. Linguistic metaphors are indicated by quotation marks. So, the phrase DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION is my interpretation of the data “punch a hole through,” “impregnable,” “get through,” and “impenetrable.” When the reader

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63 Linguistic metaphor only includes “language that has the potential to be metaphor, rather than language that a speaker or writer intended as metaphor or that a hearer or reader interpreted as metaphor. To claim that some language was actively processed as metaphor would require psycholinguistic evidence or explicit statements from users. Neither of these types of evidence is usually available” (Metaphor Analysis Project 2006; emphases added).

64 Identifying linguistic metaphor is an interpretive process (see Chapter 5); I’m not claiming that linguistic metaphors are unmediated data. However, they appear directly in the text, whereas conceptual metaphors don’t.
encounters a metaphorical word or phrase in quotations without a citation, s/he should assume that the word or phrase appears in the data. Direct citation is often impractical because the expression is used repeatedly in numerous texts.
U.S. STRATEGIC DEFENSE, 1944-2002

Introduction

The previous chapter covered the current debate on American NMD. This chapter tells the story of strategic defense from 1944 to 2002. There are several reasons for recounting this history. First, the narrative provides the information necessary to review the literature on NMD in the next chapter. It also provides the context for understanding the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7.

Another aim of this chapter is to justify focusing the study on the years from 1983 to 2002. To be sure, today’s concerns with missile defense aren’t new: since intensive NMD research began in the 1950s, offense dominance, high cost, and unclear strategic rationales have been recurring themes. And as I’ll show, the late 1960s saw a great debate over missile defenses. What makes the 1983-2002 period important is that by the early 1970s, the arms controllers had won that debate and institutionalized their preferences in the ABM Treaty. Prior to the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983, NMD was a low-level research program and played virtually no role in strategic planning or arms control policy. It was President Ronald Reagan who changed all that. Reagan’s utopian rhetoric and personal dedication to overturning offensive deterrence permanently altered the American political landscape. He built a robust NMD constituency, galvanized the hopes of conservative advocates, and turned missile defense into a “right wing litmus test,” as then Sen. Joe Biden (D-Delaware) put it in 1999.1 This support wasn’t sufficient to carry strategic defense through the end of the Cold War, however. The SDI’s goals were too ambitious, and the threat had receded. NMD’s prospects were dim until the first Bush administration found further rationales: namely, the ROGUE STATE threat and the ostensible success of the Patriot missile during the Persian Gulf War. The Clinton administration thought

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NMD an unwise response to ROGUE STATES, but moved towards deployment to relieve pressure from the right. George W. Bush entered office convinced that missile defenses were the cornerstone of American security and primacy for the 21st century, and ordered deployment in late 2002.

Background: 1944-2002

Initial Efforts

Americans had their first experience with BMD in the autumn of 1944, when the U.S. Army began studying Britain’s unsuccessful schemes for thwarting German V-2 rocket attacks.² Anticipating the spread of atomic weapons and the development of longer-range ballistic missiles, two years later the War Department Equipment Board advised policymakers to prioritize BMD development.³ Thereafter, the Army and Air Force launched several competing research and development (R&D) programs. Since the Soviets mastered long-range bombers before ICBMs, research was at first geared towards continental air defense.

Nike-Zeus

That changed in June 1955, when U.S. intelligence learned of the Soviet ICBM program.⁴ After this discovery, the Army made Bell Laboratories lead contractor for what would become America’s first BMD program, Nike-Zeus. The system consisted of batteries of radar-guided, nuclear-tipped interceptors envisioned for deployment around major cities and other key targets. Bell Labs soon demonstrated that missile defense was theoretically possible, and laid out the challenges involved.⁵ The Soviets’ October 1957 satellite launch gave Nike-Zeus a big boost, but President Dwight Eisenhower wanted to limit defense spending and was skeptical that BMD could actually work. The president acquiesced to R&D funding, but his top science advisers, citing offense dominance, repeatedly nixed deployment proposals that the Army and its

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³ Baucom 1992, 4-6.
⁴ See Baucom 1992, 6-7; and Handberg 2002, 43.
⁵ Bruce-Briggs 1988, 105.
contractors were making.\textsuperscript{6} Meanwhile, his Defense Secretary tried, with marginal success, to settle the intense Army-Air Force fight for BMD resources that had been going on for several years. The Army largely won the battle, and remained a voluble missile defense cheerleader until escalation in Vietnam assured it a more prosaic mission.\textsuperscript{7}

The administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson shared Eisenhower’s wariness of missile defense. After Kennedy’s inauguration in 1961, the Army, its contractors, and their political allies pressured the President to deploy Nike-Zeus to defend 6 cities and “about 39 million people.”\textsuperscript{8} Defense Secretary Robert McNamara thought deployment would complicate Soviet attack plans, and acknowledged that even a marginally effective and partial population defense “would be better than none at all.”\textsuperscript{9} However, he doubted Nike-Zeus could cope with countermeasures, multiple targets, or an attack on the system itself.\textsuperscript{10} Offense held the advantage. McNamara advised the President against deployment, and Kennedy acted accordingly. Arms control arguments later figured more prominently in the administration’s opposition to strategic defense. NMD testing would jeopardize the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which Kennedy had signed in August 1963. Most important though, in the opinion of McNamara and the growing American arms control community, developing defenses in an offense-dominant world would intensify the arms race with the Soviets. Even worse, if both sides deployed NMD, they could be tempted to strike first in a crisis, and this temptation would rise with reciprocal fear of surprise attack. “Stable” mutual deterrence was only possible if the superpowers were each vulnerable to a second strike by the other. This doctrine became known as mutually assured destruction, or MAD.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{Sentinel}

At the Glassboro Summit in June 1967, the Americans failed to convince the Soviets of these arguments, and Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin dismissed Johnson’s proposal to ban ABMs. Meanwhile, pressure to deploy NMD had been mounting since 1966, when the USSR’s strategic

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{7} Baucom 1992, 38.
\textsuperscript{8} McNamara 1961.
\textsuperscript{9} Testimony before a subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, US House of Representatives, 4 April 1961, quoted in Leonard 2011, 194, emphasis removed.
\textsuperscript{10} McNamara 1961.
\textsuperscript{11} See Adler 1992.
defense program was revealed and China tested several nuclear devices. McNamara and Johnson felt cornered. Two months after Glassboro, the Defense Secretary announced that the US would deploy Sentinel, an updated Nike-Zeus system which, like its predecessor, would ring key cities with batteries of nuclear-tipped interceptors. Privately, McNamara didn’t think the Chinese threat warranted Sentinel, but to reassure the Soviets that the system was not aimed at them, and to convey to Americans that defense against the Soviets was impossible, he publicly justified Sentinel as a hedge against China.\(^\text{12}\) Arms controllers and citizens’ groups pointed out that low-altitude intercepts with nuclear-armed missiles threatened defended cities; the weapons also would be targeted by Soviet strategic forces. Sentinel became unpopular with many of those it was meant to protect.

* Safeguard *

When the Nixon administration arrived in 1969, it cancelled Sentinel in favor of Safeguard, a scaled-down program that would defend ICBM fields instead of cities. By this time, however, anti-BMD sentiment had grown, and Nixon’s announcement touched off a fierce debate in Congress and among the attentive public. The arguments against strategic defense were similar to those of today: critics contended that the costs of missile defense were astronomical, that offensive technology dominated, and that the U.S. had sufficient retaliatory capability to deter adversaries without help from BMD. However, Nixon was about to start strategic arms limitation talks (SALT I) with the Soviets, who had begun building up their offensive forces. He wanted to trade Safeguard for caps on offensive arms. The ‘bargaining chip’ argument saved the program;\(^\text{13}\) in August 1969, Safeguard squeaked by the Senate with Vice President Spirow Agnew’s tie-breaking vote.

Three years later Congress ratified the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty by a vote of 98-2. By strictly limiting missile defense, the Treaty enshrined MAD as the basis for arms control between the superpowers. Safeguard was allowed under the Treaty,\(^\text{14}\) but the system was thought ineffective and proved costly to build and operate. The Pentagon planned to shut the site down


\(^{13}\) Baucom 1992, 50.

\(^{14}\) When used for “force protection” and not population defense, effective BMD would theoretically *enhance* mutual deterrence by helping assure retaliatory capability. This is why Safeguard was permitted under the ABM Treaty.
almost as soon as it became operational. In October 1976, Congress learned of DOD’s plans and withdrew Safeguard’s funding, one day after the system went on-line.

The ‘Window of Vulnerability’ and NMD Advocacy

The Carter years were lean ones for strategic defense. Focus shifted from deployment to lower-level R&D as a hedge against a Soviet breakthrough in defensive technology. Even as Safeguard was being dismantled, though, a group of hawkish analysts known as “the Committee on the Present Danger” (CPD) began laying the foundations for a new NMD push. CPD experts felt that the SALT process would permit the Soviets to attain “a theoretical [nuclear] war-winning capability” in the 1980s that would cripple the U.S. deterrent. At that point, until it deployed heavy, MIRVed ICBMs that could survive a Soviet strike, Washington would face a “window of vulnerability.” The CPD analysis was hotly debated at the time, and its urgency would lessen by Reagan’s second term. But it “became the generally accepted national estimate of what the United States faced” as Carter took office, and it spurred him to modernize U.S. offensive forces late in his presidency.

The late 1970s and early 1980s also produced proposals for promising new BMD weapons. Researchers were making progress in kinetic energy-based (or ‘hit to kill’) interceptors, which destroy warheads in their midcourse or terminal phases by ramming them at high speeds. (Today’s BMDS works on the same principle.) But the most prominent ideas were the furthest from reality. Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyoming) formed a small but vocal ‘laser lobby’ promoting directed energy weapons, or DEWs, for space-based missile defenses. Edward Teller, a staunch conservative widely credited with creating the hydrogen bomb, plugged a thermonuclear-fuelled X-ray laser for the job. Another group called the “High Frontier” pushed for non-nuclear space-based defense. Wallop’s group managed to secure more funding for basic

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15 Nitze 1976, 207.
16 SALT I allowed the Soviets a numerical advantage in large ICBMs, the SS-18s, which could deliver heavier payloads than American Minuteman ICBMs. In theory, when the Soviets equipped their SS-18s with multiple, independently-targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), they could destroy most of the Minutemen with a small fraction of their own ICBM force. This would leave Washington with two untenable options: it could surrender, or it could retaliate by attacking Soviet cities, knowing that Moscow would reciprocate to greater effect, as the Soviets—unlike the Americans—were allegedly building robust civil defenses. See Nitze 1976, and discussion in Homer-Dixon and Karapin 1989.
17 See, for example, Lodal 1976 (a retort to Nietze 1976); and discussion in Homer-Dixon and Karapin 1989.
18 Baucom 1992, 82.
R&D, but otherwise DEW advocates had little success. The technical consensus was that DEWs were a decade or two from weaponization, assuming a Manhattan Project-type effort. And if DEWs could be weaponized, they—along with their potentially gargantuan power supplies—would have to be hefted into orbit and somehow protected from attack. (Limited space-lift capacity and DEW vulnerability, along with basic DEW technology problems, would dog strategic defense throughout the 1980s). In October 1981, a Pentagon review “savaged” High Frontier’s proposal; the following year, Reagan Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger testified to Congress that High Frontier’s ideas were indefinitely far away, and that he could not support them.

The Strategic Defense Initiative

No technological developments suggested that strategic defense was achievable in the foreseeable future. However, other factors helped pave the way for Reagan’s famous “Star Wars” speech in March 1983. Missile defense advocates found high-ranking positions in the Reagan administration, which appointed some fifty CPD members. The President himself found MAD morally distasteful on religious and other grounds, and strongly favored NMD as an alternative.

Some of Reagan’s key aides shared this view. They also thought that a fresh defensive initiative could siphon support from the Nuclear Freeze movement, which was posing a potent threat to the administration’s offense buildup. Freeze proposals were gaining ground in Congress, the public was learning the effects of thermonuclear war through television broadcasts like “Facing Up to the Bomb,” and the Vatican had come very close to calling offensive deterrence immoral.

Meanwhile, the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to bolster deterrence by moving the controversial B-1 and B-2 bombers into production. But the crown jewel of the planned buildup was the heavy, highly accurate, MIRVed MX ICBM. The MX could close the “window of vulnerability,” but only if it were based in a way that was both “survivable” and politically

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20 Baucom, 136.
21 Ibid., 111-2.
22 Lakoff 2007, 33; see also Siracusa 2008, 92.
24 FitzGerald 2000, 156.
feasible. No such basing mode could be found, and the system was controversial in its own right, \(^{26}\) so Congress cut off funding. It was the first time that body had balked at supporting a nuclear weapons system. \(^{27}\) In spring and fall 1982, the Chiefs met over 40 times to determine an MX basing mode that would be both politically and militarily viable. \(^{28}\) Frustrated by the search and worried about the Freeze movement, that December the Chiefs told Reagan that they would support taking another look at missile defense. None of the Chiefs save for Admiral James Watkins supported missile defense, but Watkins eventually persuaded the group that missile defense might have both political and military uses. Perhaps an upgraded Safeguard-type system could protect the MX in fixed silos. Even if a point defense didn’t pan out, Watkins argued, shifting the debate towards defenses might take the heat off the offensive modernization. \(^{29}\)

As National Security Advisor “Bud” McFarlane later told Congress, the Chiefs thought they were agreeing to explore Safeguard-type point defenses. \(^{30}\) It came as a complete shock to them (and nearly everyone else in the administration) when, three months later, Reagan appeared on national television and announced what his administration would later dub the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The SDI was a six-year, $26 billion dollar research program to explore technologies capable of destroying nuclear-armed ballistic missiles and their warheads before they reached American soil. (If the technologies proved promising, they could be deployed at a later date.) Reagan’s speech sketched a vision of a national shield that would transcend a morally dubious policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and make nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete.” \(^{31}\)

In his address, the President claimed that he had consulted carefully with the Chiefs and other advisers when formulating his proposal. But apart from the Chiefs (whom Reagan had wittingly or unwittingly misled), the advisers he relied on were political functionaries and not experts on technology, strategy, or diplomacy. \(^{32}\) In early 1983, Reagan and his advisors were preparing to roll out the FY 1984 defense budget, which called for continued spending increases,

\(^{26}\) Because it was an efficient counterforce weapon, arms controllers felt the MX would escalate the arms race and increase crisis instability. Moscow’s acquisition of similar missiles in the 1970s had threatened the U.S. land-based deterrent, which lead to the “window of vulnerability” scenario in the first place.

\(^{27}\) Saplosky, Gholz, and Talmadge 2009, 141.

\(^{28}\) Lettow 2005, 94.

\(^{29}\) See FitzGerald 2000, 203, 403; Hey 2007, 84-5; and Lettow 2005, 94.

\(^{30}\) Lakoff 2007, 48.

\(^{31}\) For the full text of Reagan’s address, see New York Times, 24 March 1983, 20.

\(^{32}\) Lakoff 2007, 49-50.
particularly for strategic modernization. The President was scheduled to defend his budget with a televised address from the Oval Office on the evening of 23 March. To frame the budget, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) had prepared a rehash of Reagan’s “standard threat speech” harping on Soviet imperialism and military superiority, and the irresponsibility of the Freeze proposals.\(^{33}\)

But the President’s approval ratings were extraordinarily low, especially regarding his administration’s security policies.\(^{34}\) His positions in arms control negotiations seemed designed for Soviet rejection—and often they \textit{were} made for rejection, since arms control skeptics were drafting them. On the rhetorical front, heated oratory (Reagan had recently given his infamous “Evil Empire” address before a group of Christian evangelicals) and loose talk about “winnable” nuclear war, combined with proposals for the MX, anti-satellite weapons, and anti-submarine warfare, had given the administration a belligerent appearance. This talk only fuelled the Freeze movement, then supported by 70 percent of Americans.\(^{35}\) Public support for more defense spending was falling, and Americans were “demanding détente.”\(^{36}\) Congress was scheduled to debate Freeze proposals later that spring, which made Reagan’s speech all the more important. To blunt the Freeze and raise his sagging popularity, the President wanted to, in his words, “break something new” in his national address.\(^{37}\) He was inclined to support strategic defense anyway, and his advisors had laid the bureaucratic groundwork by securing a vague endorsement from the Chiefs and keeping most of the administration in the dark about the impending announcement. On the evening of 23 March, after a lengthy disquisition on the Soviet military threat, Reagan unveiled what would soon become the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Though later admired for its graceful language and deft use of cultural commonplaces,\(^{38}\) the speech was a short-term political blunder. In spring 1983, the ‘Second Cold War’ was in full swing, and the American public had trouble accepting Reagan’s premise that SDI technologies were “defensive.”\(^{39}\) Policymakers, for their part, were shocked and appalled that strategic defense had been resurrected in the first place. (The day after the speech, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Thayer opened a meeting at the Pentagon by asking, “What are we going to do

\(^{33}\) Mitchell 2000, 52.
\(^{34}\) See Burns and Brune 2003, 85; and FitzGerald 2000, 191.
\(^{35}\) See Burns and Brune 2003, 85; and FitzGerald 2000, 190.
\(^{36}\) Beinart 2010.
\(^{37}\) Mitchell 2000, 52.
\(^{38}\) For example, by Bjork 1992; FitzGerald 2000; Harak 1988; and Linenthal 1989.
\(^{39}\) FitzGerald 2000, 259.
with this mess?"\(^4\) Since Safeguard’s demise, Congress and the executive had lost their appetites for missile defense. NMD was politically comatose, and had vanished from the policy agenda. Though they would later shrilly support the SDI, in early 1983, even Republicans—including nearly all of Reagan’s advisers—were baffled and dismayed by the President’s speech. They thought his VISION utopian, and its pursuit dangerous.\(^41\)

Of course, NMD had never been banished from strategic discourse. As mentioned above, a small missile defense advocacy network was in place and had been active for some time. Washington, moreover, never totally embraced MAD; it maintained a counterforce orientation as a matter of actual policy.\(^42\) And hardliners had never given up on NMD as part of a “damage limitation” strategy in the event of all-out nuclear war. Hawks supported strategic defense—but not as the “leak-proof” SHIELD that dominated public discourse after Reagan’s speech. Rather, they envisioned a system that, in combination with civil defense, air defense, and improved counterforce capability, would enhance deterrence by denying the Soviets an assured destruction capability. Should deterrence nevertheless fail, the reasoning went, these defensive measures “should hold down American casualties to a level compatible with national survival and recovery”—perhaps “20 million deaths.”\(^43\) But this was as far as claims for strategic defense went (and they were very controversial).

At the time of the SDI’s unveiling, the overwhelming consensus amongst defense strategists and scientists was that comprehensive population defense—the kind that would make nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete”—was impossible.\(^44\) The logic was familiar: without unprecedented\(^45\) technological breakthroughs on multiple fronts, attacking with ICBMs would

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\(^4\) Peoples 2010, 129.
\(^41\) FitzGerald 2000, 210-2.
\(^42\) See, for example, Freedman 2003; Lieber 2001; and Sagan 1989.
\(^43\) Gray and Payne 1980, 25, 27. This broad line of reasoning was adopted by the Reagan administration in its National Security Strategy in 1982 (Lettow 2005, 67-8).
\(^44\) Glaser 1989, 139. As it happened, the afternoon of Reagan’s address, an administration official had testified to Congress that space-based ABM lasers (which featured prominently in SDI system ideas) were “insufficiently promising to warrant additional funding.” Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 210. See also Pressler 1986, 63. Senator Sam Nunn, then ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, recalled that the day before Reagan’s speech, Pentagon officials (presumably unaware of the president’s impending announcement) had said under oath that the current level of funding was “all the money that they could reasonably and prudently spend.” Qtd. in Cong. Rec., S87128, 13 June 1984.
\(^45\) SDI proponents frequently compared the technological challenges involved in missile defense to those faced by the successful Manhattan and Apollo programs. However, the Manhattan and Apollo analogies downplay the strategic aspect of missile defense, namely, the fact that adversaries are actively devising countermeasures to defeat one’s defenses. As Bundy et al. put it, “The effort to get to the moon was not complicated by the presence of an adversary. A platoon of hostile moon-men with axes would have made it a disaster” (1984-5, 267).
always be easier and cheaper than defending against them. Offense dominance was especially problematic because of the high threshold for population defense. Since even a few thermonuclear detonations over U.S. cities would wreak unfathomable destruction, an effective UMBRELLA would have to be nearly (if not wholly) “leak-proof” against a Soviet barrage involving up to 10,000 warheads plus countermeasures. Tellingly, not a single defense expert—not even the most die-hard defense enthusiast—ever uttered under oath that such a “leak-proof” SHIELD was attainable; the administration also avoided this explicit claim in its official documents.\textsuperscript{46} Even Edward Teller doubted SDI would work against a massive Soviet attack.\textsuperscript{47} Two other prominent SDI supporters went so far as to call the President’s VISION “will-o’-the-wisp;” another said flatly that “there is no such thing as a nuclear umbrella.”\textsuperscript{48} But technological implausibility was not the sole basis on which Reagan’s VISION was opposed. Most experts felt that adding defense to the superpower arms equation, unless done much more cautiously than the administration proposed, would aggravate the arms race, and possibly increase crisis instability as well. After all, this logic was the crux of the ABM Treaty. The SALT agreements hadn’t stopped either side from striving for superiority in offensive arms, but the ABM Treaty had effectively interred population defense—or so it was thought.

In spring 1983, critics seized on these arguments and counter-framed Reagan’s initiative as a dangerous ILLUSION. Too, the popular “Star Wars” moniker captured the quixotic aspects of the SDI. Several observers (correctly) called the strategic defense announcement a political ploy to re-frame the defense budget debate. As Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-South Carolina) put it, Reagan’s “zeal and over-description about” the SDI “almost killed it.”\textsuperscript{49} Facing an unexpectedly hostile reaction, the administration quickly backtracked, stressing that Reagan’s announcement did not imply large spending increases or a drastic policy change.\textsuperscript{50} The week after his speech, the President was asked whether he wanted strategic defense funding doubled or tripled. He replied, “I don’t see any need for that, no.”\textsuperscript{51} Almost as soon as he had unveiled his VISION, then,
the President quietly shifted it to the back burner, keeping mum about the SDI through his re-election campaign of fall 1984.52

But even before Reagan’s landslide re-election, “Star Wars” struck back. In April 1984 DOD chartered the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO). SDIO was a semi-autonomous entity that would bypass Pentagon bureaucracy. It was officially charged with conducting research to determine the feasibility of an “effective” missile defense (crucially, “effectiveness” was never defined).53 A decision to deploy strategic defenses would be made sometime in the early 1990s. Though scientists’ opinion of NMD’s feasibility did not change,54 funding for exotic technologies like DEWs soon skyrocketed. In February 1984, the future SDIO head had made the first SDI budget request. The organization wanted a three-quarters increase in the annual BMD budget, then running at about one billion dollars.55 Although Democrats held the House (and would do so throughout Reagan’s tenure), Congress still appropriated 90% of the SDIO’s request.56 By spring 1985, the SDI was back on the policy agenda, the subject of intense debate in the media, Congressional committee hearings, and academic journals. That year, Congress again gave the SDIO most of what it asked for (about three billion for FY 1986). Between 1983 and 1985, the NMD budget tripled, and SDI became “the Pentagon’s single largest R&D program.”57

Given the high hurdles it faced, the revival of strategic defense in the early and mid 1980s was far from inevitable. Indeed, it is quite baffling. Effective population defense was almost universally discredited. Strategic defense was politically moribund. Its unveiling in March 1983 had been a minor public relations disaster. Even its supporters never believed in it—at least not in Reagan’s transcendent terms. And yet, by 1985, NMD was a cornerstone of Washington’s military and arms control policy. How was this possible? I take up this question in the following chapter, when discussing, rationalist, psychological, and discursive accounts of the SDI. My alternative metaphorical framing explanation is developed at length in Chapter 4. For now, let’s continue the SDI story where it left off in 1985.

52 See Burns and Brune 2003, 91; and Siracusa 2008, 95.
53 FitzGerald 2000, 371.
55 See Burns and Brune 2003, 84; and Pratt 1990, 144.
56 See Reiss 1992, 83.
57 Ibid., 51.
One reason why SDI once again topped the policy agenda was simply that Reagan had been reelected. Mindful of the incredulity and alarm that had greeted his March 1983 speech, the administration had deliberately “low-keyed the program” until the autumn of 1984. But the President kicked off his second term with a full-bore SDI publicity campaign.

Reagan’s top advisors, though, promoted SDI for purposes that had very little to do with the VISION. A few missile defense sponsors genuinely believed that a defensive revolution was afoot. “True believers,” however, had little influence in the Reagan administration. The President’s team was split between pragmatic and hawkish conservatives, and neither faction had much faith in the VISION. To be sure, the aims of the two camps “were incompatible—indeed, contradictory.” To meet their respective goals, however, both hawks and pragmatists had to espouse public support for the President’s DREAM.

Leading pragmatists included Secretary of State George Shultz, arms control “czar” Paul Nitze, and National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane. None believed in the President’s VISION, save perhaps for its rhetorical appeal. Pragmatists wanted to trade restrictions on SDI testing and deployment for cuts in the USSR’s heavy, MIRVed ICBMs (the same arms that gave rise to the “window of vulnerability” scenario). Since Reagan’s “Star Wars” speech, Soviet propaganda had attacked the President’s VISION as a first-strike gambit. But two years later, in March 1985, Moscow finally agreed to resume long-stalled arms control negotiations in Geneva.

The consensus in Washington was that the Soviets’ fear of SDI had compelled them to negotiate. Pragmatists realized they could exploit Moscow’s apparent alarm for bargaining

60 See Burns and Brune 2003, 86; and Pratt 1990.
61 FitzGerald 2000, 256.
62 Shimko 1991, 201. Shultz, along with the rest of the top officials at State, pronounced the SDI announcement “ill thought-out” (Lettow 2005, 106, 108; see also FitzGerald 2000, 205-6). The Secretary went so far as to call the President’s Science Advisor a “lunatic” for clearing Reagan’s speech (see FitzGerald 2000, 206; and Lakoff 2007, 51). Nitze was a seasoned arms control expert and knew the technology wasn’t feasible (see Lakoff 2007, 43-4; and Lettow 2005, 143). McFarlane was also versed in nuclear strategy. He was instrumental in sneaking Reagan’s “Star Wars” speech through the bureaucracy in late 1982 and early 1983, but his motivation was mainly to rescue the administration’s offense modernization by outflanking the Freeze movement (See Bjork 1992; and FitzGerald 2000, 199-204).
63 The ABM Treaty had a withdrawal clause allowing either side to exit the agreement if it jeopardized its “supreme national interests.” SDI deployment could be delayed by amending the treaty to prohibit withdrawal for a certain period of time.
64 The negotiations would cover strategic weapons, intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe, and space-based defenses. Moscow had cancelled the strategic and INF talks in fall 1983, after NATO deployed intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe.
65 See, for example, Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), in Cong. Rec., 133 (140), S12134, 16 September 1987.
leverage. Since SDI was unlikely to yield deployable technologies anyway, Washington could trade a phantom defense for real offense cuts. “Star Wars” would be a bargaining chip.

But to preserve its value, the pragmatists had to walk a fine line. On one hand, they publicly championed the program to ensure that a skeptical Congress would fund it adequately. They also “vowed fealty” to Reagan’s vision to keep the public on board. But on the other hand, actually fielding SDI technologies would be intrinsically unwise (the defenses wouldn’t work) and would wreck any potential arms control agreement. Pragmatists had to ensure that “Star Wars” remained just a research program.

To that end, in May 1985 Nitze announced that strategic defense would have to meet three criteria. A prospective defense must: 1) perform its mission effectively; 2) survive direct attack, and 3) cost the U.S. less to build than it would cost the Soviets to defeat. For any other weapons system, the “Nitze Criteria” wouldn’t have been controversial—they were actually the Pentagon’s own acquisition requirements. In the context of strategic defense, though, they were widely seen as a blow against deployment.

But for the pragmatists, enhancing SDI’s leverage also required a more coercive strategy. Even as they fenced in SDI, Nitze, Shultz, and McFarlane teamed up with the hardliners to ratchet up the pressure on Moscow. Without consulting the Senate (which has a constitutional responsibility to ratify treaties), U.S. allies, or the Soviet Union, they reinterpreted the ABM Treaty to permit testing and development of space-based DEWs. This understanding was contrary to that of both signatories when the agreement was ratified and clashed with that of every administration since 1972, “including the Reagan administration to that point.” The White House justified its unilateral revision by citing its own analysis of the classified SALT negotiating record (which it withheld from Congress for a year). On that basis, the pragmatists “would speak of an “ambiguity” in the treaty that might permit the testing and development of space weaponry—and would argue that, the greater the Soviet reductions, the less need there would be for SDI.”

The hardline camp supported the “broad interpretation,” but it had other uses for SDI. Prominent hardliners included Arms Control and Disarmament Agency head Kenneth Adelman,

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68 FitzGerald 2000, 299-301.
69 Ibid., 291.
70 Ibid., 300.
Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and Weinberger’s assistants Fred Iklé, Frank Gaffney, and Richard Perle. The influence of the hawks rose with Reagan’s re-election and the departure of Bud McFarlane in late 1985. Deeply skeptical of arms control generally, and the ABM Treaty in particular, this group maneuvered to block any offense-defense tradeoff and weaken the SALT accords. The public strongly favored arms control,\textsuperscript{71} but the popularity of Reagan’s VISION gave hardliners political cover. Weinberger, in fact, was the VISION’s biggest champion apart from the President, despite the fact that Weinberger had emphatically rejected NMD in late 1981.\textsuperscript{72} After Reagan’s reelection, the Defense Secretary and other administration hawks began to publicly exaggerate Soviet violations of the ABM Treaty and SALT II.\textsuperscript{73} They also claimed, against the DOD and intelligence community’s assessment,\textsuperscript{74} that the Soviets were lapping the US in the defense race. Worse, they were preparing to “breakout” from the Treaty and cripple the American deterrent. Ignoring the SDIO’s contrary view, hardliners argued that the ABM Treaty was hampering vital SDI research.\textsuperscript{75} To “free” defensive research from these “constraints,” Iklé and Perle initiated the specious “broad” interpretation of the treaty (which the pragmatists soon found useful for their own purposes).\textsuperscript{76} Meanwhile the OSD and the SDIO Director touted non-existent SDI “breakthroughs” in public forums and National Security Council meetings,\textsuperscript{77} and the President echoed their assessments publicly.\textsuperscript{78}

For awhile, hardliners used claims of Soviet treachery and American progress merely to justify the administration’s preferred funding level for SDI. But attacks on “Star Wars” mounted in mid-1986 and forced hawks into more radical positions. At the time, SDI was at the peak of its public popularity,\textsuperscript{79} but elites were attacking it with increasing boldness. The critiques came from all points of the political spectrum.

\textsuperscript{71} See \textit{ibid.}, 415-6; and Graham and Kramer 1986.
\textsuperscript{72} Lettow 2005, 139.
\textsuperscript{73} SALT II differed from its predecessor in that it actually reduced the number of nuclear delivery vehicles on both sides. It was an interim agreement set to expire in December 1986. The accord was signed by Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev in June 1979. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan the following year, Carter withdrew the treaty from ratification in the Senate. Despite not ratifying it, the US had continued to abide by its limitations until Reagan breached the caps in December 1986.
\textsuperscript{74} Burns and Brune 2003, 110.
\textsuperscript{75} FitzGerald 2000, 394.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid.}, 294-5.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, 372-3, 378, 403-4; and Shimko 1991, 210. See, for example, Weinberger 1987, 15-6.
\textsuperscript{78} Bjork 1992, 73.
\textsuperscript{79} FitzGerald 2000, 370.
In Congress, Democrats and a few moderate Republicans complained that the VISION of an “astrodome” defense was obfuscating the real strategic aims of the SDI. In practice, SDIO treated “Star Wars” as a partial defense to enhance deterrence. In their testimony on Capitol Hill, program managers were quite clear that they weren’t out to replace deterrence. But “the administration never withdrew the more popular idea of the space shield.”

Reagan and Weinberger kept on talking population defense, the press was filled with images of UMBRELLAS and space SHIELDS, and the majority of the public still thought SDI was to protect people and not weapons.

Moreover, thanks to an investigation led by Sen. William Proxmire (Democrat of Wisconsin and member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee), it was clear that the administration had grossly over-hyped SDI’s progress. Hundreds of leading scientists had criticized the program from outside, and half of all academics in American science and engineering departments had boycotted “Star Wars” research “despite the millions of dollars of research money that could secure an academic career.” One high-profile consultant even resigned from the SDIO. But more damning were the interviews that SDIO scientists themselves gave to Proxmire’s staff. These scientists freely admitted that after three years and a tripled budget, they were nowhere near the President’s DREAM; in fact, they hadn’t a clue what a SDI system would look like, even in principle. Lacking a system design, program managers wouldn’t estimate SDI’s deployment costs. Outside figures ranged from $700-800 billion to $1.3 trillion, excluding research expenses. These estimates came at a time of record deficits that squeezed the defense budget and put SDI in direct competition with other defense priorities. Congress therefore cut nearly $2 billion from Reagan’s SDI request for FY 1987.

While Democrats and moderate Republicans were checking SDI’s growth, the right wing began to attack the administration’s timidity on missile defense. Conservatives, mindful of SDIO’s modest progress and the precariousness of the VISION, feared that support for missile defense would fade. In the meantime, SDIO made sure that the SDI tests it used to promote the program were highly visible to the press and public. A decade later, it emerged that SDIO had rigged the SDI tests it used to promote the program (see Burns and Brune 2003, 104; FitzGerald 2000, 486; and Mitchell 2000, chap. 2).
defense would evaporate after Reagan’s second term if SDI remained a research program. Rather than have SDI die a slow research death, it was better to field something useful—even just point defenses. The technology could always be improved and expanded later. (The W. Bush administration may have used similar logic when making its deployment decision.) Right-wing politicians like Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyoming) savaged SDI as “thin gruel” and a “substitute” for a functional defense. Wallop and fellow hardliners began promoting near-term deployment and making stronger moves against the ABM Treaty.

Wallop’s was a minority view in Congress, but he had allies in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Weinberger began pushing to deploy a rump system called “Phase One.” SDIO was chartered to research and develop defensive technologies to prepare for a deployment decision in the early 1990s. SDI was supposed to be evenly balanced between “exotic” technologies like DEWs and more conventional kinetic systems. In late 1986, however, Weinberger and the SDIO Director quietly channeled funds from long-term DEW projects to more mature kinetic technologies with better near-term deployment prospects. And in early 1987, Weinberger began arguing that technological progress warranted a decision now. Hundreds of kinetic ground and space-based interceptors could be fielded starting in the mid-1990s. The deployment would deter a Soviet first strike by guarding America’s military assets. Mindful of Americans’ distaste for mere point defenses, Weinberger carefully framed Phase One as a “first step” towards Reagan’s DREAM.

The odd thing about this is that Phase One was the same High Frontier proposal that the Secretary himself had dismissed five years earlier. Moreover, High Frontier’s proposal itself rehashed a program that the Pentagon had abandoned in 1962! Weinberger’s ebullient claims of “breakthroughs” notwithstanding, there was nothing remotely ready to deploy for Phase One; a basic architecture didn’t even exist, as the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chair noted in a rare

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87 See Burns and Brune 2003, 104-5; FitzGerald 2000, 377-80, 389; and Lakoff 2007, 78. See also Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10325, 5 August 1986; 132 (106), S10579, 6 August 1986; and 134 (67), S5684, 9 May 1988.
90 See Burns and Brune 2003, 105; and FitzGerald 2000, 403. For a detailed analysis of the SDI budget, see prepared statement of Robert H. Hale, testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Research and Development, 26 March 1987. See also Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana) in Cong. Rec., 133 (144), S12430, 22 September 1987.
91 See Burns and Brune 2003, 105; FitzGerald 2000, 406; and Mowthorpe 2004, 327-8.
92 FitzGerald 2000, 379-80. For example, see Weinberger 1987.
public break with his civilian boss. Not only was the technology not there, but basic preparatory questions hadn’t been asked. The planning was so poor that SDIO requested $330 million for Phase One before considering whether the US would be safer if and when the Russians responded with their own space weapons. Surely the Secretary of Defense and his civilian aides knew Phase One wasn’t ready for deployment. Why then were they pushing for it?

Their motivation was probably to ‘lock in’ strategic defense beyond Reagan’s presidency. As Wallop observed, “there is no and has never been a constituency for strategic defense within the military establishment.” The program was sustained to a large degree by Reagan’s personal sponsorship; SDI might wither away with the next administration. Once the program moved into procurement and large sums of money were committed, however, vested interests would nourish it regardless of its merits. By committing to deployment, the hardliners would lay the “track on which the appropriations train may roll for the next two decades or more.” This was exactly what SDI skeptics in Congress feared.

Ironically, the Pentagon was worried as well. The Chiefs tolerated the VISION when it gave them cover to modernize the triad as well as bargaining leverage for talks on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). They also welcomed more funds for their own anti-missile programs. But deployment threatened their procurement budgets, which were under pressure from increasing national deficits. Weinberger had shielded SDIO from budget cuts and internal oversight, and this bred jealousy and resentment among managers of other DOD programs. An unidentified Defense official confided that “SDI is going down the tube. The military services hate it. They’re scared to death of SDI costs.” Too, the administration’s ambiguous “Star Wars” policies were jeopardizing the Pentagon’s strategic planning. The Chiefs also thought that breaching the ABM Treaty would work in the Soviets’ favor. They therefore

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94 FitzGerald 2000, 405-7.
96 FitzGerald 2000, 403.
97 Qtd. in Cong. Rec., 134 (67), S5801, 13 May 1988.
98 Guertner 1985, 76.
99 See Cong. Rec. 131 (71), S 7326, 4 June 1985; 131 (104), S 10284, 4 August 1986; 132 (105), S10325, 5 August 1986; 133 (141), S 12235, 17 September 1987; 133 (144), S 12430, 22 September 1987; and 134 (65), S 5423, 11 May 1988.
lured Weinberger into putting Phase One through DOD’s normal acquisition process, which eventually killed it, much to the relief of the NATO allies, the Soviet Union, and the increasing number of skeptics on the Hill.\textsuperscript{104}

The death knell for Phase One tolled in May 1988, when the new Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci received a 900 page study of SDI from a high-level advisory panel called the Defense Science Board (DSB). Even though a majority of the DSB’s members were major SDI contractors, the report recommended that “Star Wars” funding be cut and deployment plans slowed. The DSB reasoned that Phase One would prove extremely costly and ineffective. Instead of early deployment of space-based defenses, SDI should focus on modest interim goals, such as ground-based point defenses. An impregnable space shield was decades away, if it ever materialized. Officially, the Pentagon distanced itself from the report, but Carlucci backed it privately.\textsuperscript{105} It seemed that the stars were aligning against “Star Wars,” for now DOD-appointed advisers were reaching the same conclusions as independent bodies like the Congressional Office for Technology Assessment, and even studies by Democratic Senate staffers. In June of that year, House and Senate conferees struck the final blow against Phase One by decimating its budget for the 1989 fiscal year. (Reagan vetoed the bill, and Congress relented by removing the ceiling on Phase One funding. By that point, however, the Pentagon had privately dropped Phase One in favor of mature technologies like ground-based kinetic interceptors.\textsuperscript{106})

The Phase One campaign raises the question why hardliners wanted to commit the US to strategic defenses in the first place. They may have championed deployment for three reasons. First and most important, even partially effective point defenses would deny the Soviets the ability to destroy the U.S. land-based deterrent in a first strike. Second, as the bruising MX debate showed, the politics of offense modernization in America had become difficult. Moscow faced few domestic barriers and would always prevail in an offense race. However, a defense competition would play to American strength in high technology.\textsuperscript{107} Eventually, fielding an effective strategic defense would make offense buildups pointless and allow both sides to safely “build down” their offensive arsenals (European leaders’ preference for extended nuclear

\textsuperscript{104} FitzGerald 2000, 392, 405-6; and Washington Post, 7 February 1987, A01. DOD’s negative assessment of Phase One is excerpted in Cong. Rec. 13 (144), S12430, 22 September 1987.
\textsuperscript{107} See Sen. Malcom Wallop’s comments in Cong. Rec. 133 (133), S12068, 15 September 1987.
deterrence tended to get ignored in this debate.\textsuperscript{108} If deployment meant scrapping the ABM Treaty, that was all the better, because the agreement tilted the arms race in the Soviets’ favor. The third rationale for deployment was espoused by an administration clique that Al Gore, then a Democratic senator from Tennessee, called the “ultra-hardliners.” To these people, it mattered less whether missile defenses worked or not; the point was to lure Moscow into a high-tech arms race that would stress the Soviet system and induce its collapse. The “ultra-hardliners” opposed \textit{all} arms control because it relieved the pressure on Moscow as well as Washington.\textsuperscript{109}

Hardliners’ second move was against the ABM Treaty itself. In addition to pressing for deployment, they urged the SDIO to test outside the parameters of the “narrow” (i.e., legally correct) interpretation of the Treaty, possibly in the hopes that this would provoke a Soviet response that would doom arms control.\textsuperscript{110}

Congress scuttled the tests, however. In March 1987, Sam Nunn, the new Chair of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, delivered an extensively-researched, 98-page rebuttal of the “broad” interpretation. Nunn’s critique convinced both sides of the aisle;\textsuperscript{111} even Republicans conceded that it was a “most scholarly” analysis.\textsuperscript{112} It helped that Nunn was a conservative southerner, the Democrats’ “leading expert on defense policy”\textsuperscript{113} and a supporter of the Reagan buildup. Despite Nunn’s credibility, the administration still wouldn’t disavow its reinterpretation. So, that September, Nunn pushed through an amendment to prohibit funding for all non-Treaty compliant SDI testing for the rest of Reagan’s presidency.

Although the Reagan hardliners failed on the testing front, they did block a strategic arms accord, first at the superpower summit in Geneva in November 1985. Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev had offered Reagan the offense-defense tradeoff that the pragmatists wanted.\textsuperscript{114} The President clung to his VISION and refused to give up SDI. The same thing happened at Reykjavik the following year, except this time Soviet concessions on INF and START were even more favorable to the US. This disappointed administration pragmatists.

\textsuperscript{108} Weinberger 1987, 15. For a detailed picture of how a “defense-protected buildup” would work, see Weinberg and Barkenbus 1984.


\textsuperscript{110} FitzGerald 2000, 394.

\textsuperscript{111} See \textit{ibid.}, 399-401; and \textit{Washington Post} 18 March 1987, A01, and 13 April 1987, A08. A handful of hardcore Republicans attempted to rebut Nunn, however.

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Washington Post}, 18 March 1987, A01.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Washington Post}, 7 February 1987, A01.

\textsuperscript{114} See Lakoff 2007, 73; and Lettow 2005, 179-80.
It also alarmed moderates and liberals in Congress. They doubted that the President’s vision was workable and were wary of large funding increases. However, when it came to SDI appropriations, they were reluctant to undercut U.S. bargaining leverage by paring back the program.\textsuperscript{115} As with Safeguard under Nixon, “Star Wars” benefited from a bipartisan perception that it had brought the Soviets to the negotiating table.

Regardless, the tables turned in early 1987. Glasnost encouraged Soviet defense intellectuals to think more critically and express themselves more freely. They began to argue that SDI posed no serious threat to the USSR for the foreseeable future, and that it shouldn’t impede progress on START and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, both of which were thought valuable in their own right. Accordingly, Gorbachev de-linked SDI from INF in February 1987, paving the way for the INF Treaty he and Reagan signed that December in Washington.\textsuperscript{116} Nevertheless, Reagan’s insistence on SDI helped stymie the START talks for the remainder of his presidency.

SDI was more than just a poison pill for arms control. It also deflected attention from the buildup in offensive arms. When Reagan left office, his team had gotten most of what it wanted: 50 new MX missiles, Trident submarines fitted with highly accurate, counterforce missiles, and improved warning and communications systems. Insofar as the SDI was meant to provide political cover for the ‘Reagan buildup,’ it succeeded.\textsuperscript{117}

The administration got new offensive arms, but it didn’t leave its successor with a concrete NMD plan. SDIO continued nonetheless, and less ambitious deployment schemes had emerged by early 1988. Nunn began pushing for a “thin,” ground-based system to protect against accidental or unauthorized launches. Conservatives signed onto Nunn’s proposal, hoping that “a limited defense could serve as a foot-in-the-door for the more costly and elaborate space weaponry envisioned by President Reagan.”\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115} See Cong. Rec. 131 (71), S7274, 3 June 1985; S7326, 4 June 1985; S7373, and 4 June 1985; and Pressler 1986, 71, 83.
\textsuperscript{116} See Burns and Brune 2003, 123-4; FitzGerald 2000, 409-11; and Lakoff 2007; 85.
\textsuperscript{117} Saplosky, Gholz, and Talmadge 2009, 142.
\textsuperscript{118} Washington Post, 21 May 1988, A28.
The Waning of the Cold War and the Rise of the “Rogues”

The ebbing of the Cold War in 1989 held both peril and promise for strategic defense. On the upside, the weakening and eventual demise of the USSR made NMD more plausible. Strategic parity made it easy to argue that any increase in the defense could be offset by the offense, and at less cost. But

[i]n a world of one superpower, that formula, and its compelling logic, changes. Technological, and more importantly economical, superiority makes an adversary’s response to missile defenses less challenging. Even if changes to the offense are less costly (at the margin) than changes in the defense, a military and economic superpower may choose to simply outspend an adversary.119

Of course, missile defense was still exceptionally difficult, even against a rudimentary threat. However, the specter of a massive Soviet attack involving 10,000 warheads—the scenario that made even Edward Teller qualify his support of SDI—had vanished, offering hope to missile defense advocates.

There was a downside to the end of the Cold War, though: “the absence of clearly identifiable enemies of a stature that would justify the retention of a large military establishment.”120 Nunn called it the “threat blank.” 121 The Pentagon’s planning was based on the grand strategy of containment. Without it, DOD was “rudderless.”122 Even worse, leading lights of the Cold War establishment like McNamara were calling for a “peace dividend.” In December 1989, the former Defense Secretary testified to Congress that U.S. military spending could and should be halved over the next five years.123 Congress wasn’t prepared to go that far, but whole programs were on the block, including “Star Wars.”124 Many felt that the “threat blank” threatened not just budgets and prestige, but American hegemony itself.

In early 1990, Robert Powell, now JCS Chair, worked with the top Pentagon brass to identify a threat that would require a large, high-tech military. The ROGUE STATE metaphor stemmed in large part from this search.125 Prototypical ROGUE regimes, like North Korea, Iran, and Iraq, were described as having three characteristics: 1) they threatened vital American

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120 Klare 1995, 12.
121 Ibid., 14.
122 Ibid., 6.
123 Ibid., 9.
124 Ibid.
125 See Klare 1995, chaps 1-2; and Wirls 2010, chap. 2.
interests; 2) they sponsored terrorism, and 3) they undertook illicit proliferation activities to acquire WMD and the means of delivery, particularly ballistic missiles.\textsuperscript{126} (This last criterion, of course, justified missile defenses.) Powell’s proposed force structure was based on the requirement that the US be able to fight two ROGUES simultaneously in major conventional wars, with some forces to spare for a lesser contingency. This would reduce force levels to three-quarters of their Cold War size, and would justify retaining expensive, high-tech weapons programs required for rapid power projection.\textsuperscript{127} After 1990, the “rogue state doctrine” became the basis for American defense planning, with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 giving the doctrine a major credibility boost.\textsuperscript{128} During the Clinton years, interest groups and administration officials hitched their own agendas to the ROGUE bandwagon. This lead to some dubious semantics: Cuba sometimes made the “rogue’s gallery” despite meeting none of the criteria, while Syria met all three but was left out because of its importance to the Middle East peace process.\textsuperscript{129} Despite inconsistencies in its application, the ROGUE construct underlay the security policies of both the Clinton and W. Bush presidencies,\textsuperscript{130} and remains a key rationale for NMD to this day.

\textit{From SDI to GPALS}

Despite its new preoccupation with ROGUE regimes, George H.W. Bush’s administration was less supportive of NMD than Reagan’s had been, even though it never renounced the “broad” interpretation of the ABM Treaty and continued to link SDI to START negotiations. Upon taking office, the Bush administration renounced Reagan’s VISION, frankly admitting that it was political hyperbole.\textsuperscript{131}

For its part, the Democratic-led Congress was even more skeptical of SDI. In August 1990, for the first time, it took control over NMD spending, channeling money away from exotic technologies and toward ground-based “hit-to-kill’ interceptors. Congress also cut overall funding.\textsuperscript{132}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[126] Lake 1994.
\item[128] See Klare 1995, 205; Litwak 2000, 240; and Reiss 1992, 186.
\item[129] Litwak 2001, 378.
\item[130] See Klare 1995, 108; and Saunders 2006, 27.
\item[131] See FitzGerald 2000, 480; and Reiss 1992, 180.
\item[132] FitzGerald 2000, 485.
\end{footnotes}
Facing this opposition, in his State of the Union address in January 1991, Bush introduced a “scaled down version” of SDI called “Global Protection against Limited Strikes” (or GPALS).\(^\text{133}\) Whereas Phase One was designed to enhance deterrence by defeating a fraction of a massive Soviet first strike, GPALS would defend the homeland against a much smaller target set—only 200 warheads. Like preceding SDI designs, GPALS would use a combination of undeveloped and untested space-based interceptors. Kinetic ground-based interceptors, based on more mature but still problematic technology, would provide backup. Full deployment of the system would violate the ABM Treaty.

In late 1990, “the chances that the Congress would fund GPALS seemed extremely low.”\(^\text{134}\) The administration justified the system by citing threats from accidental or unauthorized Russian launches, terrorists, ROGUE states, and “narco-gangsters” with geopolitical ambitions.\(^\text{135}\) Along with DOD analysts, Congressional Democrats found these rationales wanting.\(^\text{136}\) And the Joint Chiefs remained opposed to deploying and heavily funding strategic defenses.\(^\text{137}\)

But NMD’s prospects brightened with the Gulf War of early 1991, as spectacular images of Patriot interceptors apparently destroying Iraqi Scud missiles were broadcast worldwide. Informed observers knew that theatre systems like the Patriot were tangential to the far more difficult task of strategic defense—the Patriot program wasn’t even part of SDI.\(^\text{138}\) Missile defense proponents, including the President, didn’t deny this, but they nevertheless defended NMD with a simplistic analogy: if the Patriot could work, so could NMD.\(^\text{139}\)

That November, Congress passed the Missile Defense Act with little debate and by wide margins. The legislation committed the US to deploy a “cost-effective, operationally effective,” and Treaty-compliant system by 1996. The system would include a network of theatre defenses (the first priority) but also an NMD interceptor site.\(^\text{140}\) The legislation instructed the president to begin negotiations with the USSR to revise the ABM Treaty to permit deployment.\(^\text{141}\) ABM funding jumped by 44% over the previous year to $4.15 billion, higher than it had ever been. For

\(^{133}\) Burns and Brune 2003, 138.
\(^{134}\) FitzGerald 2000, 485.
\(^{135}\) Ibid., 483.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., 484.
\(^{137}\) Burns and Brune 2003, 135.
\(^{138}\) The Army started the Patriot as an anti-aircraft system in the 1960s.
\(^{139}\) See Burns and Brune 2003, 138-9; FitzGerald 2000, 486; and Mitchell 2000, chap. 3.
\(^{140}\) Pratt 2011, 19.
\(^{141}\) See Graham 2003, 21; and Pratt 2011, 7.
the first time since Safeguard, there was arguably a bipartisan consensus around NMD deployment.\footnote{See Graham 2003, 395; and FitzGerald 2000, 486.}

However, the Act’s language was deliberately vague: “proponents of missile defenses could argue that the act committed the US to deploying an initial missile defense by 1996, while opponents could argue deployment was authorized only when the technology is available for a “cost-effective, operationally effective, and ABM Treaty-compliant” defensive system.”\footnote{Pratt 2011, 7.} The language of the Act masked deep divisions over NMD.

Within a year, these divisions widened. Pentagon and GAO investigators discovered that the Army had exaggerated the success of some tests and rigged others, and that the Patriot missiles had probably failed to make almost all the intercepts attributed to them.\footnote{See Burns and Brune 2003, 138-43; and Mitchell 2000.} Moreover, contrary to its upbeat assessments to in public and on the Hill, SDIO had still not settled on a basic system architecture, and key components were over-budget and/or still on the drawing board.\footnote{See Burns and Brune 2003, 146-8; and FitzGerald 2000, 487-8.} Opponents made several attempts to repeal the \textit{Missile Defense Act}. They failed, but the Armed Services Committees pushed the scheduled GPALS deployment date from 1996 to 2002.\footnote{See FitzGerald 2000, 487-90; and Mowthorpe 2004, 331.}

The end of the first Bush administration saw NMD’s fortunes “at an all-time low.” The Cold War faded further into the background as Bush and Russian president Boris Yeltsin signed START I and START II, which eliminated land-based MIRVed missiles “and tacitly reaffirmed the traditional interpretation of the ABM Treaty.” Some in Congress were pushing for a peace dividend after the Cold War and the Gulf War, and the public was focused on the ongoing recession. Missile defense went unmentioned in the 1992 presidential campaign.\footnote{FitzGerald 2000, 490-1.}

\textit{“Three-Plus-Three”}

Shortly after taking office in January 1993, the Clinton administration cancelled GPALS and marked 70\% of the missile defense budget for theatre defenses, which the services had been
working on for some time, albeit outside the auspices of SDI. Strategic defense using kinetic, ground-based interceptors was the second priority, with 20% of overall funding. Exotic technology for future BMD systems dwindled to 5% of the budget. Total missile defense funding fell by a quarter, and SDIO’s bureaucratic autonomy was reduced in its reincarnation as the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO). The BMDO’s name reflected its new focus on theatre missile defense. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, a longtime SDI critic, proclaimed “the end of the Star Wars era. … These changes represent a shift away from a crash program for the development of space-based weapons designed to meet a threat that has receded to the vanishing point.” The Democratic Congress supported Aspin.

But in the mid-term elections of November 1994, Republicans took both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. They attributed their success in large part to the “Contract with America,” a legislative platform masterminded by House Speaker Newt Gingrich and his colleague Dick Armey (R-Tex.). The platform’s only specific foreign policy plank concerned missile defense. The Contract called the ABM Treaty a “Cold War relic” and described NMD deployment as a “moral imperative.”

The GOP resurgence gave rise to a series of strategic defense bills. First, Republicans put an NMD deployment directive in the defense authorization bill for FY 1996. The measure was meant to trigger a veto and make missile defense an issue in the 1996 presidential elections. Clinton vetoed the bill over the missile defense provision. Republicans then sent the President a new bill lacking a deployment order but giving the Pentagon twice the NMD funds it wanted. The Joint Chiefs balked at the added funding, but the bill was sweetened with a pay raise for the troops, and Clinton signed it.

The Republicans indeed made much ado about NMD in the 1996 elections. As campaigning got underway, Republicans introduced the Defend America Act with great fanfare. The legislation mandated deployment of ground, sea, and space-based interceptors by 2003. Its preamble stated—falsely—that “the United States possesses the means to develop and deploy

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148 The three theatre programs the Pentagon opted to develop were the same ones in place today: the Army’s PAC-3 and THAAD, and the Navy’s Aegis BMD.
149 See ibid., 491-2; and Burns and Brune 2003, 154.
150 Qtd. in Hartung et al. 2005, 3.
151 Burns and Brune 2003, 155.
152 Cirincione 1996, 40.
153 FitzGerald 2000, 492.
defensive systems that would be highly effective in countering limited ballistic missile threats to its territory.\textsuperscript{155} Presumably only Clinton’s opposition stood in the way.

Why did the Republicans embrace missile defense so strongly? NMD had always had cachet on the right. But in the early to mid-1990s, the big push came from a small network of right-wing NMD enthusiasts, led by a think tank called the Center for Security Policy (CSP). The CSP was headed by former Reagan official Frank Gaffney, who had worked under Weinberger at OSD. It was Gaffney who had persuaded Gingrich and Armey to insert the missile defense plank into the Contract with America.\textsuperscript{156} Gaffney’s board of directors was a “Star Wars Hall of Fame;” it included key hardline veterans of the Reagan administration, right-wing Congresspersons, and lead missile defense contractors.\textsuperscript{157} A quarter of its funding came from corporate sponsors, including NMD contractors.\textsuperscript{158} The Center for Security Policy had convinced the new Republican leadership that NMD “would be the wedge issue that would expose President Clinton’s weakness in ‘failing to defend America.’”\textsuperscript{159} Surely the American people would punish Clinton for “intentionally leaving America’s cities and territory open to missile attack.”\textsuperscript{160} Unsurprisingly, missile defense contractors took a similar line. In addition to blanketing key congressional districts with subcontracts, they tried to educate the public on the need for NMD.\textsuperscript{161}

Republican leaders, however, had misjudged public opinion—despite the Center for Security Policy’s polls and focus groups, the missile threat aroused few Americans.\textsuperscript{162} Republicans had also greatly exaggerated the technological maturity of NMD technologies and under-estimated their cost. Deficit hawks revolted when the Congressional Budget Office released its cost estimates, and the majority leadership quickly shelved the Defend America Act.\textsuperscript{163} After repeatedly and dramatically attacking Clinton over NMD, Republican nominee Bob

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 45.
\textsuperscript{156} Hartung et al. 2005 2005, 4.
\textsuperscript{157} Hartung and Ciarrocca 2000; see also Hartung et al. 2005 2005, 4.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} Cirincione 1996, 39.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{161} Burns and Brune 2003, 157-60.
\textsuperscript{162} See Burns and Brune 156-7; Cirincione 1996, 50-1; FitzGerald 2000, 493; Graham 2003, 27; and Pratt 2011, 9-10. See also discussion in the following chapter.
Dole and his running mate hardly mentioned missile defense during and after the GOP convention in August.\textsuperscript{164}

As the pro-NMD campaign ramped up in the spring and summer of 1996, Clinton, the Chiefs, and Democrats on the Armed Services Committees worked to mollify Republicans and avoid a crash strategic defense effort.\textsuperscript{165} They began with an attempt to re-frame strategic defense. Republicans stressed systems hardware and national vulnerability, but the administration tried to highlight the broader context of prevention. The first “line of defense” against missile attack would be arms control, diplomacy, and non-proliferation initiatives; the second would be deterrence. Only after the first two measures had failed would NMD come into play.\textsuperscript{166} Known as “three-plus-three,” their compromise plan would produce a demonstration system in three-to-four years (by 2000) that could be deployed—\textit{if} judged necessary—three years later (by 2003). If, as expected, the threat remained inchoate, then NMD would remain a research program. Whereas the \textit{Defend America Act} had called for the whole panoply of “Star Wars” weaponry, Clinton’s proposal entailed a modest twenty ground-based interceptors to block a handful of ROGUE STATE missiles, or an accidental or unauthorized launch from Russia or China. Deployment would hinge on several factors. These included the effectiveness of the system, its cost, its compliance with the ABM Treaty, and the gravity of the ballistic missile threat. Since the Republicans had abandoned the \textit{Defend America Act} and hadn’t proposed an alternative, three-plus-three “won by default.”\textsuperscript{167}

Events in Clinton’s second term moved the country towards NMD deployment. Proponents began harping on the ballistic missile threat with increasing vehemence. Relations with China had frayed over nuclear espionage allegations and the perennial issue of Taiwan, and China hawks in Congress began warning more and more openly of a “Red China” missile threat.\textsuperscript{168}

However, ROGUE STATES were by far the biggest issue. A 1995 National Intelligence Estimate had put a ROGUE STATE ICBM fifteen years out. NMD advocates had faulted the Clinton administration for “politicized” intelligence and commissioned an independent review. This was a misstep. The review vindicated and even bolstered the original estimate in December.

\textsuperscript{164} Cirincione 1996, 42.
\textsuperscript{165} Graham 2003, 27.
\textsuperscript{166} Cirincione 1996, 52-3.
\textsuperscript{167} Pratt 2011, 10.
\textsuperscript{168} Nathan and Tien 2003, 39-41.
1996. But the following year, dissatisfied Republicans, led by a board member of the Center for Security Policy, commissioned another external task force, chaired by Donald Rumsfeld, “to assess the possibility, not the probability,” of a ROGUE STATE ICBM threat. Center for Security Policy members heavily shaped the commission’s work. Much like the Committee for the Present Danger in the 1970s, the commission second-guessed extant intelligence by focusing selectively on worst-case scenarios.

The task force delivered its influential report in July 1998. The document concluded that, with “little or no warning,” Iran and North Korea could field an ICBM within five years of deciding to do so (ten years in the case of Iraq). The report strongly hinted that “the five-year clocks of North Korea and Iran were already running.” One observer noted that “within and beyond the administration, as well as within the intelligence bureaucracy itself, the threat was widely seen as greatly inflated.” But the threat seemed more credible a few weeks later when Pyongyang unexpectedly (albeit unsuccessfully) tested a 3-stage missile that could potentially reach Alaska and Hawaii. After the test, the intelligence community and the Joint Chiefs defended their original estimate, but North Korea’s provocation gave NMD advocates powerful rhetorical ammunition.

An independent review of missile defense completed the previous year had warned of “a rush to failure” due to politically-driven testing schedules. But the Rumsfeld Report and the North Korean launch had put the administration on the defensive. (Clinton also faced impeachment over the Monica Lewinsky scandal.) In January 1999, the Pentagon conceded the existence of a near-term ROGUE STATE threat, added $6.6 billion to its six-year missile defense

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169 See Cirincione 1996, 45; Garwin 1997; Hartung and Ciarrocca 2000; and Thielmann 2003, 4. The Rumsfeld Report made no explicit policy recommendations, but was widely seen as a boon to NMD advocates.
171 Pratt 2011, 10, emphasis added. See also Glaser and Fetter 2001, 45; and Thielmann 2003.
174 Thielmann 2003, 3.
175 Newhouse 2001, 100.
176 Pratt 2011, 10.
179 Defense Secretary Bill Cohen, the lone Republican in Clinton’s cabinet, personally supported limited NMD deployment. Behind the scenes, however, the intelligence community, particularly at State, remained deeply skeptical over the urgency of the ROGUE STATE ballistic missile threat. Many officials were dismayed in particular at the Rumsfeld Report’s emphasis on what rogue states could do, rather than what they were likely to do. See Elaine Sciolino and Steven Lee Meyers, “U.S. Study Re-opens Division over Nuclear Missile Threat,” New York Times
budget, and pledged to conduct a deployment readiness review in June 2000. In announcing this policy shift, Defense Secretary William Cohen said that North Korea’s launch and other events had borne out the Rumsfeld Commission’s “sobering” analysis.180

Congress pre-empted DOD, however. By lopsided margins (the Senate vote was 97-3), it passed the National Missile Defense Act that month, stating that “it is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as technologically possible an effective national missile defense system capable of defending […] against a limited ballistic missile attack.”181 Eager to avoid a fight over NMD for the 2000 election, and aware that he didn’t have the votes to sustain a veto, Clinton signed the bill.182

The bill’s enactment shifted the debate from whether to deploy NMD to when.183 Clinton stipulated that a deployment decision would hinge on the familiar criteria of affordability, effectiveness, necessity, and compatibility with other arms control and non-proliferation objectives. That spring the administration intensified negotiations with the Russians to amend the ABM Treaty, but the Pentagon made it known that if it couldn’t agree with Moscow to permit deployment, the US would break the treaty and deploy anyway.184

This irked Russia, China, and the European allies, all of whom had long been wary of American NMD and none of whom found the ROGUE STATE threat compelling.

Moscow railed against Clinton’s limited NMD as a gambit for a disarming first strike. The ABM Treaty was, according to Russia, the “cornerstone of strategic stability;” scrapping it would start a new arms race.185 That said, as President Vladimir Putin would openly acknowledge in 2001 (when NMD was a foregone conclusion), Russia could overwhelm any system the Americans could field over the next generation.186

Beijing’s strategic forces were far fewer and less capable than Moscow’s; it had more cause for concern. Like Russia, China framed its opposition in “language about the sanctity of treaties and the threat of nuclear proliferation,” but it worried mostly that its “deterrent will be

182 FitzGerald 2000, 496.
183 Hartung and Ciarrocca 2000.
184 FitzGerald 2000, 496.
185 See CRS 2002; and Ivanov 2000.
186 Graham 2003, 378.
crippled when the time comes that Chinese forces are modernized and integrated enough to take Taiwan by force.”

Many Europeans worried—needlessly, as it turned out—that an ABM Treaty withdrawal would collapse the entire arms control framework that had stabilized the NATO-Russian relationship for decades. Russia and China would upgrade and expand their arsenals to defeat the U.S. defense. And a “Fortress America” would unhinge the North Atlantic alliance, leaving the Europeans alone to face a possibly resurgent Russia. Moreover, a Chinese buildup could provoke an Indian response, which would trigger a broader arms race in Asia (both India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in 1998).

In 2000, these concerns remained hypothetical. The National Missile Defense Act didn’t specify a deployment date for the anti-missile system. In his final year in office, Clinton, though under “extreme pressure” to field a system, declined to do so, pointing to recent test failures. Clinton’s people had “never had their hearts in the program;” for them, “missile defense [was] a strenuous exercise in damage limitation and deployment avoidance.” Clinton tried to steer the Pentagon towards the least costly and ambitious system possible, and he wanted it to conform to America’s diplomatic and arms control agenda.

The W. Bush Deployment Decision

The new administration had different priorities. The Supreme Court declared Clinton’s successor to be George W. Bush. It seemed that deployment would take place sooner rather than later, as the Bush crowd was more enthusiastic about strategic defense than any administration since Reagan’s. As a candidate, Bush spoke frequently of the need for NMD, and promised that if elected, he would field a system by the end of his first term.

Upon taking office, Bush stocked Defense and State with hardline arms control skeptics. Most prominent among them were Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who was reprising his role from the Ford administration. Rumsfeld had opted to dismantle Safeguard in

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187 Nathan and Tien 2003, 39.
188 Burns and Brune 2003, 169.
189 Ibid., 178.
192 Graham 2003, 354.
1975, but he later became known as a missile defense hawk. In 1998 he had chaired the committee that warned of an urgent ROGUE STATE ballistic missile threat—and he began actively campaigning for NMD only weeks after he finished working on the ostensibly apolitical report. Rumsfeld, along with 22 other members of the new administration, had close ties to Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy. Richard Perle also reappeared at the Pentagon, this time in an advisory role.

Rumsfeld and Perle, along with many other Bush officials, were “hegemonic realists.” Like the rest of the foreign policy establishment, they were convinced that American primacy was good for the US and the world; they favored preserving American power, and the ability to project it. Unlike liberals, centrists, and moderate conservatives, however, hegemonic realists favored unilateral foreign policy and preventative war as policy instruments.

Missile defenses, both national and theatre, played a crucial role in maintaining U.S primacy. Rebuilding America’s Defenses was an influential report drafted in 2000 by many who would take positions in the new Bush administration. The paper gives a frank summary of how missile defense fit into the hegemonic realist vision:

[The US] must develop and deploy global missile defenses to defend the American homeland and American allies, and to provide a secure basis for U.S. power projection around the world… Effective ballistic missile defenses will be the central element in the exercise of American power and the projection of U.S. military forces… [W]eak states operating small arsenals of crude ballistic missiles, armed with basic nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction, will be in a strong position to deter the United States from using conventional force, no matter the technological or other advantages we may enjoy. Even if such enemies are merely able to threaten American allies rather than the United States homeland itself, America’s ability to project power will be deeply compromised.

Contrary to popular belief, George W. Bush was not a captive of his hardline advisers; he usually shared their convictions. By his own account, upon taking office, the President was very concerned about “blackmail” by ROGUE STATES armed with ballistic missiles and WMD. The argument that small powers could use ballistic missiles to deter U.S. military action would

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193 Miller 2001, 97.
195 Ibid., 6.
196 Daalder and Lindsay 2005, 46-7; see also Maynes 2001, 51-2.
197 Project for the New American Century 2000, v, 12, emphases added.
198 Daalder and Lindsay 2005.
199 Graham 2003, 342-3.
become a key NMD rationale for his administration.\textsuperscript{200}

The election of Bush and the ascendancy of the hardliners set the stage for sweeping changes in missile defense policy. Two years into Bush’s first term, the administration had raised BMD funding by 60 percent,\textsuperscript{201} blurred the distinction between national and theatre defenses, upgraded the BMDO to agency rank (it became the Missile Defense Agency in early 2002), swapped Clinton’s limited NMD for a global, “layered” system that would attack missiles at all phases of their flight, withdrawn from the ABM Treaty, classified missile defense testing data, exempted missile defense from standard DOD acquisitions policies, and announced that an “initial capability” would be fielded by late 2004.

This background section concludes by describing how these changes came to be.

On taking office in January 2001, the Bush team inherited Clinton’s “three-plus-three” plan. They weren’t happy with it. They wanted a more robust system, one that would target missiles not just in their mid-course phase, but in their boost and terminal phases too. And they wanted to defend America’s allies as well as the U.S. homeland and deployed forces. Though unsatisfied with Clinton’s limited ground-based system, Bush and his advisors opted to deploy it sooner and augment it later, rather than develop a comprehensive system and defer deployment until possibly another administration.\textsuperscript{202} They may have recalled the fates of “Phase One” and GPALS, schemes that had withered on the vine after deployment plans were nixed.

In early 2001, the Bush team began laying the rhetorical groundwork for deployment. One tactic—an apparently successful one—was to simply repeat over and over that the US would deploy missile defenses, thus weakening domestic and foreign resistance by “shrouding NMD in an aura of inevitability.”\textsuperscript{203} This was what the President did when he toured European capitals that June. While ostensibly travelling to “consult” with NATO allies and Russia, Bush budged not a whit from his positions on defenses and the ABM Treaty.\textsuperscript{204}

The other tactic was to cast missile defense as the cornerstone of a “new strategic framework” for a post-Cold War world. The “new framework” emerged in a series of speeches

\textsuperscript{200} Miller 2001, 98-100.
\textsuperscript{202} Pratt 2011, 12.
\textsuperscript{203} Graham 2003, 356.
\textsuperscript{204} Miller 2001, 102-3.
by White House officials, most notably the President himself in a key address in May.\textsuperscript{205} Bush’s justifications for NMD were far less sweeping than Reagan’s DREAM. Offensive deterrence would continue to operate, Bush said (though the US would cut its oversized offensive arsenal, unilaterally if necessary). But offensive deterrence was no longer sufficient to deter hostile powers bent on acquiring WMD “to intimidate their neighbors, and to keep the United States and other responsible nations from helping allies and friends in strategic parts of the world.” Offenses must be complemented by missile defenses. Effective NMD would discourage hostile states from \textit{acquiring} WMD and ballistic missiles in the first place; barring that, it would deter the \textit{use} of these weapons by thwarting their effectiveness. (And presumably, missile defenses would offer some protection in case deterrence failed, though Bush didn’t mention this in his speech.) The main obstacle to achieving these goals was the ABM Treaty, which locked Washington and Moscow both into “a relationship based on mistrust and vulnerability,” while ignoring “the fundamental breakthroughs in technology during the last 30 years.”\textsuperscript{206}

Since there was already broad consensus that the Cold War was over and that the US could make further offense cuts, the “new strategic framework” amounted to little more than a repudiation of the ABM Treaty and some “stretching”\textsuperscript{207} of the concept of nuclear deterrence.\textsuperscript{208} In fact, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was frank “about the largely content-free nature” of the administration’s new vision.\textsuperscript{209}

July 2001 saw the official unveiling of the administration’s missile defense proposals. Bush requested a 53 percent increase over the previous year’s missile defense budget. Bush’s ambitions were also grander than Clinton’s had been. The latter’s “three-plus-three” was limited to a small number of ground-based interceptors for mid-course national defense, but Bush called for a global system with “layered” ground, sea, air, and possibly even space-based defenses targeting missiles of all ranges in all phases of their flight. Moreover, protection would be extended to U.S. and allied deployed forces as well as the territories of American allies.\textsuperscript{210} In not


\textsuperscript{206} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{207} Giovanni 1970.

\textsuperscript{208} Miller 2001, 103-4.

\textsuperscript{209} As Rice put it, “The idea here is that we should have a new strategic framework. Now, we are open as to what form that takes” (\textit{ibid}., 104).

\textsuperscript{210} Since theatre systems could be upgraded to defend some allied homelands, and since boost-phase technologies could intercept missiles of all ranges, the administration also renounced the “artificial distinction” between national
offering a final, fixed system architecture, and in experimenting with a wide range of technologies, some of which were very nascent, “the Bush plan effectively acknowledged that military contractors had yet to figure out the best way to mount a national missile defense. In this way, it resembled Reagan’s early scattershot approach for the best technologies.”

But whereas Reagan’s SDI never yielded any deployed systems, Rumsfeld would invoke the “spiral development model” to develop technologies in the field rather than the lab. Finally, upon presenting its plan to Congress in July, the Pentagon forced the ABM Treaty issue by announcing that testing would violate the Treaty “in months, not years.”

NMD opponents were alarmed by these developments. Democrats had re-taken the Senate in May after James Jeffords quit the GOP. They quickly mobilized to block funds for Treaty-busting tests and reduce overall NMD funding, as they had under Reagan. The Jeffords defection put two prominent missile defense critics, Joe Biden (of Delaware) and Carl Levin (of Michigan), in control of crucial committees. Biden and Levin announced that they would hold hearings on strategic defense.

But, as we’ll see in greater detail in Chapter 7, Democratic opposition to missile defenses ebbed after 11 September. The Armed Services Committee dropped its effort to block non-Treaty-compliant testing after the attacks. In a climate of heightened patriotism and threat perception, Democrats figured they lacked the votes to block the tests. In October, the Congress passed the annual defense authorization bill with scarcely a hint of dissent.

Perhaps it wasn’t inevitable that 9/11 would weaken opposition to NMD. The attacks, after all, simply reinforced pre-existing attitudes towards missile defense. Skeptics felt vindicated that low-tech strikes were more pressing threats than ballistic missiles. Rather than spending vast sums on dubious defenses against inchoate threats, why not increase the counterterrorism budget? For advocates, on the other hand, 9/11 highlighted U.S. vulnerability to all threats, including ballistic missiles. Was there any doubt that terrorists would strike the US with such weapons if they could?

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211 Graham 2003, 364.
212 See CRS 2005, 5; and Graham 2003, 374.
213 Graham 2003, 368.
214 Pratt 2001, 12.
215 Graham 2003, 376.
216 Ibid.
The administration espoused the latter view. This perspective may have resonated after 9/11, because, as Michael Crepon put it, “What’s changed, and changed dramatically, is the public’s level of tolerance for vulnerability” of any kind.\(^\text{217}\)

Coupled with a large rally effect,\(^\text{218}\) heightened vulnerability opened a “policy window”\(^\text{219}\) for a series of actions only tangentially related to terrorism, including both Iraq and missile defense. The administration was determined to deploy defenses before 11 September; the attacks simply cleared the path. Indeed, the White House’s approach to NMD was largely unchanged by 9/11. Missile defense had been the administration’s top security priority before the attacks. The morning of 11 September, in fact, Rice was scheduled to give a major address “to promote missile defense as “the cornerstone of a new national security strategy.”\(^\text{220}\) The National Security Advisor’s planned remarks show that the administration ranked the ballistic missile threat as high as or higher than terrorism:

> We need to worry about the suitcase bomb, the car bomb and the vial of sarin released in the subway... [But] why put deadbolt locks on your doors and stock up on cans of mace and then decide to leave your windows open?\(^\text{221}\)

After 11 September, the “War on Terror” and the coming war with Iraq topped the policy agenda, and NMD faded somewhat from the administration’s public pronouncements.\(^\text{222}\) The White House remained focused on missile defense, only now it hitched NMD to the “War on Terror.”\(^\text{223}\) One argument was that WMD-armed missiles in the hands of ROGUES deterred U.S. intervention, thereby enabling these regimes to sponsor terrorism.\(^\text{224}\) Another claim was that ROGUE leaders such as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein could give ballistic missiles to terrorists to use against Americans.

While the “War on Terror” had the limelight in autumn 2001, the administration kept trying to persuade Russia to either heavily amend the ABM Treaty, or replace it with a new accord that would remove “constraints” on American missile defenses. To entice Putin to cut a

\(^\text{217}\) Qtd. in Pratt 2011, 26.
\(^\text{218}\) Murray and Spinoza 2004.
\(^\text{219}\) Kingdon 1995.
\(^\text{221}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{222}\) Pratt 2011, 14.
\(^\text{223}\) Sikka 2008.
\(^\text{224}\) NSPD-23 (2002) states that “our new adversaries [i.e., ROGUE STATES] seek to keep us out of their region, leaving them free to support terrorism and to pursue aggression against their neighbors. By their own calculations, these leaders may believe they can do this by holding a few of our cities hostage” (emphasis added).
deal, Bush offered further deep cuts in offensive strategic weapons (the Russians couldn’t afford to maintain their deployed forces). But Putin wouldn’t budge on the Treaty, which lead Bush to announce U.S. withdrawal on 13 December 2001, effective six months later.

Thanks in part to Bush’s diplomatic preparation, international reactions to the withdrawal were more muted than NMD critics had predicted. Putin called the move a “mistake,” but noted that Russia’s security was unaffected because it could easily overwhelm any system the Americans might deploy. Moscow stopped complying with START II when the ABM Treaty expired in June 2002. This move was largely symbolic however, as START II never entered into force had been supplanted by the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty signed the previous month. China reacted cautiously. It thought, probably correctly, that the ground-based interceptors slated for Alaska were aimed at its deterrent in addition to—or even instead of—North Korea’s non-existent strategic missiles. Nevertheless, while protesting the withdrawal, Beijing continued its long-standing policy of slowly modernizing and enlarging its deterrent. European allies were reluctant to spend political capital on protesting a done deal—and some of them were getting missile defense contracts from the Pentagon. To this day, dire warnings of new arms races and unraveled arms control regimes have proven unwarranted.

After announcing the Treaty withdrawal in December 2001, the administration took a number of actions that set the stage for a deployment decision the following year. A January 2002 memo from Rumsfeld exempted NMD from the planning and reporting requirements imposed on other DOD acquisition programs. The Defense Secretary also upgraded BMDO to agency rank, re-naming it the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). That June, MDA Director General Ronald Kadish grew alarmed at the amount of public information available on missile defense flight tests and decided to classify much of the data. His rationale was that U.S. adversaries might use the information to defeat the system, but critics suspected that the administration was trying to thwart oversight and cover up test failures.

In the meantime, two days after the ABM Treaty expired, bulldozers broke ground on a new GMD “test bed” facility in Fort Greely, Alaska. Throughout the summer, the Pentagon

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226 See Graham 2003, 378; and Johnson 2002, 3-4.
227 Graham 2003, 379.
228 See Burns and Brune 2003, 196-7; Hentz 2003; and Nathan and Tien 2003.
229 Graham 2003, 391.
230 See Burns and Brune 2003, 211; and Graham 2003, 391.
maintained publicly that a deployment decision wasn’t imminent, but “behind the scenes the administration was moving towards a deployment decision, pushed by a number of Rumsfeld’s senior policy aides who were bent on getting something built sooner rather than later.”

Kadish and the OSD drew up a plan calling for 10 ground-based interceptors for midcourse defense in Alaska and California. The interceptors would be fed targeting data from up to 10 Aegis ships fitted with long-range radars. Three more Aegis ships would be equipped for theatre defense, and production of PAC-3 batteries would be ramped up. All of this kit could be deployed and declared operational by 30 September 2004—just as Bush’s reelection campaign would be in high gear. The president would enter the campaign having fulfilled the promise he made in 2000 to deploy a missile defense system by the end of his first term. The guiding acquisitions concept for the system would be “spiral development”—equipment would be tested and refined in the field, and the system would evolve in response to changes in the threat and the pace of technological progress. In mid-August, the President signed off on the plan. He announced it publicly in December 2002. On the 16th of that month, Bush issued missile National Security Presidential Directive 23, which codified his administration’s missile defense policies.

**Conclusion**

This chapter recounted the history of American missile defense from 1944, when the Army began studying how to stop German V-2 rockets, to late 2002, when President George W. Bush proclaimed his intention to deploy a comprehensive system of theatre and strategic defenses.

There is striking continuity in this narrative: the issues of cost, strategic rationale, and technological workability have plagued NMD advocates since serious R&D began in the late 1950s. This accounts for a pattern whereby NMD programs went “from pretentious beginnings to humble ends.” Projects typically began “with grandiose visions of escape from nuclear terror, then [were] whittled down to more modest missions, [cancelled outright or] deployed in a limited manner, and then forsaken, as the cycle” renewed. This was the fate of Nike-Zeus and Sentinel

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231 Graham 2003, 383.
232 Pratt 2011, 4.
in the 1960s, as well as Safeguard in the 1970s. These programs all fell victim to cost overruns, technical obstacles, and shifting strategic priorities. SDI didn’t alter this pattern. The history of strategic defense since 1983 has been marked by progressively more circumscribed missile defense schemes. From the grandiosity of Reagan’s DREAM emerged Weinberger’s Phase One. Phase One was narrowed further to GPALS during the George H.W. Bush presidency. After GPALS came “thin, and then thinner missile defense proposals” in the Clinton administration, “and finally, [the modest] Ground-based Midcourse Defense System” in place today.²³³ Literally and figuratively, “Star Wars” has come down to earth (though NMD supporters remain keen to expand the system).

Having told the story of missile defense in America, it’s time to return to the research question, which is narrower in scope. Given all the obstacles that national defense faced, how was it possible for it to have been revived in 1983 and approved for deployment two decades later? To answer this question, the following chapter considers the academic literature on missile defense.

²³³ Ibid.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The story told in the last chapter leads to the question guiding this study: How and why was strategic defense revived in the early 1980s and approved for deployment in 2002, despite the ABM Treaty and the arms control consensus it enshrined, despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and despite chronic concerns about its feasibility, cost, and rationale?

International Relations literature offers many different answers. Explanations fall roughly into “rationalist,” “psychological,” and “discursive” categories. This chapter describes and evaluates explanations within each category. I argue that rationalist accounts offer only partial answers to the NMD puzzle. This sets the stage for the metaphorical framing approach developed in Chapter 4, which leverages the strengths of psychological and discursive explanations while avoiding some of their limitations.

Rationalist Accounts

Rationalism explains foreign policy from the ‘bottom-up.’ Even when structural constraints are severe, social phenomena are ultimately reducible to individual choices\(^1\) arising from peoples’ interests and beliefs.\(^2\) Rationalists assume a “procedural” or “thin” rationality whereby actors satisfy their interests efficiently in light of constraints, and their beliefs and information about those constraints.\(^3\) Actors’ preferences are traditionally assumed and

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\(^1\) This is the principle of methodological individualism, defended at length in Little 1991.
\(^2\) Wendt 1999, 87.
\(^3\) Nicholson 1992, chap. 3.
treated as fixed, though beliefs can change depending on available information. Rationalism
is a broad analytical approach. Its explanations differ depending on what actors, interests, and
constraints are specified. This is clear when examining three rationalist explanations of
NMD: realism, electoral politics, and vested interests.

**Realism**

For realists, strategic preferences turn on assumptions about the existential imperatives of
anarchy (maximizing power vs. security). This tradition splits into “offensive” and
“defensive” branches.

Offensive realism\(^4\) explains strategic defense as Washington’s effort to maximize
power vis-à-vis the USSR and later, ROGUE states. On this view, NMD was desirable insofar
as it enabled the US to project power abroad.\(^5\) Washington, this argument goes, was moved
by a desire for short-term strategic gains, despite the high costs of strategic defense, its
technical flaws, and the risk it would make adversaries feel less secure and incite arms
racing.\(^6\) The offensive realist account has some empirical support. For instance, while MAD
was *declaratory* policy during most of the Cold War, “as a matter of *actual* policy ... the US
built an enormous counterforce arsenal that threatened its adversary’s retaliatory capability,
aimed to limit damage to its own forces and society, and generally sought to prevail in the
event of nuclear war.” As the Soviets never failed to point out, “Star Wars” could be seen as
a key part of this strategy—or, more generally, as another example of the American
preference to compete “for unilateral advantage rather than accept mutual security.”\(^7\)
Offensive realism also fits the motivations for NMD after the Cold War. In 2000, the Joint
Chiefs issued a future strategy paper describing missile defense as vital to its mission of
“dominance across the full spectrum of conflict.”\(^8\) And, as we saw in the last chapter, the
“hegemonic realists” who dominated George W. Bush’s first term clearly considered missile
defense a cornerstone of American primacy.\(^9\)

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\(^4\) A prominent example is Mearsheimer 2001.
\(^8\) JCS 2000.
On the flip side, defensive realism\textsuperscript{10} explains other policymakers’ reluctance to build missile defenses on the assumption that states maximize security and not power. In an offense-dominant world, pursuing NMD signals malign intent, and risks sparking conflict spirals and arms races that would quickly offset security gains from deployment. In policy terms, defensive realists counsel states to seek “the most efficient and effective means to counter the most serious realistic (material) threat to national security,” which “left [defensive] realists to consistently rule out BMD.”\textsuperscript{11} This certainly occurred during the Cold War, when preserving “strategic stability” was thought the best way to maintain security in a MAD world. Indeed, even hard-boiled Cold Warriors like Robert McNamara, Richard Nixon, and Brent Scowcroft opposed NMD. The fall of the USSR didn’t drastically change this logic, because ICBM strikes were low probability threats, and because strategic defense (in addition to being ineffective) still risked provoking Russia and China into an arms race that would leave both sides less secure. In terms of its security strategy (if not its rhetoric) the Clinton administration was as concerned about ROGUE STATES as its successor.\textsuperscript{12} Clinton, along with the defensive realists, saw missile defense as at best a fraught backup option in case less confrontational policies (i.e., diplomacy, non-proliferation regimes, and deterrence) failed.

In sum, evidence supports both offensive and defensive versions of realism. We could view each approach in zero-sum terms as making ontological claims about the invariant imperatives of survival in anarchy. In that case, both explanations cannot be correct, for states shouldn’t oscillate between maximizing power and security. However, if we admit unit-level factors into the picture, we could explain shifts in NMD policy as transitions between leaders with different understandings of the strategic environment. This brings the explanation closer to “neoclassical realism.”\textsuperscript{13} Here we gain descriptive accuracy but lose parsimony and theoretical distinctiveness as lines blur between realism, psychology, and domestic politics.\textsuperscript{14}

Perhaps the best test of realism is the basic question of whether the ICBM threat was necessary and/or sufficient to explain missile defense. Here, the evidence is mixed. On one

\textsuperscript{10} See, for example, Van Evera 1998.
\textsuperscript{11} Lott 2004, 78, emphasis in original.
\textsuperscript{12} See Hoyt 2000a and 2000b; Litwak 2001; and O’Reilly 2007.
\textsuperscript{13} Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009.
\textsuperscript{14} Cf. Legro and Moravesik 1999.
hand, the revival of NMD is inconceivable absent the perception of material threats to American security, combined with an anarchic international environment that mandated self-help strategies. Even as pure pretext for, say, vested interests, the specter of a Soviet or ROGUE ICBM strike was doubtless necessary to compel policymakers to approve such a costly and questionable program.\textsuperscript{15} But while threat perception is necessary to explain missile defense, it can’t be sufficient. Threat—even when inflated, as in the Rumsfeld Report—was only a “permissive cause.”\textsuperscript{16} There are several reasons why.

First, threat perception doesn’t explain the timing of NMD initiatives. From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, policymakers considered the “window of vulnerability” a pressing problem. But Reagan announced SDI in early 1983, as his offensive buildup was beginning and as most observers (for example, the bipartisan, blue-ribbon commission Reagan had appointed to investigate basing modes for the MX) were stressing that U.S. vulnerability was not as pressing as previously thought. Neither did NMD deployment pressures during Clinton’s second term correlate with a clear increase in threat. The Rumsfeld Report and Pyongyang’s surprise ICBM test in 1998 did contribute to the \textit{National Missile Defense Act} the following year. But Clinton had been fending off calls for deployment since 1995. And arms control had \textit{lowered} the number of ballistic missiles capable of striking the US by the time George W. Bush took office. Key players on the Bush team had their minds set on missile defense long before 9/11 or the Rumsfeld Report. For them, missile defense was much more about ideology than objective material capabilities.\textsuperscript{17} Perhaps the challenge posed by ROGUE STATES was one to American \textit{identity} more than U.S. security.\textsuperscript{18}

Second, even if the ICBM threat was as pressing as NMD proponents claimed, this doesn’t explain why Reagan, H.W. Bush, and W. Bush thought \textit{strategic defense} to be the best answer. A wide range of policy responses were available to superpowers like the US.\textsuperscript{19} Alternatives included revamping arms control (to which hardliners in the Reagan and W. Bush administrations were largely opposed), modernizing offensive deterrent forces (which had in fact begun under Carter), strengthening non-proliferation regimes, a serious re-look at civil defense, and preventative/pre-emptive attacks against ROGUE regime capabilities (and/or

\textsuperscript{15} See Reiss 1992, 195.  
\textsuperscript{16} On “permissive” causation, see Waltz 1954, 232-4.  
\textsuperscript{17} Legro and Moravcsik 2001, 81.  
\textsuperscript{18} Bormann 2008.  
\textsuperscript{19} See Agrell 2005; and Handberg 2002, 111-9.
the regimes themselves). Each alternative had problems—but then, effective missile defenses didn’t even exist!

The Reagan administration’s incoherent rationales for SDI pose another problem. “Star Wars” was justified as force protection to enhance deterrence, population defense to transcend deterrence, leverage in arms control negotiations, and (privately) as a way to goad the Soviets into a high-tech arms race. Each of these rationales derived from the imperatives of superpower competition, variously construed. This augers against realism because actors drew such different conclusions from the same strategic situation. Psychological explanations offer far more leverage in this case.

When it comes to SDI and realism, though, the main issue isn’t that its justifications varied so widely. The problem is that the initiative began as a public relations ploy as much as a security program. Chapter 2 made this clear. “Star Wars” began as a gambit to increase the President’s popularity and co-opt the Nuclear Freeze movement. Indeed, it was widely panned as such when Reagan introduced it in early 1983, and it faded quickly. Only later, in early 1985, did pragmatists and hardliners find strategic uses for it. It was then that SDI reappeared high on the administration’s security agenda. It seems, then, that realism gets the policy process backwards. Though superpower competition enabled it, “Star Wars” is best understood not as a solution to a strategic problem. Instead, to paraphrase John Kingdon, the SDI was a “solution in search of a problem,” or, in the words of Ernest Yanarella, a “technology in search of a mission.” Domestic politics is the best explanation for its birth.

There is one more realist claim to rebut. When Reagan left the White House, many American conservatives began arguing that the President and the hardliners in his administration supported SDI to lure the Soviet Union into a high-tech arms race that would bankrupt it and cause its collapse. There is some limited evidence for this view. A few administration “ultra-hardliners” seemed to welcome an arms race for this reason. Moreover, Reagan frequently spoke of the economic weaknesses of the Soviet Union, and both the

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21 Kingdon 1995.
22 Yanarella 2002.
23 Some went further and claimed success for the strategy—that SDI frightened the Soviets so much that it caused Gorbachev to “throw in the towel” (Beinart 2010; see also FitzGerald 2000, 473-4; Lakoff 2007, 85; and Reiss 1992, 192-3). This is very doubtful, but refuting this argument would take my discussion too far afield (see FitzGerald 2000 for a rebuttal).
President and his aides were convinced that the Soviets were terrified of SDI. And a 1983 CIA assessment predicted that SDI would pressure the Soviet economy. But insofar as the economic stress motive drove “Star Wars,” it only did so after about 1985, and even then it competed with several other rationales, all of which received much more emphasis in the administration. This explanation is suspiciously post-hoc, and probably ideologically motivated.

The argument that threat perceptions were necessary for NMD offers only minimal support for realism, because realism has difficulty explaining threat perception without recourse to ad hoc factors. The core problem is that realism privileges structure (which is partly a function of material factors), but structure works by virtue of the meaning actors ascribe to it. This is especially true for strategic policy, which has relatively little grounding in material reality and in which questions of interpretation loom large. Accordingly, the chapter ahead develops an interpretive framework for understanding NMD.

If strategic considerations didn’t drive missile defense, perhaps domestic politics did. There are two domestic drivers to consider under the rationalist rubric: electoral politics and vested interests.

**Electoral Politics**

The electoral politics argument is that strategic defense was popular, which led politicians (including some skeptics) to support it to bolster their own support and blunt attacks from their opponents. Frances FitzGerald, for example, argues that the “SDI was … the first military program the Congress had funded because of direct popular pressure, and the first its members voted for knowing full well that what the public expected from it could not be

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24 Lettow 2005.
26 Ibid., 47-8.
28 Wendt 1999, chap. 3.
30 The electoral politics argument is derivable from Andrew Moravcsik’s “ideational liberalism,” in which social actors lend their support to a government to enact their “identity-based preferences.” To gain and exercise power, politicians must enact “legitimate” policies, that is, policies according with the social identities and values of those with a say in selecting the government. Thus, all else being equal, the societal distribution of identity-based preferences determines government policies (Moravcsik 1997).
achieved.”\textsuperscript{31} As FitzGerald implies, electoral politics goes a long way towards explaining NMD’s revival under Reagan. And evidence from the previous chapter suggests that electoral politics played a large role in subsequent administrations—a far more important role than strategic considerations. To be sure, there was always a small minority of ‘true believers’ who pushed NMD on its own merits, all of whom were members or supporters of the GOP. After Reagan’s re-election in 1984, the ‘true believers’ were able to make supporting missile defense a litmus test for Republicans.\textsuperscript{32} But their most important role may have been to convince the whole party to use NMD as a rhetorical bludgeon against the Democrats. As we’ll see in Chapters 6 and 7, this pushed Democrats into approving large funding increases for strategic defense in the 1980s and late 1990s.

There are two interesting wrinkles in the electoral politics story, however. First, in 1983 and 1995-6, missile defense campaigns didn’t seem to attract much public support. This suggests that the success of pro-NMD rhetoric hinged partly on contextual factors. The second complication, related to the first, is that polling data from 1985-2002 show public attitudes towards NMD to have been surprisingly ambivalent and malleable, which points to the importance of framing in missile defense discourse. I’ll discuss each of these issues below.

At first glance, an electioneering explanation seems practically sufficient to explain the SDI’s success. “Star Wars” was timed and announced largely to soften Reagan’s hawkish image in his first term, and to weaken the Freeze movement. Aside from the small, ever-present NMD lobby (which didn’t influence Reagan’s decision directly but helped legitimate it after the fact), there just weren’t many other pressures to resurrect strategic defense at that time. As I’ll argue below, neither the military nor its contractors were pushing for NMD, and after SDI took off, the military brass tried hard to rein it in. If the President and his advisers did not think that the VISION would garner popular approval, it’s difficult to imagine them introducing it.

And they had good reasons to believe their strategy would work. Policymakers—skeptics and supporters alike—were convinced that the President’s DREAM resonated with the

\textsuperscript{31} FitzGerald 2000, 264, emphases added.
\textsuperscript{32} For example, the Republican right attacked George H.W. Bush in 1988 for being “pragmatic” on SDI (Harak 1988, 500). See also Hartung and Ciarrocca 2000.
American public. Opponents often spoke of the SDI’s appeal; several stressed that they too shared Reagan’s vision of a world free of nuclear arms. By the spring of 1985 (when the SDI was near the top of the political agenda), supporting “Star Wars” had become almost mandatory for Republicans. Meanwhile, Democrats, in the words of National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane, were “in an absolute tizzy.”

The problem here is that SDI was a political liability when Reagan first introduced it. It was panned as a Buck Rogers fantasy, and a ploy to gain support for the administration’s large defense budget. After his March 1983 speech, the President faced a firestorm of criticism and quickly backtracked. He didn’t mention strategic defense during his reelection campaign in fall 1984. Reagan even intervened personally to remove a deployment pledge from the Republican platform. Only after his landslide reelection did the President push hard for “Star Wars” and made it the cornerstone of his strategic policy. Strategic defense certainly put the Democrats on the defensive, but the political context may have been the decisive factor. In particular, public approval of the SDI rose when Reagan began to soften his rhetoric toward the USSR.

Another missile defense campaign in the mid-1990s failed as well. The right-wing Center for Security Policy had used polls and focus groups to persuade the GOP leadership to use missile defense against the Democrats in the 1994 midterm and 1996 presidential elections. But the Center’s data were compromised by leading questions, threat priming, straw arguments, and other distortions. Consequently, the findings seriously over-estimated public support. Missile defense aroused a small group of neo-conservatives and space weapons enthusiasts. But later surveys and focus groups—even some commissioned by NMD advocates—revealed that U.S. vulnerability to ICBMs did not rouse the Republican

33 See, for instance, Bundy et al. 1984-5, 265; and Rathjens and Ruina 1985, 254. Chapter 6 contains many more examples.
34 For example, Bundy et al. 1984-5, 265.
35 Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 261.
36 Ibid., 210-1.
37 Ibid., 242.
38 Ibid.
base as whole, nor did it bother voters at large.\(^{40}\) Several polls put public support for the *Defend America Act* at under 3 in 10 people.\(^{41}\) (Republicans ultimately withdrew the bill, though the unexpectedly high cost of the proposed system played a large role in that decision.) As with SDI, the role of context was crucial. April 1995 saw the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. To the extent that they fretted over national security (which wasn’t much), voters were worried about terrorism and not ballistic missiles.\(^{42}\)

While context factored in, public inattention may also help explain why NMD drives occasionally flopped. For one thing, despite both sides’ attempts to educate the public, Americans remained largely uninformed on missile defense from 1983-2002, though the White House’s pro-SDI campaign in 1985 might have sparked a temporary surge in interest.\(^{43}\) On the whole, the public didn’t seem to care much; strategic defense was mainly an elite debate.\(^{44}\) Elite attitudes hewed closely to ideology and party affiliation: conservatives and Republicans were very likely to support missile defense, with liberals and Democrats mostly opposed.\(^{45}\) But surveys suggested this wasn’t the case for the public, whose positions “smeared” all over the ideological map.\(^{46}\)

Attitudes towards missile defense weren’t just non-ideological, they were ambivalent and mutable. Respondents consistently supported NMD in the abstract, often by large majorities. For instance, in the mid-1980s, almost 60 percent of Americans favored SDI, while only 25 percent disapproved outright.\(^{47}\) But majorities or pluralities often disapproved when questions mentioned cost, technological doubts, or arms racing scenarios.\(^{48}\) On at least two occasions, researchers induced respondents to switch positions on NMD in the same survey.\(^{49}\)

\(^{40}\) See Burns and Brune 2003, 156-7; Cirincione 1996, 50-1; FitzGerald 2000, 493; Graham 2003, 27; and Pratt 2011, 9-10.
\(^{41}\) See Cirincione 1996, 52; and Mowthorpe 2004, 334.
\(^{42}\) A May 1996 poll revealed that just 3 percent of Americans thought it likely that the U.S. homeland would be attacked by ballistic missiles in the next five years (Cirincione 1996, 50-1).
\(^{43}\) Hunter 1992, 115.
\(^{44}\) Handberg 2002, 120.
\(^{45}\) See DeNardo 1995; Jarvis 2001; and Lindsay 1991.
\(^{46}\) See DeNardo 1995, 101; and Russett 1989, 196.
\(^{47}\) DeNardo1995, 43.
\(^{49}\) See Bishop 2005, 38-9; and Hunter 1992, 110-1.
Framing effects explain this variation. The public wanted missile defenses, and most were reasonably confident that they could be built, but Americans also wanted arms control and balanced budgets; the wording of certain questions alerted respondents to tradeoffs among these goals.

Thanks to a close reading of SDI-era polling questions, we know specifically which frames induced which responses. Questions evoking the VISION of the SHIELD and omitting logical arguments for or against the program elicited support for SDI. On the other hand, questions that implicitly refuted the VISION and/or were confined to factual argumentation yielded negative responses. The American public seemed to favor strategic defense as a SHIELD, not as an actual weapons program.

This is key to reconciling ambiguous public opinion with the electoral politics explanation. As I’ll argue in Chapters 6 and 7, because the SHIELD frame dominated NMD discourse, skeptical politicians felt pressured to support missile defenses despite the plasticity of public opinion. For example, many Democrats gave qualified support to SDI largely to avoid being painted as soft on defense. The pattern repeated itself after Reagan. Clinton—whose political antennae were famously sensitive—doubtless felt threatened by the Defend America Act, or else he wouldn’t have appeased critics with his “three-plus-three” plan. And he gave presidential candidate Al Gore political cover by refusing to rule out deployment in 2000. The SHIELD’s popularity surely lay beneath Democrats’ defensiveness. It probably bolstered Republican’s insistence on development and deployment as well.

The key question then becomes why politicians in both parties felt NMD resonated with Americans. But an electoral politics account offers no answers. Strategic defense might seem to have been “hard not to like” and “something many would instinctively approve of.” But given the ambiguous nature of public opinion and the varying political fortunes of NMD, it won’t do to suggest that NMD was somehow ‘intrinsically’ attractive. As Roger Handberg writes,

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Hunter 1992, chap. 5
Ibid., 112.
Nathan and Tien 2003, 45.
issues immediately germane to private individuals... As a result, much of the public debate has been largely framed in symbolic terms or though metaphors aimed at fostering understanding by the uninitiated. The “shield” concept of President Reagan is the most obvious example.\textsuperscript{53}

An alternative account, explored below, explains the program’s popularity in rhetorical terms. From this perspective, NMD’s attractiveness (and/or the perception thereof) was less about missile defense \textit{itself}, and more how proponents’ rhetoric, especially their metaphors, tapped commonplaces in U.S. foreign policy discourse. This is particularly plausible since NMD was so remote from the lives of most Americans (and policymakers). By necessity, Handberg reminds us, the debate was cast in metaphorical terms.\textsuperscript{54}

\textit{Vested Interests}

Before turning to discourse, though, there is one more rationalist explanation to consider. In the vested interests account, policy flows from the top down rather than the bottom up; the focus is on interlocking elite interests. Specifically, military officers responsible for missile defense have a stake in enlarged NMD budgets and program mandates. For their part, defense contractors want research, development, and procurement contracts; members of the Armed Services Committees have an interest in appropriating funds to create jobs in their districts (and campaign donations). Within this ‘military-industrial complex,’\textsuperscript{55} the explanation goes, exchanges of people, information, money, and expertise assured a robust constituency for NMD.\textsuperscript{56} In particular, contractors and federal laboratories had huge stakes in missile defense, and they wielded considerable political power through their expertise, lobbying, and the classified nature of their work.\textsuperscript{57}

This description is accurate. Both before and after Reagan announced the SDI, stakeholders were heavily involved in drafting feasibility studies and issuing technical guidance.\textsuperscript{58} And predictably, once the program ramped up and it was clear that the administration was serious about NMD, defense industry associations actively lobbied for it.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[53]{Handberg 2002, 25-6.}
\footnotetext[54]{\textit{Ibid.}, 26.}
\footnotetext[55]{Yarmolinsky 1971, chaps. 3-7.}
\footnotetext[56]{See Handberg 2002; Pratt 1990; Pratt, Pike, and Lindley 1988; and Reiss 1992.}
\footnotetext[57]{See Handberg 2002, 23-4; Kurlanditzick 2005; Mitchell 2000; and Reiss 1992, 12-3.}
\footnotetext[58]{Pratt, Pike, and Lindley 1988.}
\end{footnotes}
Contractors worked with allies in the Pentagon and the nuclear weapons labs to publicly exaggerate the success of “Star Wars” research and the Patriot “Scudbuster” missile. They also spread subcontracts to ensure the widest NMD constituency possible, both geographically and politically. Corporate sponsors worked in other ways, too. For example, contractors helped bankroll pressure groups like Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy; they even fed crucial arguments to the Rumsfeld Commission. During the W. Bush administration, stakeholders circulated widely between the contractor community and the executive branch. And unsurprisingly, the two Democratic senators who consistently bucked the party line on NMD during the second Bush administration were among the top recipients of contractors’ campaign donations.

However, while vested interests became important, they weren’t always present. A robust pro-NMD network didn’t exist when Reagan unveiled the SDI in March 1983. The SDI’s introduction startled nearly everyone, supporters included. While a small group of stakeholders had been pushing strategic defense, they hadn’t made much headway in the 1970s and early 1980s. Sanford Lakoff and Herbert York explain:

The SDI was promoted by a very small coalition of military officers, scientists, strategists, and politicians, but… [it] did not carry the immediate promise of lucrative procurement contracts, and it did not arouse much enthusiasm among military researchers, who had come to rely more on continued modernization of offensive weapons… [E]arly in the Reagan administration’s first term, even the Defense Department’s own internal review of the High Frontier proposal on strategic defenses had led to the conclusion, announced by Secretary Weinberger, that the project was premature at best, because it could easily be defeated and overwhelmed…[Reagan’s] decision… was successfully implemented not because the President could count on support in Congress, the DOD, and the contractors—or, in other words, from all points of the “iron triangle”—but rather because he went over the heads of the “establishment” and appealed to the electorate. His simplistic vision of a space shield against nuclear weapons aroused precisely the strong public approval that he needed and that his political instincts told him he could expect. Once he advanced this vision and the people responded favorably, Reagan could count on enlisting institutional support among the contractors whose interests would be served, within the services where special divisions would be created with responsibility for the program, and among those who would develop the strategic rationale for the program.

60 See Pratt, Pike, and Lindley 1988; Burns and Brune 2003, 131; and Hartung et al. 2005.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., 15.
64 Lakoff and York 1989, 259-60, emphases added.
In short, there wasn’t a wide constituency for strategic defense when it was first proposed. Vested interests help explain the institutionalization of “Star Wars,” but not its emergence and public legitimation. Reagan’s powerful frames created “coalitional glue” around which vested interests could coalesce. After the “Star Wars” constituency was in place, stakeholders helped the administration perpetuate these frames through their publications, advertising, and Congressional testimony.

Even then, supporters met resistance from surprising quarters. For example, despite benefitting materially from the project, DOD’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency “wanted to pay lip service to SDI and go no farther.” Similarly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff actively opposed “Star Wars” even though it expanded their R&D budgets. Indeed, for organizational reasons, the services shied away from NMD well into the 1990s. The Chiefs were willing to develop NMD with the “free money” from SDIO and BMDO, but they didn’t want to fund it from their own acquisitions budgets. Shielding deployed servicemembers with theatre defenses was one thing, but strategic defense was never on the Chiefs’ wish list, and they cooperated with Clinton to head off deployment in the 1990s with the “three-plus-three” plan. In their case, organizational politics prevailed over vested interests.

In other instances, pre-existing beliefs either trumped or dovetailed with economic and bureaucratic interests. Analyses of Congressional roll call votes on NMD in the 1980s and 1990s found that ideology was strongly associated with voting patterns while parochial interests were not. And even though defense contractors had the ear of the W. Bush administration, Bush’s team was bent on NMD as an ideological imperative. It’s plausible that lobbyists simply supported a policy that the President had already decided on principled grounds. This isn’t to say that vested interests were insignificant, only that they worked in tandem with pre-existing convictions in this case.

At other times, however, vested interests definitely succumbed to broader political and military developments. For instance, the “Star Wars” lobby couldn’t stop SDI’s slide in

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66 Reiss 1992, 8.
67 Hey 2007, 106.
68 Locke 1998, 8.
69 See Cirincione 1996, 49; and Saplosky, Gholz, and Talmadge 2009, 142.
70 See Jarvis 2001; and Lindsay 1991.
political support (and, to a lesser extent, funding) in the late Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations. The technology and planning weren’t there, the rationales were shaky, and the threat wasn’t cooperating. A Democratic White House put up even more roadblocks. NMD stakeholders couldn’t keep Defense Secretary Aspin from seriously downgrading the program during Clinton’s first term.

In sum, evidence for the vested interests explanation is mixed. On one hand, the NMD constituency was a consequence of SDI and not a cause. Vested interests sometimes took a backseat to organizational politics and ideology. Moreover, the considerable clout of NMD stakeholders didn’t always translate into policy outcomes: after the missile defense lobby took shape, NMD’s political fortunes rose and fell, and vested interests don’t wholly explain this variation. The ‘military-industrial complex,’ then, is clearly insufficient to account for NMD’s revival and deployment. On the flip side, it may have been necessary. Given NMD’s high cost, low feasibility, and controversial rationales, it’s hard to imagine advocates succeeding without such powerful backing from Congress, parts of the Pentagon, and defense firms. For example, the NMD lobby helped create the narrative of the Patriot’s Gulf War success and the Rumsfeld Report. And top Pentagon officials embraced the ROGUE STATE construct for their bureaucratic interests. All of these things helped prevent missile defense from reverting to the low-level research program it had been before Reagan. However, if vested interests were indeed a necessary cause, they worked in conjunction with beliefs, threat perceptions, and electoral politics.

This leads to the central flaw in the rationalist approaches considered thus far. Each contributes a piece of the puzzle, but none succeeds individually in explaining NMD’s perplexing success. Reagan’s initiative certainly wasn’t dictated by the imperatives of the arms race, but realism rightly points to superpower competition in anarchy as a permissive cause of the SDI. And to be sure, strategic defense proved a useful political tool for vote-seeking politicians, cash-seeking contractors, and bureaucratic players alike. One could even venture that the arms race, electoral politics, and vested interests were jointly necessary for the success of NMD from 1983-2002. But one more necessary condition is missing. None of the rationalist accounts sheds light on how or why strategic defense resonated with

71 Mitchell 2000, chap. 3.
policymakers and the American public. Psychological and discursive approaches are better suited to this task.

**Psychology**

Compared to rationalist explanations, few psychological accounts of NMD exist. Some have speculated on the psycho-social origins of Reagan’s DREAM,\(^{72}\) and the personality traits that led the President to defend it with such implacability and earnestness. These accounts are important, particularly if we take seriously Reagan’s claim that he and only he came up with SDI.\(^{73}\) Even if he didn’t dream it up, though, Reagan’s evident dedication to his VISION, the sincerity with which he spoke of it, and the tenacity with which clung to it despite overwhelming evidence of its futility, made him an extremely effective ‘salesman’ for the program.\(^{74}\) Few could have been better spokespersons for strategic ideas so off the wall. Without the DREAM, SDI wouldn’t have been bureaucratically entrenched in the SDIO. And as I argue below, without this institutionalized support base, it was less likely that the stars would align for strategic defense in later administrations. However, depth psychological readings of Reagan, in addition to being speculative, aren’t applicable to other administrations, and obviously can’t explain the shifting fortunes of NMD after his presidency.\(^{75}\)

Cognitive psychological approaches have the advantage of being systematic, replicable, and potentially generalizable. These studies draw mainly on image theory. “Images” are a type of cognitive schema, so understanding image theory requires grasping schema theory. Schemata are “the set of cognitions related to some concept.”\(^{76}\) They may have affective as well as propositional content. Schemata bias attention, encoding, and recall;

\(^{72}\) Reagan biographer Lou Cannon (1991), for instance, ventures that the President was predisposed towards SDI because of certain films he starred in or had seen, coupled with his apparent inability to tell fact from fiction. This view was shared by many of the President’s closest advisers (ibid., 292). Other observers point to Reagan’s fixation with the Biblical scenario of Armageddon (see Broad 1992, 98; and Lettow 2005).

\(^{73}\) Cannon 1991, 717.

\(^{74}\) See FitzGerald 2000; and Hunter 1992, chap. 5.

\(^{75}\) That said, the two presidents in this study most favorable to NMD (Reagan and George W. Bush) seem to share a rigid “ideological” cognitive style, while the two presidents most opposed (George H.W. Bush and Clinton), share a more open and complex “intellectual” cognitive style (on “cognitive styles,” see Shimko 1991, 228-31).

\(^{76}\) Kuklinski, Luskin, and Bolland 1991, 1342.
they are resistant to change, and they shape policy preferences and simplify complex decisionmaking tasks by highlighting schema-consistent courses of action. In Foreign Policy Analysis, schemata containing propositions about other countries (particularly adversaries) are called images.77

Using a content analysis of public statements by Reagan administration officials, Keith Shimko identifies “hardliner” and “moderate” images of the Soviet Union.78 The images differed on fundamental questions like the goals, motives, and capabilities of Soviet leaders. Unsurprisingly, he finds that SDI hawks (e.g., Perle and Weinberger at Defense) had hardline images of the USSR, while pragmatists (e.g., Shultz at State) had moderate images. Shimko’s explanation jibes with non-psychological studies tracing diverging strategic preferences to deep differences on the nature of the Soviet Union.79 Two other image theory studies carry Shimko’s approach beyond the Cold War.

Paul Hoyt identifies a ROGUE STATE image from a large corpus of public statements by Clinton administration officials.80 Prototypical ROUGES, he argued, are threatening, culturally degenerate, and seek to rectify their military weakness vis-à-vis the US.81 According to Hoyt’s analysis, behaviors indicative of ROGUE-ness include: 1) pursuing WMD; 2) sponsoring terrorism; 3) challenging international norms; and 4) threatening regional or global stability. If the ROGUE concept denoted reality, we would expect these actions to be necessary and sufficient for inclusion in the ROGUE category.82 But this wasn’t the case, so Hoyt argues that ROGUE STATE was a cognitive construct and not an objective category.83

Patrick O’Reilly replicates many of Hoyt’s findings, not just for the Clinton years but for George W. Bush’s first term as well. O’Reilly also finds that, of all the policy options available for dealing with ROGUE STATES, the Clinton and Bush administrations focused overwhelmingly on two: non-proliferation and strategic defense. The relative emphasis placed on these policies differed across actors, however. Bush and Rumsfeld stressed NMD

77 See, for example, Herrmann and Fischerkeller 1995. Jervis’s classic work on misperception (1976) is compatible with this approach.
79 See Eden and Miller 1989, esp. chap. 1; and Homer-Dixon and Karapin 1989, 408.
80 Hoyt 2000.
81 See also O’Reilly 2007.
82 See Gardner 1985, chap. 12.
83 See also Litwak 2000 and 2001; and O’Reilly 2007, 297.
far more than Clinton and his Defense Secretary William Perry, whose major focus was non-proliferation.

Image-based accounts are plausible, but they have serious limitations. First, it isn’t always possible to establish congruence between images and NMD preferences. For one thing, Shimko found Shultz’s image hard to discern; he also argues that Reagan never had a stable, coherent image of the Soviet Union. Moreover, as other studies have pointed out, the President shifted between various rationales for SDI depending on his audience. Reagan seemed emotionally engaged by his VISION, but it’s doubtful he had coherent beliefs on how SDI fit into the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Even when images map onto policy preferences and rationales, moreover, their impact might be filtered through situational factors. For example, O’Reilly’s data show that for both the Clinton and W. Bush administrations, secretaries of state stressed non-proliferation efforts while defense secretaries emphasized missile defense. This suggests that the effect of the ROGUE image on NMD preferences was either mediated or caused by bureaucratic role. The latter possibility reverses the causal arrow of image theory. Rather than shaping policy preferences, images arise to justify policies decided upon for other reasons. This is a plausible interpretation of the birth of the ROGUE STATE in the early 1990s. And of course, even if images did shape preferences during NMD debates, preferences didn’t automatically produce policy. If that were the case, “Star Wars” would never have gotten off the ground in 1983, because nearly the entire security establishment was against it. A plausible account of NMD has to include non-psychological factors.

Finally, image theory is silent on the origins of images themselves, and why they are structured as they are. As I’ll argue in the chapter ahead, conceptual metaphor theory offers a psychologically and even neurally plausible account of the origins and structure of schemata like ROGUE STATE. An important advantage of this approach is that it isn’t limited to elite cognition—elites and the public seem to reason about policy using identical metaphors.

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84 See Bjork 1992, 80; and FitzGerald 2000, 262-3.
85 See Hunter 1992, chap. 5; and Lettow 2005.
87 Though this may seem to undercut my argument on the importance of metaphor, Chapters 4 and 8 argue that even if metaphors are deployed instrumentally, this doesn’t mean that they are epiphenomenal.
89 Schlesinger and Lau 2000.
The work of strategic analyst James DeNardo supports this view.\textsuperscript{90} From 1990-1993, DeNardo surveyed strategic experts and novices alike on their preferences for a variety of strategic weapons systems, including NMD. He concludes that all respondents based their preferences on simple heuristics\textsuperscript{91} and not elaborate images of the USSR. Heuristics were used along two dimensions. The first dimension concerned the requirement for security: did security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union come from \textit{strength} (i.e., U.S. superiority) or \textit{balance} (i.e., strategic parity)? Note how the \textit{strength} and \textit{balance} heuristics evoke bodily health and spatial positioning. The second dimension was the contents of the superpower arsenals rather than their relative size: was a weapons system like SDI “good” or “bad?” DeNardo implies that for many, this judgment turned on metaphorical framing: “defensive” weapons like SHIELDS are “good,” whereas “offensive” weapons like the MX are “bad.”\textsuperscript{92}

\textbf{Discourse}

There is one element missing from the literature review so far: foreign policy discourse. A discourse is a contingent “system of signification.” This system produces social reality by generating and constraining possibilities for social identities, thought, and action. Discourse analysts explore how discourses produce the ‘commonsense,’ taken-for-granted categories and meanings that inform foreign policy practice.\textsuperscript{93} They criticize mainstream scholarship for assuming \textit{a priori} that that certain representations are meaningful—even thinkable.\textsuperscript{94} For this reason, discourse analysis (with the exception of cognitive linguistics-based approaches), aims not to uncover the thinking \textit{behind} discourse, but to show “the manifest political

\textsuperscript{90} DeNardo 1995.
\textsuperscript{91} Whereas images contain information on a specific concept, heuristics are general “rules of thumb” for decisionmaking under uncertainty. They “reduce the complex tasks of assessing probabilities and predicting values to simpler operations” (Tversky and Kahneman 1998, 585). For instance, when estimating the likelihood that object A is a member of class B, people invariably rely on the degree to which A represents their image of B. The “representativeness heuristic” yields systematic errors because it ignores, for example, information about the prior probability that A is a member of B, such as the number of B’s in a population (see \textit{ibid}).
\textsuperscript{92} DeNardo 1995, 131.
\textsuperscript{93} Milliken 1999.
\textsuperscript{94} Doty 1993.
consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another.\textsuperscript{95} The point is not to explain why foreign policies are adopted, but how it was possible to adopt them in the first place. Because discourse analysis mixes up and crosses over divisions between post-structuralism, post-modernism, feminism, cultural studies, cognitive linguistics, critical theory, and social constructivism,\textsuperscript{96} I won’t refer to these specific theoretical approaches unless they bear on the substantive argument.

Edward Reiss succinctly describes NMD’s discursive power. Though he wrote at the close of the first Bush presidency, the themes he raises are applicable to subsequent administrations, and have been taken up by later authors:

If the course of ‘Star Wars’ has often baffled observers, this may be due to its strange mingling of science and culture, expertise and popularization. From its very inception SDI was both a high-tech program and a popular idea, a mélange of physics, psycho-politics and metaphysics, attuned to the drives and dissatisfactions of the American people. Its secret strength lay in its emotive connotations, its capacity to motivate people by mobilizing culture, discourse, emotion and fantasy.\textsuperscript{97}

To put this more concisely, NMD proponents succeeded by tapping deeply-rooted rhetorical commonplaces, or \textit{topoi},\textsuperscript{98} in U.S. foreign policy discourse. The literature identifies six of them: 1) American exceptionalism; 2) manifest destiny; 3) a yearning for absolute security; 4) a ‘folk’ model of security based on the \textit{container} image schema; 5) a strong sense of technological optimism; and finally, 6) technological determinism. Although optimism and determinism represent different attitudes toward technology, the first three \textit{topoi} are mutually reinforcing. Strategic defense supporters—often even the skeptics—connected strategic defense to these six commonplaces with a variety of metaphors.

\textsuperscript{95} Campbell 1992, 4.  
\textsuperscript{96} See Blanchard 2008; and Milliken 1999, 225. Even within international relations, discourse analysis encompasses a broad range of theoretical approaches and methods. Although there are family resemblances (Milliken 1999), not every approach to discourse in IR is totally congruent. Scholars are influenced by post-structuralism (e.g., Campbell 1992; Doty 1993), post-Marxism (Weldes 1999), and post-analytic philosophy (Fierke 1998), among newer approaches like cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Discourse analytic methods are just as diverse. They include argument analysis (e.g., Crawford 2002); metaphor analysis (Chilton 1996; Družák 2006), predicate analysis (Doty 1993), and narrative analysis (Suganami 2008), to name a few.  
\textsuperscript{97} Reiss 1992, 162.  
\textsuperscript{98} Topoi are meanings that all interlocutors accept. In the constructivist literature, persuasion and “rhetorical coercion” (Krebs and Jackson 2007) hinge largely on linking favored policies to \textit{topoi}. On persuasion and \textit{topoi}, see Crawford 2002, 68; Homer-Dixon and Karapin 1989, 396; Jackson and Nexon 2001, 14-5; Kraotchwil 1989, 38; and Kornprobst 2005, 6.
In this sub-section, I introduce each topos, along with a few missile defense metaphors associated with each. I conclude by describing some shortcomings of discursive explanations.

The first topos is the notion of ‘American exceptionalism.’ This is the myth that the United State is uniquely innocent and morally superior, destined to lead a fallen world towards virtue and prosperity. America’s benign, messianic identity was shaped by the historical circumstances of the Republic’s founding, Protestant (especially Calvinist) religious and cultural influences,99 and Enlightenment philosophy filtered through the state’s ‘Founding Fathers.’100

The Reagan administration invoked this legacy in its SDI rhetoric. The possession and possible use of nuclear weapons—even for deterring evil—challenged America’s self-image of innocence and moral purity. MAD, then, engendered a sense of “cognitive dissonance,”101 anxiety, and even guilt.102 It compelled the nation to “regain its lost innocence by somehow returning to a pre-nuclear state.”103 But disarming in the face of what Reagan once called an “evil empire” was not an option. SDI offered a ‘third way’ between disarmament and deterrence. It signified moral clarity, “captured in the simplistic slogan ‘SDI will destroy weapons, not people.’”104

But the problem with strategic defense, as the public opinion data suggest, was that it was far removed from the everyday concerns of Americans. At the same time, if associated with thermonuclear war—and in particular, with the prospect of a US first strike—it could evoke images of horrendous carnage and threaten America’s virtuous identity. “Star Wars” had to be reconciled with American innocence, cast in familiar terms, and cleansed of malign connotations.

Reagan achieved in part through the domesticating metaphors of “nukespeak,” or “techno-strategic discourse.”105 Rather than a system of chemical lasers, orbiting battle

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100 Bjork 1992, 24-6.
103 See Bjork 1992, 39; and Smith 1987.
104 Linenthal 1989, 65. See also Bjork, 65-7.
105 This discourse, premised on an “analytic convention of assuming the worst and focusing on [weapons] hardware capabilities… brackets and freezes politics while finding dynamism in the evolution of technology”
stations, and the like, SDI became an UMBRELLA, an “astrodome,” or, in Reagan’s homely formulation, “a roof protect[ing] a family from the rain.”106 “Weapon isn’t the term for what we’re researching,” he once said. Instead, he called it an “insurance policy for your future” and a “high-tech shield.”107 The latter metaphor linked “Star Wars” to the exceptionalist myth of American innocence and nonaggression.

American exceptionalism also ties into the ROGUE STATE construct that undergirded NMD policy after Reagan. At its core, the ROGUE metaphor was made possible by STATES ARE PEOPLE in an INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY. (The latter concept itself included a CIVILIZED/DEVIAN'T binary as well as an INSIDE/OUTSIDE distinction based on the CONTAINER schema.) By reinscribing these familiar frames, ROGUE STATE bolstered the U.S. identity of exceptionalism.108 In foreign policy as in all social action, there is no Self without the Other. As a chosen nation, the United States is called upon to redeem the world and “to defeat, if necessary by force, the sinister powers of darkness.”109 ROGUE demonology peaked during Bush’s second State of the Union address in January 2002, when he described Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an “axis of evil.” The original phrase was “axis of hatred,” but a Bush staffer, a self-described evangelical Christian, changed the descriptor to evil so as to, as he put it, make it sound “more sinister, even wicked.”110

Tied to American exceptionalism is the topos of manifest destiny: the notion that the US is bound, perhaps divinely ordained, to conquer fresh FRONTIERS. The idea took hold in the 19th century with America’s westward expansion. But for NMD proponents, and space weapons enthusiasts in particular, America’s new FRONTIERS would be those of “outer space and scientific development.”111 A leading NMD advocacy group, High Frontier, encapsulates this notion in its name. As the group put it in a 1983 book,

The United States is faced with an historic, but fleeting, opportunity to take its destiny into its own hands... confidence in the future of free political and economic systems can be restored... To accomplish this we need only take maximum advantage of the priceless legacy

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106 Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 336; and Shimko 1991, 200.
107 Qtd. in Bjork 1992, 74.
108 See Bormann 2008; Masters 2005, 112; and Seng 2002.
110 Qtd. in Heradstveit and Bonham 2005, 3.
111 Linenthal 1989, 65. See also Bjork 1992, 71-2; and Peoples 2010, 144-5.
handed down to us by those free institutions—superiority in space technology… We can confound the prophets of doom by opening the vast and rich High Frontier of space.\textsuperscript{112}

The FRONTIER metaphor serves to “naturalize the weaponization of space, implying that space is just the latest in a series of geographical constraints to be conquered.”\textsuperscript{113} Manifest destiny coheres with the metaphor of the national JOURNEY or QUEST. Here, the state is depicted as a vehicle (the SHIP OF STATE) carrying the BODY POLITIC\textsuperscript{114} on a JOURNEY to EXPLORE new horizons.

The conquest of space is the culmination of America’s traditional quest for invulnerability. This “neurotic quest for absolute security” forms a third topos in U.S. foreign policy discourse.\textsuperscript{115} According to a perciipient Pentagon official:

Somewhere in the American viscera we don’t want to believe that some son-of-a-bitch on the other side can destroy us… [NMD] has nothing to do with military planning… it’s just a gut reaction that comes from the deepest, deepest recesses of the American viscera.”\textsuperscript{116}

G. Simon Harak puts this yearning for protection in social historical context:

Americans find… openness to attack geographically intolerable, because the nation has always enjoyed a territorial invulnerability, assured by the vastness and virtual impassability of the two oceans. [They also find] the situation mythologically unacceptable, because an essential component of American self-identity is the idea of a “virgin” soil, “ramparted” by nature and God against the old, fallen world. … Without the protection of SDI, America would have difficulty conceiving of and presenting itself as exemplar and refuge in the modern world.\textsuperscript{117}

Just as “Star Wars” would redeem America’s innocence by restoring a pre-nuclear past, it would reconstruct its FORTRESS against the wrath of depraved nations.

That Harak describes vulnerability to attack as “openness” is telling. Cognitive linguist Paul Chilton argues that the U.S. quest for security is inscribed at a deeper, socio-cognitive level. He draws on conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) to show how the image

\textsuperscript{112} Daniel Graham, qtd. in Peoples 2010, 144.
\textsuperscript{113} Reiss 1992, 157-8.
\textsuperscript{114} On the BODY POLITIC metaphor in U.S. foreign policy, see Weber 1999.
\textsuperscript{116} Qtd. in Shimko 1991, 219.
\textsuperscript{117} Harak 1988, 504-5.
schema CONTAINER structures a fourth *topos*: the concept of state security *itself*. A CONTAINER-based concept of state security has interesting implications for missile defense. In light of this *topos*, the vulnerability of the CONTAINER-STATE to ‘penetration’ is a problem: secure containers are ‘closed tightly’ and do not ‘expose’ their ‘contents’ to ‘penetration.’ Too, the CONTAINER-based frame pushes the offensive potential of NMD to the background and foregrounds the possibility of protection. Just what is protected is left ambiguous: on one hand it could be the public; on the other, it could be strategic weapons, or the ability to project power abroad. Finally, the *topos* obscures how mutual vulnerability (i.e., MAD) might be beneficial, or “stabilizing.”

Chilton believes that NMD has proven successful in part because its legitimating metaphors, such as COVER, SHIELD, and ROOF, resonated with Americans’ CONTAINER-based security *topos*. By contrast, Cold War arms control discourse entailed a vulnerability-based security concept, a concept out of sync with Americans’ unconscious understanding of what it means to be protected.

Post-structuralist feminism offers a subversive reading of the “absolute security” *topos*, and NMD discourse more generally. CONTAINERS, PENETRATION, and “vulnerability”—highly gendered terms—construct “security” as a practice to reproduce the U.S. “straight hegemonic masculine” identity. From this perspective, the SHIELD can be read as a prophylaxis that constitutes “an American body politic that does not fundamentally disable its performance on the world stage.” As prophylaxis, the SHIELD inscribes an alien, even evil Other, and offers protection from the consequences of the U.S. Self penetrating the Other (through ‘power projection’), and the Other penetrating the US (through an ICBM strike).

The fifth *topos* tapped by NMD rhetoric is the strong sense of technological optimism amongst Americans. This optimism is “only partially a direct consequence of experience… it also reflects an almost naïve faith in science and technology [that is] often not tempered by

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118 See Chilton 1996. Image schemas, including CONTAINER, are discussed at length in the following chapter.
121 Masters 2005, 111.
122 See Bormann 2008; and Masters 2005, 111-2.
123 Masters 2005, 112.
adversity, even when it occurs.”

Technological optimism is strongly linked to America’s self-image as a land of enterprise enabled by freedom. By embodying technological optimism, strategic defense bolsters an identity equation whereby “America = virtue = technology = power.”

In the broadest sense, this topos promises a technological fix for the political problems of weapons proliferation and Soviet (later ROGUE STATE) hostility. The technological enthusiasm was most spectacular in the SDI. As Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director Kenneth Adelman put it, “Would you rather base our security on Western ingenuity or Soviet integrity?”

In his March 1983 speech, Reagan invoked the “strengths in technology that have spawned our great industrial base and given us the quality of life we enjoy today.” He called

upon the scientific community, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.

Near the end of his address, the President invited the audience to draw upon technological optimism to answer a rhetorical question: “Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability?”

With this speech, and in the administration’s rhetoric in the following years, NMD supporters “reenacted the historical and quintessentially American drama of technological breakthroughs in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.”

Consequently, pro-missile defense rhetoric trapped the program’s skeptics into appearing unpatriotic. The theme of American technological superiority returned with the George W. Bush presidency.

However, critical security studies scholar Columba Peoples argues that since the founding of the United States, technological optimism has co-existed with a more pessimistic

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126 Qtd. in DeNardo 1995, 122.
128 Ibid.
129 Bjork 1992, 73. See also Holloway 2000, 220-2; Peoples 2010, 137-47; and Smith 1987.
130 See Bjork 1992, 72; and FitzGerald 2000, 248, 260.
131 Peoples 2010.
view of technology. Technological determinism holds that technological development is autonomous, beyond human control. Rather than serving human goals, ‘run-away’ technology makes people fulfill its own ends, threatening the social order. According to Peoples, the appeal of technological determinism has waxed and waned in America, but it strongly influenced postwar strategic discourse, including missile defense advocacy.

The proliferation metaphor evokes this *topos.* Along with rogue state, proliferation arose to fill the “threat blank” left after the Cold War. As Chapter 7 describes, proliferation suggested that weapons technology “grew,” “evolved,” and “spread” of its own accord. What did technological determinism mean for missile defense advocacy? By framing technological progress as autonomous, proponents could argue that even “third-rate powers like North Korea, Iran, and Iraq” would acquire ICBMs. Why states would do so didn’t matter—it was the weapons themselves that proliferated. Once the proliferation metaphor implied that rival states would inevitably acquire the means to strike the US, NMD advocates had to go further and argue that rivals had the intention to attack. Rogue state demonology made this argument plausible.

Like psychological and rationalist accounts, discursive explanations have strengths and weaknesses. On the upside, they avoid the methodological problems of inferring psychological states from texts. They also avoid the pitfalls of psychological reductionism more broadly. Moreover, whereas image-based explanations are confined to top leaders, *topoi* explain NMD’s resonance at both elite and mass levels. This addresses the big unanswered question in the electoral politics explanation: why politicians thought that missile defenses were popular with the American public. NMD’s popularity is also crucial to realist and vested interest explanations. Insofar as actors advocated missile defense for strategic advantage or material benefit, they could cite NMD’s public resonance to bolster their case. (This was the strategy of pressure groups like High Frontier and the Center for Security Policy.) Since strategic rationales were so shaky, the costs were so high, and the technological prospects so dim, the perceived electoral benefits of NMD were a decisive

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132 Ibid.
133 See ibid., Mutimer 2000; and Pelopidas 2011.
134 See the content analysis of leading U.S. foreign policy journals in Mutimer 1994, 13.
136 This is because the six *topoi* are part of elite as well as popular discourse.
factor in strategic defense advocacy. Discursive approaches also help make sense of public opinion data. Americans liked missile defense when it was framed in symbolic terms that resonated with *topoi*, but seemed ambivalent about it as an actual program. On a related note, discourse analysis reminds us that the ‘fit’ between missile defenses and U.S. political culture wasn’t automatic, but had to be *constructed*, and that metaphor was central to this process.

The discursive literature on NMD has some downsides as well. The limited scope of many studies is one problem. Many important arguments about missile defense discourse have been made in passing, as asides in larger projects. Consequently, scholars have made relatively little effort to clearly specify and test for the mechanisms by which strategic defense rhetoric produced policy outcomes. In this study, I condense important insights of the discourse literature, translate its key claims into empirical propositions, and test the resulting hypotheses systematically in two detailed case studies. I also devise transparent, replicable criteria for choosing and analyzing texts. Such analytical and methodological rigor has been lacking in interpretive missile defense scholarship to date.

Moreover, even the more rigorous studies are limited in their research design. Some authors, for instance, draw on only one or a small handful of primary sources. By contrast, my conclusions are drawn from a broad corpus of hundreds of texts. Additionally, many scholars focus disproportionately on texts of strategic defense proponents. But without systematically comparing pro and anti-missile defense rhetoric, as I will do, it’s difficult to explain why the former had better resonance. Also, several previous studies offer only static snapshots of NMD discourse, ignoring the contingency of discursive (re)articulation in a changing historical and political context (what Jennifer Milliken calls “the play of practice”). Instead, I’ll analyze missile defense rhetoric at two crucial junctures: before and after the Cold War. My study documents both continuity and change in this discourse, and shows how the discursive and material environment co-evolved. On a related note, unlike all previous analyses of strategic defense discourse, this dissertation pays close attention to

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139 Linenthal 1989 and Peoples 2010 are exceptions.
140 For example, Bjork 1992; Harak 1988; Holloway 2000; and Masters 2005.
141 Milliken 1999.
rationalist counter-explanations like threat perceptions, domestic politics, and vested interests. Doing so not only increases confidence in the importance of metaphor for U.S. NMD, it also shows how the material and the metaphorical were intimately connected (a point I’ll revisit in the concluding chapter).

While the literature’s research design is often problematic, its wholesale avoidance of psychological claims imposes deeper limitations. Interpretivists assume that discourse constitutes reality, but this assumption presupposes causal mechanisms running through human bodies and brains. By bracketing these mechanisms, discourse analysis closes itself off to a wealth of potential insights.

For example, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) explains how and why representations of missile defense are constituted by metaphors of physical experience. Paul Chilton notes that “although discourses are historically contingent, their conceptual basis is not entirely arbitrary.” Discourses arise from evolved human body-brains and their situated-ness in the world. It follows that inferences within a discourse are constrained by embodied meanings. This constraint has important implications for analyses of missile defense rhetoric. CMT shows how humans’ shared experience of the material world makes some representations (like SHIELD, for example) more ‘commonsensical’ than others. In particular, representations that tap into shared bodily experiences are more likely to resonate with audiences more than representations that don’t. As we’ll see in the case studies, pro-NMD rhetoric evoked powerful embodied meanings, meanings that touched directly on core human preoccupations with survival, security, and comfort. By contrast, opponents’ discourse centered on abstract, technocratic arguments. Proponents’ deft use of embodied metaphor may have contributed to NMD’s political success.

More generally, CMT allows analysts to theorize the discursive construction of reality in cognitively (and neurally) plausible terms. Theorizing the cognitive micro-foundations of discourse lets us posit constitutive as well as causal relationships between discourse and policy outcomes. Discourse studies seldom attempt causal inference, but since discourse

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142 Chilton 2005, 6.
143 Chilton 1996, 424.
144 See Doty 1993, 298; and Hopf 2004, 33.
underdetermines policy, a reasonably complete account of foreign policy must bridge the gap. That is the task of the chapter ahead.

**Conclusion**

Whether based on vested interests, psychological factors, or anything else, mono-causal explanations of NMD are incomplete. Perceived threats, domestic politics, vested interests, and discourse were perhaps *jointly necessary* for missile defense, but none of them *individually was sufficient*. The factors *interacted*, combining in ways that made them jointly sufficient for NMD deployment at some periods and insufficient at others. Weapons programs, for instance, needed sponsors, but sponsors couldn’t justify procurement without pointing to compelling threats. Moreover, the definitions of threats themselves depended on constructs like the *ROGUE STATE*, and electoral politics motivated actors to choose some constructs over others.

The remainder of this study develops, applies, and evaluates a theory of metaphoric framing. Metaphorical framing subsumes and integrates psychological and discursive explanations of NMD, while overcoming the limitations of these approaches.

On what grounds does my framework highlight psychological and discursive factors and not strategic threats, electoral politics, and vested interests? Multiple, interacting variables mean that the causes of NMD deployment in 2002 approximate an INUS set: each factor is an Individually Necessary component of a causal conjunction that was itself Unnecessary but Sufficient for the weapons to be deployed. A metaphorical framing explanation would account for all factors in the INUS set, while nonetheless concentrating on the role of metaphor as a necessary—though insufficient—condition. Although metaphor is not the only factor at work, it is appropriate to focus on it. Since all parts of an INUS set are necessary, they are equally important. Therefore, according to a metaphorical framing explanation, metaphor is logically co-equal to more commonly emphasized factors like perceived threats and vested interests.

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146 See Pratt 1990, 2; and Reiss 1992, 200.
With that in mind, let’s turn now to the metaphorical framing approach in Chapter 4.
**METAPHORICAL FRAMING**

**Introduction**

This chapter formulates a generalizable theory of metaphorical framing.¹ The approach draws on cognitive linguistics, primarily the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and the dialogical constructivism of Ronald Krebs and Patrick Jackson. To explain policy change, the explanation emphasizes two stages of the policy process: metaphorical framing and decisionmaking [see Fig 4.1].

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¹ This chapter draws heavily on Flanik 2011a and Flanik 2011b.
As shown in the diagram, metaphor shapes policymakers’ decisionmaking at both the social and the individual levels. At the individual level, metaphors constitute the concepts policymakers and the public use when thinking about policy issues. Metaphor directly biases decisionmaking, predisposing actors to support policies consistent with underlying metaphors. At the social level, metaphors endow actors with rhetorical resources to legitimate their favored policies and de-legitimate their opponents’ position.

This chapter unfolds as follows. After introducing conceptual metaphor theory, or CMT, I’ll go over how metaphor works at each level. I’ll then point out the ways in which the levels are connected. The chapter concludes with a critical discussion of CMT.

**Conceptual Metaphor Theory**

Metaphor represents something (an entity, experience, or concept) in terms of a different thing. This sub-section outlines two views of metaphor: ‘objectivist’ and ‘constitutive.’ Objectivism sees metaphor as language that describes pre-existing similarities between things. Many cognitive scientists, among others, reject objectivism in favor of a ‘constitutive’ theory of metaphor, which holds that metaphor makes reality by constituting similarities between things.

*Two views of metaphor*

The objectivist approach to metaphor held sway in philosophy and linguistics for roughly two millennia.² Objectivist theorists of metaphor fall into two camps.³ The first group, including Aristotle as well as classical and Renaissance students of rhetoric, sees metaphor as figurative language that derives from independently-existing similarities between things.⁴ The second group thinks that metaphor deviates from literal truth, and must therefore be avoided if one intends to describe the world ‘as it is.’ Locke fits into this category,⁵ as do the

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² Lakoff and Johnson 1999.
⁵ de Man 1979.
twentieth century logical positivists, for whom non-literal statements were meaningless. In both approaches, metaphors are simply linguistic representations of external reality—and are entirely dispensable.

In the traditional objectivist view, metaphor is epiphenomenal. At most, metaphor (re)describes reality; it doesn’t make it anew. By contrast, the ‘constitutive’ theory holds that metaphor makes reality by constituting perceived connections between things. Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) is now the dominant constitutive view in cognitive science.\(^6\)

But constitutive theories go back at least to Vico in the early eighteenth century,\(^7\) and later Nietzsche, who famously defined truth as “a mobile army of… worn out metaphors.”\(^8\) For linguistic anthropologist Benjamin Lee Whorf, metaphor was key to the “thought world” of a language community, a world extending beyond language to perception, action, and culture.\(^9\) Whorf’s views shaped structuralist and symbolic anthropology.\(^10\) In philosophy, Max Black dismissed the objectivist view of metaphor in an influential 1955 paper,\(^11\) and Paul Ricoeur and Richard Rorty later offered more radically constitutive perspectives.\(^12\) Political scientist Murray Edelman saw metaphor as essential to the “process through which people’s cognitions are generated, powerfully reinforced, or changed.”\(^13\) Deconstructionists,\(^14\) including feminist deconstructionists,\(^15\) have grafted onto the constitutive view an interest in emancipation through metaphorical deconstruction.

But how do we know that metaphor makes similarities and does not just point them out? One could answer by philosophical fiat: if knowledge is not a “mirror of nature”\(^16\) but instead is internal to a system of meaning, then there are no similarities ‘out there’—at least none that we could ‘capture’ in language, either figurative or literal. This is in fact my conclusion, but rather than assert it \textit{a priori}, I derive it from the failure of the traditional view to account for metaphor on its own objectivist terms. On these grounds, there are four

\(^6\) Reimer and Camp 2006, 845.  
\(^7\) Danesi 1993.  
\(^8\) Nietzsche 1954, 46-7.  
\(^12\) See Ricoeur 1978; and Rorty 1989.  
\(^13\) Edelman 1971, 67.  
\(^14\) For example, Derrida 1974.  
\(^15\) See Bormann 2008; Cohn 1987; Masters 2005; and Weber 1999.  
\(^16\) Rorty 1979.
reasons why the traditional account of metaphor fails.

First, similarities don’t necessarily exist ‘out there’ before a metaphor introduces them. Take, for instance, the metaphor MISSILE DEFENSE IS A JOURNEY. When Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative in March 1983, he couched it in terms of a JOURNEY: “let us embark on a program to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat… as we proceed, we must remain constant in preserving the nuclear deterrent… [effective defenses] could pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate the weapons themselves.” Reagan’s words are perfectly comprehensible, but they don’t describe pre-existing similarities. One could say that SDI research is like forward motion along a path; effective defenses are like smoothing a path, and eliminating nuclear weapons is like one’s destination at the end of the path. The associations seem ‘natural’ enough, but of course purposes aren’t really destinations, neither are means paths, nor is policy action motion along paths. We must invoke something more than the world ‘out there’ to explain these perceived likenesses.

To be sure, abstract likenesses between the terms of a metaphor usually do exist. But—this is the second point—abstract similarities do not make metaphors reducible to literal comparisons. Consider NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE IS A ROOF. For an objectivist, this is an implied simile that boils down to a literal comparison between NMD and roofs. This works up to a point: roofs ward off the elements, and missile defense should destroy incoming warheads. NMD is like an roof in that both are designed to protect. But when we speak of warheads penetrating, saturating, and leaking through defenses, we’re not describing similarities between roofs and NMD, for the latter is a complex network of radars, satellite-based sensors, computer software, interceptors, etc. Instead (figuratively speaking), we seem to be “seeing” missile defense through a roof lens.

This leads to a third point. Convergent evidence from cognitive science suggests that metaphor is not purely linguistic; rather, it is thought reflected in language. This argument is developed at length below, but we can preview it here by recalling SDI IS A JOURNEY. As noted above, the connections in the metaphor aren’t ‘real,’ so objectivism has trouble explaining why they appear natural. According to conceptual metaphor theory, these

17 Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 126.
19 Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 126.
21 Cf. ibid., 71.
perceived likenesses arise because they cohere with the organization of our cognitive unconscious, a semantic network in which LONG-TERM, PURPOSEFUL ACTIONS are linked to JOURNEYS, MEANS with PATHS, PURPOSES with DESTINATIONS, and ACTIONS with MOTIONS. Missile defense seems like a journey because the aforementioned metaphors are active associations in our conceptual system. As I will shortly explain, these ‘cross-domain mappings’ arise not from literal similarities, but from correlations in our embodied experience.

Fourth, and finally, if metaphor describes pre-given similarities, then it’s hard to account for cases where rival metaphors cast the same concept in incommensurable terms. Metaphors of globalization are a good example: “[w]hereas some metaphors soothe their audiences with talk of global community, global neighborhood and global village, other metaphors disturb with talk of global apartheid, global terror and global pillage.” For sure, one set of metaphors could be ‘true’ and the other ‘false.’ But since there is no Archimedean ‘view from nowhere’ to determine this, it seems more likely that some metaphors construct globalization as benign, while others cast it as malevolent.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

As we’ve seen, objectivism views metaphor as a linguistic convention likening one thing to something else. But to cognitive scientists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, “[t]he essence of metaphor” is not language but rather “understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another.” For CMT, then, metaphor can’t be understood apart from cognition, and vice versa. Metaphor is not merely cognitive, however; it is also a neural, linguistic, and cultural phenomenon. To explain these points, I’ll begin with the four levels of explanation in CMT and the relationships between them. I then define conceptual metaphor and discuss what motivates humans to make it. There follows a discussion of two types of metaphor: “cultural” and “embodied.” Metaphor is ubiquitous in foreign policy, but I discuss it only in the context of NMD policymaking in the US. To illustrate key concepts, I’ll use the aforementioned SDI

\[\text{Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 127.}\]
\[\text{Kornprobst et al. 2008.}\]
\[\text{Scholte 2008, x, emphases added.}\]
\[\text{Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 5. Emphasis added.}\]
IS A JOURNEY metaphor, as well as the ubiquitous and influential SHIELD and ROGUE STATE metaphors.

CMT views the cognition-metaphor nexus at four explanatory levels: the neural, the cognitive unconscious, the conscious, and the social [see Figure 4.2]. The first level is the neural level, where concepts and reasoning are instantiated physically as patterns of neuronal activation in the brain. The cognitive unconscious is the second level. This level isn’t a Freudian reservoir of repressed thoughts and desires. Rather, the cognitive unconscious is the array of mental structures and operations we are unaware of, but that nonetheless structure and enable conscious experience. Schemata, “automatic” reasoning, and modalities of sensory perception, motor control, and language processing are all assumed to exist at level two. The cognitive unconscious contains most of the structures and processes that ‘frame’ conscious experience. Cognition, in fact, is mostly unconscious: “evolution seems to have off-loaded the vast bulk of our everyday decisionmaking and judgment formation onto automatic, unconscious systems, because such systems are fast, computationally frugal, and reliable.”

The phenomenological realm is the third level. This level includes everything

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26 See Lakoff 2008.
27 Automatic reasoning is unconscious, rapid, and schematic. It is far more common than deliberative reasoning, which is “explicit, slow, verbalized,” and analytic (D’André quoted in DiMaggio 1997, 271). See DiMaggio 1997, 269-72.
accessible to individuals’ awareness, including mental states, bodily states, and environmental interactions. Cognition is inescapably social, so metaphor researchers posit a fourth level of explanation. The social level is the realm of human interaction and intersubjectivity. It is a world of shared meaning. Propositional meanings (e.g., beliefs) are not the only meanings that can be shared. Intersubjectivity includes belief, but it also includes non-reflexive, non-representational meanings at level two. Specifically, those are patterns of embodied experience and preconceptual structures of our sensibility (i.e., our modes of perception, of orienting ourselves, and of interacting with other objects, events, or persons). These embodied patterns do not remain private or peculiar to the person who experiences them. Our community helps us interpret and codify many of our felt patterns. They become shared cultural modes of experience and help to determine the nature of our meaningful, coherent understanding of our “world.”

In other words, embodied experience is shaped by social experience, and the reverse is also true: our common embodiment shapes our shared understandings of the social world.

This leads to a more general point on the relationship between the four levels. Together, they form a chain where explanations flow simultaneously in both directions; i.e., from ‘top’ to ‘bottom’ and vice versa. For instance, a debate between two people (the social level) depends on neural activity, unconscious cognition, and conscious thought; here, the explanatory chain runs from the bottom up. However, the debate simultaneously triggers changes at the neural, unconscious, and conscious levels. The explanation is top down in this case.

Since explanations run in both directions simultaneously, the four levels are not an explanatory hierarchy privileging the bottom level. Rather, Lakoff and Johnson think of the levels in terms of a non-reductionist, “non-eliminative physicalism.” In a reductive, eliminative physicalism, only the neural level would be considered ‘real,’ and higher levels would be epiphenomenal. Instead, in CMT, higher levels are taken to be ‘real,’ that is, as having emergent properties necessary to explain phenomena. The four levels, moreover, are

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29 CMT argues that meaning “is not just what is entertained in acts of feeling and thought; instead, meaning reaches deep down into our corporeal encounter with our environment” (Johnson 2007, 25, emphases removed).

30 Johnson 1987, 14.

31 Though the specification of the levels is different, this approach is similar to the “multi-level interacting mechanisms” approach in Thagard 2010.


33 Or perhaps only the molecular level would be ‘real,’ since our understanding of neural activity itself is heavily metaphorical, consisting of concepts like ‘computation’ and ‘circuitry’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1999).
linked by relations of “weak supervenience,”\(^{34}\) with higher levels emerging from and dependent upon—but not wholly reducible to—phenomena at lower levels.

Color offers a way to illustrate these relationships. The same ‘focal colors,’ or ‘best examples’ of a particular color, are recognized by all cultures despite vast differences in how languages carve up the color spectrum.\(^{35}\) There seems to be a universal, unconscious categorical structure for color. This structure depends not only on the makeup of neural pathways between the eye and the brain (level one), but also unconscious cognitive mechanisms that categorize combinations of primary colors (level two).\(^{36}\) Cognitive mechanisms consist of neural activity, but have emergent properties which are not directly explicable in physical terms. Similarly, the experience of color (level three) hinges on neural activity (level one) and unconscious categorization (level two), but cannot be reduced to either without violating its phenomenological essence. And finally, the social experience of color—“seeing red” or “feeling blue”—requires the previous three levels but cannot be explained in their terms.

Conceptual metaphors are thought to reside largely in the cognitive unconscious, so this level is the main locus of explanation in CMT, though neuroscientific work on metaphor has increased in the past decade.\(^{37}\) Conceptual metaphor occurs when we project features of one mental ‘domain’ in the cognitive unconscious, known as the ‘source domain,’ onto a second, different domain, called the ‘target domain.’ These projections are connections in our unconscious semantic network.

Humans make metaphorical projections for one of two reasons. In the first case, source-target projections occur because the two domains are tightly correlated in embodied experience. These experiential correlations give rise to what Joseph Grady calls “primary metaphors.”\(^{38}\) An example is MORE IS UP (e.g., ‘Inflation rose last year;’ ‘The President’s popularity went down’). Here, the sensorimotor source domain VERTICAL ORIENTATION is

\(^{34}\) Neal (2009, 197) defines supervenience as “the notion that interaction in complex systems gives rise to superordinate phenomena, possessing qualities that differ from those of the entities interacting ‘below.’ ‘Weak’ supervenience,” he continues, “characterizes the superordinate as being independent of any particular patterning at subordinate levels, while ‘strong’ supervenience refers to the existence of tighter, more knowable, relationships between the super- and sub-ordinate.”
\(^{36}\) See discussion in Lakoff 1987, 26-30.
\(^{37}\) Lakoff 2008.
\(^{38}\) For example, Grady 1999.
projected onto the target concept QUANTITY. MORE IS UP stems from experiential correlations learned in childhood and reinforced throughout life: “If you add more or a substance or of physical objects to a container or pile, the level goes up.”39 Earlier, I alluded to three other primary metaphors to explain why SDI IS A JOURNEY appears ‘natural.’ These are: ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS (‘We’re proceeding smoothly with the trial’); PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS (‘The jury arrived at a verdict’), and MEANS ARE PATHS (‘We went through six arguments to sway the jurors.’) Cognitive linguists have shown primary metaphors to be remarkably consistent across cultures. These similarities are thought to stem from innate cognitive and perceptual faculties (e.g., basic-level/prototype-based categorization; “folk” psychology/biology) and their interaction with regularities in the material and social worlds.40

Metaphors are motivated not only by directly experienced correlations, but also perceived resemblances between source and target domains.41 This is the case, for instance, with SDI IS A ROOF, where both source and target are linked to PROTECTION. (It is crucial to note that perceived similarities are not literal resemblances, as objectivism holds. Perceived similarities obtain only within a conceptual system.) Other ‘perceived resemblance’ metaphors (to be discussed shortly) are ROGUE STATE, and NATION-STATES ARE CONTAINERS.

Metaphorical projections, in sum, arise from either experiential correlations or apparent similarities. Regardless of their motivation, projections obtain between entities in the domains—i.e., ‘ontological’ correspondences—and/or between knowledge about the two domains—i.e., ‘epistemic’ correspondences, more commonly called ‘entailments.’ Both ontological correspondences and entailments are referred to as ‘mappings,’ because aspects of the source domain are ‘mapped’ onto the target.

Usually, conceptual metaphors map structure from concrete, familiar sources (like CONTAINER, BALANCE, and INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS) onto more abstract, less well-understood targets (like STATE, SECURITY, and INTERSTATE SYSTEM). The point of projecting well-understood concepts onto abstract ones is to structure the latter at “human scale,” that is, to re-cast intangible constructs as “situations [that] have direct perception and action in

39 Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 16. See also ibid., 254-5; and Grady 1999.
40 See Kövecses 2005a; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; and Slingerland 2008a, 121-42.
41 Grady 1999.
familiar frames that are easily understood by human beings." It’s important to note that metaphorical mappings are always incomplete—not all source domain structure is projected onto the target. (If it were, then the source-target relationship would be one of synonymy and not metaphor.)

Before moving to examples of metaphor, four additional points should be made. First, according to CMT, conceptual metaphor is pervasive, and cognition as we know it would be impossible without it. A second key claim is that conceptual metaphor is instantiated neutrally as well as at the other three levels. Source and target domains correspond to distinct neuronal groups in the brain, and mappings correspond to the neural ‘circuitry’ between them. When we understand two domains via metaphor, the neuronal groups associated with each domain fire together. When we recruit kinesthetic image schemata to flesh out abstract concepts (as we do with primary metaphors), the source domain is found in the brain’s sensorimotor system, while the target concept is in the higher cortical regions. The third point I want to stress is that members of language groups often use the same source domain to configure multiple target concepts. For instance, in Anglophone communities, the image schema CONTAINER structures concepts as different as NATION-STATE (e.g., ‘Refugees spilled over the border into Chad’) and VISUAL FIELD (e.g., ‘The mountain came into view’). Finally, just as one source domain can structure multiple targets, the same target can be structured by different source domains. To illustrate, I’ll now show how a central IR concept, STATE, is constituted differently by different source domains.

The ubiquitous expression rogue state suggests one conceptual metaphor in foreign policy. As noted in the previous two chapters, this metaphor plays a key role in justifying missile defense (among much else) in the US. CMT uses linguistic evidence (i.e., implicit and explicit metaphorical language) to make inferences about the conceptual projection underlying discourse. In this case, the source domain is assumed to be the concept ROGUE, or TREACHEROUS PERSON, and the target is STATE. Certain features of TREACHEROUS PERSONS, such as evil natures, malign intentions, and sudden, destructive behaviors, are mapped onto STATES, yielding the conceptual metaphor STATES ARE TREACHEROUS PERSONS. The main ontological correspondences and entailments of this metaphor are as follows:

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42 Fauconnier and Turner 2002, 312.
43 I’ll discuss image schemas, including CONTAINER, shortly.
44 This can happen because projections from source to target are always incomplete.
Source: TREACHEROUS PERSON  
Target: STATE  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nefarious individual</td>
<td>regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actions of individual</td>
<td>actions of regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evil nature of individual</td>
<td>evil nature of regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malign intentions of individual</td>
<td>malign intentions of regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secretiveness of individual</td>
<td>secretiveness of regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instability of individual</td>
<td>instability of regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerousness of individual</td>
<td>dangerousness of regime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 4.3: Ontological Mappings of STATES ARE TREACHEROUS PERSONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rogues cannot be trusted</td>
<td>regime cannot be trusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rogues may harm one</td>
<td>regime may harm one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if given the chance</td>
<td>regime acts irrationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rogues act irrationally</td>
<td>regime behaves unpredictably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rogues behave unpredictably</td>
<td>regime colludes with similar states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rogues collude with other rogues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 4.4: Entailments of STATES ARE TREACHEROUS PERSONS**

According to CMT, “knowledge of the world comes… in two forms: propositional and image-schematic.”45 Whereas image-schematic metaphors draw on embodied experience, propositional metaphors project structure from “cultural experience, stored as stereotypic frames and scripts.”46 I label metaphors either cultural or embodied, depending on the type of source domain they draw on.

The metaphor above projects features from the source domain ROGUE onto the target concept STATE. This metaphor makes use of a cultural frame that is structured propositionally. Propositional domains “specify elements, their properties, and the relations holding among them.”47 ROGUE is propositional because it posits a category of entities (rogues), attributes of category members (e.g., bad intentions and unpredictable behavior), and linkages between attributes (if rogues have malign intentions and act unpredictably, they can’t be trusted).

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45 Kövecses 2005b, 31; see also Lakoff 1987, chap. 4.
46 Chilton 1996a, 196.
47 Lakoff 1987, 113.
In other cases, source domains are structured by *image schemata* instead of cultural frames. Image schemata arise from repeated embodied experiences in our physical environment; they are “recurring, dynamic pattern[s] of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that [give] coherence and structure to our experience.”*48* These schemata are pre-conceptual; they have a non-propositional, analog structure that the mind’s sensorimotor system can elaborate in many different ways.*49* Three “fundamental” image schemata are BALANCE, FORCE, and CONTAINER.*50* Figure 4.5 is a visual representation of the CONTAINER schema, the main elements of which include an interior, an exterior, and a bounding surface. In this representation, the schema also features an entity that is contained.

![CONTAINER Schema](image)

**Fig. 4.5: CONTAINER Schema***51*

The examples so far suggest that STATE is constituted partly by metaphors drawing on cultural source domains. Other metaphors, including metaphors for STATE, map features of *embodied* frames onto target concepts. In the case of STATE, this process yields interesting metaphors like STATES ARE ENTITIES MOVING ALONG A PATH,*52* STATES ARE OBJECTS IN A FORCE FIELD,*53* and, of special interest here, STATES ARE CONTAINERS.*54* Figure 4.6 lists some mappings of the STATES ARE CONTAINERS metaphor.

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*48* Johnson 1987, xiv.

*49* Johnson 1987.

*50* Taverniers 2002, 111.

*51* Figure 5 is adapted from Johnson 1987, 23.

*52* Beer and Boyd 2004.

*53* For examples, see the discussion of realism and the ‘balance of power’ in Chilton 1996b, 91-114. International Relations metaphors subject states to hydraulic, mechanical, and, in the security communities literature, “magnetic” forces. (Magnetic attraction metaphors are found in Adler and Barnett 1998.)

*54* Chilton 1996a and 1996b.
Notice how this metaphor structures the abstract concept STATE using an image schema arising directly from sensorimotor experience. Notice too how the metaphor allows one to manipulate STATE in mental space in ways “analogous to spatial manipulation, orientation, and movement” in our physical environment.\textsuperscript{55} From a CMT perspective, the STATES ARE CONTAINERS metaphor is one of many examples of the bodily basis of thought and meaning.

Thus far, I’ve shown how the cognitive linguistics account of meaning and cognition centers on metaphor. Metaphor structures concepts and conceptualization by mapping cultural and kinesthetic structure across conceptual domains. That is what Lakoff and Johnson mean when they define metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another.”

\textit{Metaphorical Framing}

CMT is directly relevant to International Relations, and the social sciences generally, if linked to the familiar concept of framing. A \textit{frame} is a pattern of organized knowledge, more or less shared within a social-cultural group, which is \textit{presupposed} by word meanings and their associated concepts. (The concept ‘frame’ is identical to ‘source domain’ in CMT, and it works the same way. I’ll therefore use the two terms interchangeably from this point on.) In discourse, “words and constructions evoke an understanding, or more specifically a frame; a hearer invokes a frame upon hearing an utterance in order to understand it.”\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} Johnson 1987, 25. For instance, STATE can be conceptualized in a three-dimensional mental space, and within that space, STATES can be rotated, scanned to determine their features, scaled at larger or smaller sizes, and one can envision trajectories of entities ‘flowing’ ‘into’ and ‘out of’ them.

\textsuperscript{56} Croft and Cruse 2004, 8.
then, inheres not simply in the concept evoked by a word, but is constituted in part by the concept and the frame that concept evokes.

The same expression can mean different things to different people, depending on how the underlying concept is ‘framed.’ For example, for defense intellectuals, the expression ‘national ballistic missile defense’ evokes the concept MISSILE DEFENSE. The meaning of this expression differs dramatically, however, depending on whether the underlying concept is framed in terms of OFFENSIVE WEAPON or PROTECTION. The meaning is different in this case because each frame foregrounds some elements of MISSILE DEFENSE and hides others. The OFFENSIVE WEAPON frame conceals defensive aspects of NMD and highlights its potential to deny an adversary ‘assured second strike capability.’ Contrariwise, the PROTECTION frame pushes the offensive potential of NMD to the background and foregrounds the possibility of protecting populations from nuclear detonations. As one would expect from this example, if two interlocutors discussing missile defense each had these different frames, the meaning they would ascribe to MISSILE DEFENSE would be partially incommensurable.

How does framing relate to metaphor? Oftentimes, the source domains of metaphor constitute the frames actors employ—consciously and unconsciously—to shape the meaning of concepts.\(^{57}\) I’ll call this *metaphorical framing.* To continue the example, the PROTECTION frame is structured by many metaphorical source domains, including ROOF, SHIELD, and SHELL.\(^{58}\) The metaphors MISSILE DEFENSE IS A ROOF, MISSILE DEFENSE IS A SHIELD, and MISSILE DEFENSE IS A SHELL all entail protecting something. Interestingly, they all seem to entail protecting the contents of a container; thus, the concept PROTECTION is itself framed by the experientially basic domain CONTAINER. Since strategic defense is meant to protect the U.S. state, this suggests that the PROTECTION frame, as used in NMD discourse, is undergirded by the metaphor STATES ARE CONTAINERS.

**Metaphorical Framing and Decisionmaking: Two Levels of Explanation**

How does all this relate to decisionmaking? So far, I’ve argued for a constitutive view of metaphor, surveyed CMT (a prominent constitutive approach), and folded CMT into the

\(^{57}\) See Lakoff 2001; and Schön and Rein 1994.

\(^{58}\) See Chilton 1996a; Bormann 2008; and Masters 2005.
simpler concept of metaphorical framing. In this sub-section, I’ll show how metaphorical framing might shape decisionmaking. For analytical purposes, we can distinguish two levels of explanation: the individual level and the social level [see Fig. 1]. I’ll muddy this distinction later by showing the relationships between these two levels, but first, I’ll treat the levels separately.

The Individual Level: Metaphorical Cognition

At the individual level, metaphor influences three idealypical aspects of cognition: problem-setting, option formulation, and option evaluation. There’s no evidence that metaphorical cognition is very different for elites and the public,\(^\text{59}\) so I refer to both generically as “decisionmakers.”

Assumptions about Actors

1. Cognitive constraints
2. Affective bias

Assumptions about Metaphor

1. Metaphorical frames function as schemata
2. Metaphorical frames shape cognitive and affective salience of decision inputs
3. Actors draw inferences via metaphorical entailment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Decisionmaking</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Affective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-setting</td>
<td>Metaphor constitutes mental representations of policy problems</td>
<td>Metaphor influences affective salience of policy problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option formulation</td>
<td>Options cohere with metaphor</td>
<td>Somatic markers exclude some options from conscious consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option evaluation</td>
<td>Ceteris paribus, favored options cohere with metaphor</td>
<td>Somatic markers draw actors toward some choices and away from others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.7: Metaphorical Cognition

\(^{59}\) Schlesinger and Lau (2000) compare elite and public metaphorical reasoning using in-depth interviews. They find few significant differences between elite reasoning and that of even the least sophisticated members of the public.
To begin, one must simplify decisionmakers and the decisionmaking process [see Figure 4.7]. I first assume that decisionmakers are prone to cognitive and affective biases. Specifically, decisionmaking is shaped by emotion (or affect), schematic cognition, and limited computational capacity. Next, I divide decisionmaking into three ideal-typical stages: (1) problem-setting, that is, forming a representation of a situation thought to be blocking the attainment of policy goals; (2) option formulation, or identifying ways to overcome the problem, and (3) option evaluation, which refers to judging the desirability of potential courses of action.

Before discussing how metaphor functions at each stage, I need to make three generic assumptions about metaphorical reasoning. The first assumption is that metaphorical frames function similar to schemata: they bias perception, information storage, and retrieval; they are relatively enduring, and they serve as ‘cognitive shortcuts’ actors can use to simplify decisionmaking in complex environments. Second, and more specifically, metaphor influences the cognitive and affective salience of decision inputs. Cognitive salience is a function of metaphor highlighting parts of target domains that cohere with source domains and concealing those that do not. For example, in the PROTECTION frame, the defensive applications of NMD are foregrounded (i.e., cognitively salient) while the offensive applications are hidden. On the other hand, affective salience depends on decisionmakers’ feelings towards the source domains that structure decision inputs. These emotions stem from embodied experience. According to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, recurring embodied experiences induce affective states that the brain stores as “somatic markers” of those experiences. Affectively salient (or ‘hot’) frames evoke strong somatic images and their corresponding markers, while affectively non-salient (or ‘cold’) frames do not. A few ‘hot’ frames are DISEASE, PROTECTION, and CONTAINER. When metaphors map these domains onto target concepts like STATE, they elicit “fundamental motives and feelings [linked to] survival.

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60 Following Mercer (2010, 3), I define emotion, or affect, to encompass both “a subjective experience of some diffuse physiological change” and “a conscious awareness that one is experiencing an emotion.” Emotion, then, occurs both consciously (as a representational state) and unconsciously.
63 Damasio 1994.
64 Slingerland 2008.
control, and comfort." The third and final assumption about metaphorical reasoning is that when making decisions, actors draw inferences according to metaphoric entailments. The logic is aprioristic: ‘If [target domain] is [source domain], then [metaphorical entailment].’ For instance, if MISSILE DEFENSE is a SHIELD, then ‘holes’ in the shield are bad (as opposed to, say, reassuring to rivals keen on maintaining mutual deterrence).

Having made these assumptions, I can now describe how metaphor might function at each decisionmaking stage. Problem-setting is the most fundamental stage of the three. It’s also the stage to which metaphor theorists have devoted the most attention, and it may be the point where metaphorical effects are most pronounced. At the problem-setting stage, metaphorical frames constitute decisionmakers’ mental representations of policy problems. By highlighting and hiding potential decision inputs, frames pick out certain things as ‘problems.’ Let’s continue with the example, and assume the frame for STATE is CONTAINER (as in the metaphor STATES ARE CONTAINERS). In light of this frame, the VULNERABILITY of the CONTAINER-STATE to ‘penetration’ is a problem: secure containers, after all, are ‘closed tightly’ and do not ‘expose’ their ‘contents’ to ‘penetration.’ The CONTAINER frame obscures how VULNERABILITY might be beneficial (or ‘stabilizing,’ in the context of a BALANCE frame).

Of course, frames themselves do not establish policy problems. Instead, actors set problems by inferring information from a frame. Such information might include not only the basic nature of the problem (as in the last example), but perhaps also specific information about its causes, as well as who is responsible for solving it. In addition to these cognitive functions, actors may also use frames to increase or decrease the affective salience of a policy issue. In this regard, Chilton suggests that the CONTAINER frame evokes powerful somatic markers relating to security, warmth, and comfort, and that these in turn heighten anxiety about U.S. ‘vulnerability’ to ballistic missiles.

Metaphorical inference may also be important at the option formulation and evaluation stages. Here, there is a cognitive and perhaps an affective dimension at work. In

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65 Gregg 2004, 62.
70 Chilton 1996a and 1996b.
the cognitive sense, metaphor is important insofar as perceived policy options *cohere* with—that is, mesh with the entailments of—the central metaphor from the previous stage. If actors reason via metaphorical entailment, they are more likely to formulate policy options that cohere with their metaphors; they are also more likely, all else being equal, to *favor* those options at the evaluation phase. So, to continue the example, if the problem is a **VULNERABLE CONTAINER**, then one expects both proposed and favored solutions to cohere with that frame. In this case, solutions should center on reducing **VULNERABILITY** through constructing a **ROOF**, **SHIELD**, or **SHELL** for the **CONTAINER**. When frames are ‘hot,’ emotion may also shape reasoning at the option formulation and evaluation stages. When faced with multiple options with uncertain outcomes, actors do not perform the exhaustive calculations stipulated by expected-utility maximization models. Instead, even *before* options are considered consciously, the brain skews decision-making by activating somatic markers associated with the options under consideration.\(^{71}\) This eases actors’ cognitive burden immensely, because instead of facing a ‘flat’ menu of options, their decision-making terrain is now ‘lumpy,’ with positive and negative somatic markers making certain choices more ‘obvious’ than others. The option menu may be so ‘lumpy’ that some choices are not consciously entertained at all.

The individual-level approach to metaphor has a big drawback, particularly when applied to political elites. The issue is that direct evidence of metaphorical cognition is impossible to get. In the lab, indirect evidence is obtainable from, for example, sorting tasks\(^ {72}\) and priming experiments.\(^ {73}\) Experimental methods are ill-suited for studying elite decisionmaking however, particularly when the decisions in question were taken long ago. CMT researchers are usually stuck inferring elite cognition from metaphorical language in texts—and the leap from language to thought is problematic on methodological grounds if nothing else. I’ll elaborate below when discussing Lakoff and Johnson’s many critics. Here, I’ll just point out that textual analysis can’t exclude instrumental counter-explanations. Policymakers could be wielding metaphors instrumentally, perhaps wholly cynically. This is especially likely when the stakes of rhetorical contests are high, as in ‘framing battles’ over, say, whether to cast counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism policy as **WAR**.\(^ {74}\)

\(^{71}\) Damasio 1994.  
\(^{72}\) Schlesinger and Lau 2000.  
\(^{73}\) Hartmann 2007.  
\(^{74}\) Cf. Shimko 2005, chap. 12.
This critique loses much of its force, however, when we look closer at metaphorical framing. The key point here is that metaphor provides the background meanings that make instrumental action possible in the first place. Metaphor endows actors with identities, interests, and discursive resources. It constitutes identity categories, often with binaries like CIVILIZED/DEVIAN, in the case of ROGUE STATE; PARENT/CHILD, in the case of (post)colonial relationships between metropole and periphery;\(^7\) and MALE/FEMALE, in the case of relations between nuclear-armed states and their non-nuclear allies.\(^6\) National interests, moreover, are entailed by metaphorical identities, and metaphor shapes the rhetorical resources available to state leaders. As a CIVILIZED state in an INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY, for instance, the US claims an interest in, and obligation to, oppose ROGUES. Metaphors, then, are key components of intersubjective belief. They make possible the meaning-producing practices of foreign policy decision-makers, including the concepts and categories with which they speak, persuade, and reason. In this sense, metaphorical structures actually help constitute agents.\(^7\)

This means that even when metaphor is used instrumentally, it’s not epiphenomenal. As Columba Peoples notes in the case of missile defense,

Parties who stand to gain from missile defense’s increasing budgetary resources can be cognizant of the potential utility of a [particular] framing for the marketing of missile defense. However, overemphasis on this point misses out on the fact that such a framing both assumes and requires a depth of resonance, that the framing…will make sense at some broader level by being embedded within (and portrayed as) prevailing common sense.\(^7\)

All rhetoric, instrumental or otherwise, is constrained and enabled by networks of meaning. For example, condominium developers might cynically frame social housing as URBAN BLIGHT,\(^7\) but this representation is intelligible—to developers and their audience alike—only because of the background metaphors CITIES ARE ORGANISMS and SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE DISEASES. These metaphors enable developers to wield the BLIGHT frame in the first place, discouraging the use of alternatives like PRISON or SIN. Metaphors like CITIES ARE ORGANISMS aren’t ‘beliefs’ in the representationalist sense. Rather, they function as schemata,

\(^7\) Akiyoe 1994, 12.
\(^6\) Cohn 1987, 696.
\(^7\) Flanik 2011.
\(^7\) Peoples 2010, 244
\(^7\) See, for example, Schön 1993.
unconsciously motivating the inferences and lexical choices speakers make—even as they justify self-serving policies. Almost all metaphor use is unreflexive, constituting the tacit meanings actors reason from and not about. Metaphors, then, shape cognition regardless of whether they are ‘believed.’ (In fact, many rhetorical contests are not over metaphors themselves, but rather their entailments. For example, does URBAN BLIGHT require CONTAINMENT, or total EXCISION?) Moreover, the constant, unreflexive use of metaphor means that most metaphors are probably not motivated by self-interest.

It also augers against the introduction of new metaphors. “Because they have apparent naturalness and are integrated in complex networks of association,” Chilton notes, “existing metaphors will tend to be preferred and to persist.” Therefore, if policymakers’ cognition were not influenced by conceptual metaphor, we might expect their metaphors to constantly change according to their interests. But that is not what the literature on political metaphor finds. There is a stable list of core political metaphors used across time.

It would also count against CMT if policymakers and the public used very different sets of metaphors. The empirical record suggests that isn’t the case. In health care policy, for example, elites and even the most unsophisticated members of the public use and understand identical metaphors. Even the technical lexicon of nuclear strategy is shaped by familiar metaphors of male sexual conquest. From a CMT perspective, it would be odd if policymakers’ reasoning weren’t as indelibly stamped by conceptual metaphor as the rest of the population.

The Social Level: Rhetorical Coercion

There is another level at which metaphorical framing operates, a level at which evidence is more readily available. That is the social or discursive level.

The mechanism here is called “rhetorical coercion.” This approach was developed by Ronald Krebs and Patrick Jackson to model the causal power of political rhetoric without

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80 As the ‘practice turn’ in IR shows, the most fundamental practices in world politics (I would include rhetoric among them) are unreflective (see Hopf 2010; and Pouliot 2008).
81 Krebs and Jackson (2007) call this an “implication contest.”
82 Chilton 1996a, 202.
83 Beer and Landtsheer 2004.
84 Schlesinger and Lau 2000.
85 Cohn 1987.
recourse to policymakers’ motives or sincerity. Rhetorical coercion works as follows. Interlocutors debate policy in view of a public audience (P), whose ‘cultural commonplaces,’ or *topoi*, constrain the acceptable rhetorical moves debaters can make. *Topoi* are constantly being (re)articulated. They can and do change over the long term. Policy disputants have shorter time horizons, however. At any given time, the discursive terrain they face is effectively fixed, and publicly acceptable arguments must draw on, or at least not contradict, one or more pre-existing *topoi*. Rhetorical coercion occurs when, through skillful framing, a claimant (C) deprives her opponent (O) of the ability to link his arguments to *topoi*, thus placing O’s claims beyond the realm of public acceptability. O must ultimately, if reluctantly, voice support for C’s position, or risk alienating P. Krebs and Jackson elaborate:

Rhetorical coercion is successful when C’s rhetorical moves deprive O of materials out of which to craft a reply that falls within the bounds of what P would accept. In the end, O finds itself, against its better judgment, endorsing (or at least acquiescing in) C’s stance *regardless* of whether O has been persuaded or believes the words it utters. The alternatives—enduring punishment at the hands of P or investing significant resources in creating new terms of debate—would be prohibitively costly and time-consuming. In our model of rhetorical coercion, neither the motives nor the sincerity of the parties is particularly relevant.

Metaphor is a key trope that claimants use to link their positions to *topoi*. First, it translates complex arguments into simple, intuitive terms that mesh with audiences’ pre-existing understandings (e.g., MISSILE DEFENSE IS A SHIELD; MISSILE DEFENSE IS AN ILLUSION). It helps when these simple terms are emotionally potent, as in President Reagan’s metaphor comparing SDI to “a roof protect[ing] a family from the rain.” His representation triggers several potent *topoi* at once: the NATION AS FAMILY safe and dry within its CONTAINER-STATE, specifically, its NATIONAL HOME. In addition, metaphor highlights arguments that cohere with *topoi* and hides those that don’t. The DEFENSE framing of NMD, for example, coheres with Americans’ self-identity as a benign force for good in world affairs; the utility of NMD for foreign intervention or a first strike fade into the background. Finally, metaphor links policy ideas to *topoi* directly by evoking national beliefs, symbols, and narratives. For

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86 See Krebs and Jackson 2007. See also Jackson 2006; and Krebs and Lobaz 2006.
88 Krebs and Jackson 2007, 45-6.
90 FitzGerald 2000, 336.
91 Lakoff 2001 argues that the NATIONAL FAMILY is a key concept in U.S. political discourse.
instance, High Frontier, an NMD pressure group, evokes U.S. manifest destiny in its very name.

Not only does skillful metaphorical framing help claimants legitimate their own positions, it can frustrate the ability of opponents to do the same. Backed into a rhetorical corner, opponents can only advance socially unacceptable arguments. This seems to have happened in the early 1980s as the Nuclear Freeze movement peaked. The movement’s rhetoric stressed global vulnerability to nuclear catastrophe. Reagan responded with a VISION of total disarmament and a protective SHIELD. SDI skeptics countered with four arguments from the arms control cannon: 1) nuclear SHIELDS are provocative because they can be used offensively; 2) offensive retaliation is actually defensive; 3) despite its technological genius, the US can’t build a full SHIELD, and 4) a partial defense is worse than none at all. These claims were counter-intuitive at best. At worst, they clashed with the American penchant for technological solutions, and the U.S. identity as a benign force for good (if Americans are good, why would the Soviets find a U.S. SHIELD threatening?). The Freeze movement never acquiesced to the SDI, but, as I’ll show in Chapter 6, many skeptical policymakers did. My argument is that these policymakers were ‘metaphorically coerced’ into approving large increases in strategic defense funding.

*Bridging the Individual and Social Levels*

Elites might reluctantly acquiesce to NMD because they’ve been rhetorically coerced, or they might ‘genuinely’ support or oppose it because metaphorical frames bias their decisionmaking. Because these accounts can be difficult to distinguish empirically, it’s important to note that both depend on metaphorical framing. In fact, the distinction between the cognitive and rhetorical levels is an analytical convenience. Metaphorical framing is actually a single mechanism operating simultaneously at both cognitive and discursive levels. Outcomes at one level will shape outcomes at the other. To see how, let’s look at each level more closely.

At the socio-cognitive level, somatic and social meanings are inextricable. Just as we understand the social world via embodied meaning, culture frames our embodied experience. Even “direct physical experience is never merely a matter of having a body of a certain sort,”
Lakoff and Johnson note. Instead, “every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions.”\(^{92}\) This makes sense if one recalls that CMT is based on a non-reductive physicalism in which explanations run from the social to the conscious, unconscious, and neural level.

Of course, explanations move in the opposite direction as well. It follows that social outcomes (i.e., rhetorical coercion) hinge on individual-level processes (i.e., metaphorical cognition). To see how, we must understand that rhetorical coercion depends on the public’s (P) acceptance (or lack thereof) of a claimant’s (C) arguments and frames. To successfully coerce her opponent (O), C’s frames must either resonate with P because P has previously accepted them; or, P must adopt C’s frames as its own.\(^{93}\) Therefore, while Krebs and Jackson pitch it at the discursive level, rhetorical coercion makes tacit assumptions about what P thinks, and how. P presumably supports C’s claims because C’s frames constitute P’s mental representations of policy problems and bias P towards C’s favored policy options [see Figure 4.7].\(^{94}\) Moreover, the persistence of metaphors across time (e.g., STATES ARE PERSONS; BALANCE OF POWER) suggests that at least some members of P accept them.\(^{95}\) The upshot is that metaphorical coercion is a higher-level effect of metaphorical cognition.

**Critiques of CMT**

Conceptual metaphor theory is increasingly popular in IR.\(^{96}\) But it’s controversial, even within cognitive science. Everything hinges on the leap from metaphorical *language* to metaphorical *cognition*, and that inference isn’t warranted easily.\(^{97}\) To begin, CMT leans heavily on linguistic evidence that courts circularity. Lakoff and his collaborators explain linguistic patterns by reference to metaphorical thinking. Their evidence for metaphorical

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\(^{92}\) Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980], 57, emphasis in original.

\(^{93}\) There is a third possibility: C could coerce O if O *thinks* P accepts C’s frames and rejects those of O. In this case, O’s perception of P’s acceptance is sufficient for metaphorical coercion, so we need not assume anything about P’s cognition directly. Metaphorical cognition remains relevant, however, because O must be able to think metaphorically in order to assess P’s reaction to C.

\(^{94}\) Krebs and Jackson might call this reductionist because frames draw on intersubjective meaning. My approach is indeed reductionist, but benignly so. The reductionism here is a non-eliminative approach that avoids reducing intersubjectivity purely to individual body-brains [see Figure 2]. I merely stress that intersubjectivity has causal micro-foundations that can only run through human brains (see Chilton 2005; and Flanik 2011a).

\(^{95}\) I owe this point to Thomas Homer-Dixon.

\(^{96}\) Prominent works include Beer and Landtsheer 2004; Carver and Pikalo 2008; Kornprobst et al. 2008; and Slingerland, Blanchard, and Boyd-Judson 2007.

\(^{97}\) Croft 1998.
thought often consists of the same linguistic patterns that motivated their theory in the first place. CMT’s arguments, furthermore, are often based upon made-up (though highly intuitive) examples rather than corpora of actual language-in-use. Instances of supposed conceptual metaphor, moreover, rely on interpretive judgments that are impossible to falsify.⁹⁸ Also, the metaphorical expressions CMT uses as evidence can be construed in such a way that underlying concepts appear mostly literal.⁹⁹ And CMT’s claims about conceptual structure and metaphor processing might be too sweeping: the ‘metaphoricity’ of concepts turns in part on individuals’ cognitive styles and background knowledge, as well as communicative context.¹⁰⁰

These are all valid concerns. However, CMT has addressed them in the generation since Lakoff and Johnson’s foundational text, *Metaphors We Live By*, was first published.¹⁰¹ Most applications of CMT (including every political science study of which I am aware¹⁰²) analyze corpora of actual language use rather than contrived examples; a few also expand on CMT to take the pragmatics of metaphor into account.¹⁰³ To be sure, interpretive slipperiness makes it difficult to reliably infer the presence, content, and boundaries of conceptual metaphor from text. Nonetheless, CMT researchers are paying more attention to internal and external validity, offering sound advice for systematizing textual metaphor analysis—advice I’ll take up in the next chapter.¹⁰⁴ Cognitively-oriented researchers are operationalizing and testing CMT’s claims about metaphor processing. These studies use controlled experiments and gather non-linguistic data like reaction time, spontaneous gesture, eye movement, and functional magnetic resonance images.¹⁰⁵ This evidence isn’t airtight,¹⁰⁶ but it is strong enough to support a vibrant, inter-disciplinary research program in conceptual metaphor.

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⁹⁸ Vervaeke and Kennedy 1996.
¹⁰⁰ See Cameron 1999; and Chilton 1996b, 67-73.
¹⁰¹ Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980].
¹⁰² See, for example, Cienki 2005; and Charteris-Black 2005.
¹⁰³ See, for instance, Chilton 1996b.
¹⁰⁵ Overviews include Lakoff 2008; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; and Slingerland 2008.
Conclusion

This chapter formulated a generalizable theory of metaphorical framing. To do so, it fused insights from cognitive linguistics, primarily the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and the dialogical constructivism of Ronald Krebs and Patrick Jackson. Metaphor, I argued, shapes policymakers’ decisionmaking at two levels: the individual and the social. At the individual level, metaphors constitute the concepts policymakers and the public use to reason about policies. Here, metaphor biases decisionmaking directly, by leading actors to support policies consistent with underlying metaphors. At the social level, metaphors provide actors with rhetorical resources to legitimate their preferred policies, and to de-legitimize their opponents’ preferences. The distinction between these levels, moreover, is merely analytical. This is because the social or discursive effect of metaphor hinges on cognition, and because cognition is inescapably social.

What does this all mean for missile defense? The next chapter shows how to apply these insights to the two case studies.
Introduction

This chapter turns the metaphorical framing approach into a framework for empirical study. Part one covers the basic research design. Parts two and three discuss the two methods used in the study: metaphor analysis and process tracing, respectively. Part four lists and explains the standard set of questions applied to each case.

Research Design

Objective

The study’s main goal is to probe the plausibility of a metaphorical framing explanation for a historically important phenomenon: the episodic revival of NMD from 1983-2002, which culminated in George W. Bush’s decision to field a system. The study is not simply a plausibility probe, however; I also compare the explanatory power of metaphorical framing with rationalist explanations of the case. Though my aim is to enhance understanding of a single historical episode, if metaphorical framing successfully accounts for this case, then it’s potentially generalizable to others.
Drivers, Outcomes, and Data

The key explanatory factors are metaphorical frames: the coherent sets of conceptual metaphors that underlay policymakers’ discourse. Frame content is inferred from a corpus of texts using discourse analytic methods. The data include the following: 1) key documents and speeches of top White House officials; 2) articles in leading U.S. foreign policy journals, and 3) U.S. senators’ floor speeches on NMD (including supplementary material printed in the Congressional Record). The corpus and methods are detailed below.

The outcome of interest is the degree of political support expressed for NMD in the Senate. I infer support from two sources: roll call votes and floor speeches as printed in the Congressional Record. First, I examine roll call votes on NMD amendments to annual defense appropriations bills. I tally the yeas and nays, but as importantly, I consider the content of the amendments themselves: to what extent did they challenge missile defense? In floor speeches, I look for verbal indications of the level of support expressed for strategic defense. Did senators qualify their support? If so, how?

It would be ideal, of course, to examine the entire Congress. Because this study is extremely time and labor-intensive, however, it’s only feasible to look at one chamber. There are several reasons why I focus on the Senate instead of the House of Representative. The Senate is smaller than the House, for one thing, which makes analysis more tractable. Also, by dint of culture and formal design, the Senate has a stronger deliberative tradition than the lower chamber.¹ Finally, the Senate’s power to ratify treaties—and its protectiveness of this prerogative—gave it a special role in ABM Treaty debates from 1983-2002.²

Case Selection

Once again, the research is very data and analysis-intensive. Not only must I exclude part of the legislature, but it’s impossible to examine all the years from 1983 to 2002. It’s more feasible to carve the period into discrete cases and choose a few cases for study.

¹ This reputation is increasingly undeserved, however—even according to senators themselves. See George Packer, “The Empty Chamber,” New Yorker (online ed.), 9 August 2010.
² For example, the Reagan administration’s attempt to unilaterally reinterpret the Treaty aroused the ire of even Reagan’s supporters in the Senate.
What criterion or criteria should govern the division? Splitting the period into equal temporal units is elegant but arbitrary. Because NMD policy was shaped heavily by the executive branch, it makes more sense to divide by presidency. This yields four to six possible “cases,” depending on whether the Reagan and Clinton presidencies are subdivided by term [see Figure 5.1]. One could also emphasize missile defense programs. Since the explanandum is missile defense policy and not presidential politics, delimiting cases by programs is the best approach. By this criterion, SDI under Reagan’s two terms would be one case, and GPALS under H.W. Bush would be another. NMD in Clinton’s second term (the so-called “three-plus-three” plan) is a third case. Since the second Bush administration essentially deployed Clinton’s proposed system, it’s reasonable to include the W. Bush presidency as part of the third case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reagan (1st term)</td>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>SDI introduced; Regan backtracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan (2nd term)</td>
<td>1985-1988</td>
<td>SDI institutionalized; loses elite support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.W. Bush</td>
<td>1989-1992</td>
<td>GPALS introduced; support falls, rises during Gulf War, then falls again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton (1st term)</td>
<td>1993-1996</td>
<td>NMD downgraded; Republican pressure compels adoption of “three-plus-three”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton (2nd term)</td>
<td>1997-2000</td>
<td>Deployment pressure mounts; Rumsfeld Commission; Pyongyang test; National Missile Defense Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Bush</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>ABM Treaty withdrawal; deployment decision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5.1: Case Selection

Using these criteria, I’ve selected two ‘bookend’ cases for analysis [see Figure 5.1]. The first case is the SDI, from 1983 to 1988. NMD (from 1997-2002) is case two. Each case lasts six years, and each is an example of strategic defense’s resurrection after a period of decline. One important difference is that ballistic missile defense (BMD) began to hemorrhage political support in Reagan’s second term, whereas the years from 1997-2002 saw a budding
bipartisan consensus in favor of limited defenses. Ideally there are no casual breaks in historical process-tracing studies. But some selectivity is inevitable here, and the two cases I’ve chosen adequately capture the shift in debate from whether to deploy to when and how.

Publication trends in three leading U.S. foreign policy journals, Foreign Policy, The Washington Quarterly, and Foreign Affairs, reflect the importance of the cases I’ve chosen. The three journals published a total of 23 full-length articles on U.S. strategic defense for the 1983-2002 period. Only three of those articles, however, were published in the eight-year interim between the SDI and NMD cases. The remaining twenty articles are divided evenly between the SDI and NMD cases [see Figure 5.2].

Fig. 5.2: Distribution of BMD Articles in Leading U.S. Foreign Policy Journals, 1983-2002

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3 Bennett and Elman 2006, 460.
4 I’ve excluded an NMD critique published in Foreign Affairs written by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov (2000).
Discourse Analysis

Having overviewed the research design, it’s time to discuss the methods in more detail. For both the SDI and NMD cases, the study uses discourse analysis to infer conceptual metaphor from policymakers’ text and talk, and to model how those metaphors functioned in the overall missile defense discourse.

The discourse analysis proceeds in six steps. I’ll outline the steps before discussing each in depth:

1. Assemble primary corpus for linguistic metaphor identification.
2. Identify linguistic metaphors from primary corpus [inductive process].
3. Group linguistic metaphors into systematic metaphors.
4. Group systematic metaphors into metaphorical frames.
5. Test validity of metaphorical frames in secondary corpus [deductive process; only performed on SDI case].
6. Contextualize frames in larger discourse.

I’ll now describe steps one through six in detail, touching on issues of representativeness, reliability, and validity as they arise.

**Step One: Building the Primary Corpus**

The first step is to assemble a primary corpus of texts from which to identify linguistic metaphors. Unlike content analysis, which is sometimes as simple as counting words in texts, conceptual metaphor research requires careful, time-consuming interpretation. This is because conceptual metaphors are usually implicit, because speakers elaborate them in diverse ways, and because meaning is context-dependent. Consequently, the sample size of metaphor analysis is necessarily small, which can threaten researchers’ ability to generalize from texts to discourses. To ensure a representative corpus, then, documents should be selected deliberately and not randomly.⁵

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⁵ When but a few texts can be assessed, selecting them randomly might lower the likelihood that they are important to and reflective of the discourse from which they are taken. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994, 126) make a similar point in their discussion of small-"n" research designs.
The primary corpus includes two genres of texts: articles in policy journals and administration statements. I’ll discuss each in turn.

The bulk of the corpus comprises 19 full-length journal articles, as well as two briefer exchanges between opponents and proponents in the editorial pages of *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. Of the 19 full-length articles, nearly all (17) were drawn from *Foreign Affairs* (seven articles), *The Washington Quarterly* (five articles), and *Foreign Policy* (five articles). I included one editorial debate from *Foreign Affairs* and another from *Foreign Policy*. In relying mainly on *Foreign Affairs*, *The Washington Quarterly*, and *Foreign Policy*, I followed Ronald Stevenson’s content analysis of NMD rhetoric. Stevenson favors these three journals because their primary market is the select group of intellectuals and policymakers who make or influence national policy. These publications are widely read by political leaders, directed towards political decision-makers, and written by current and former policymakers.

In addition to politically active defense intellectuals, authors in the primary corpus include: a former CIA Director, one current and four former Secretaries of Defense, four lower-level Defense officials, one former and one future National Security Advisor; a senior arms control negotiator; and retired Soviet ambassador George Kennan. In a testament to the influence of these journals, one article in the corpus was cited at length in the *Congressional Record*.

I occasionally departed from the ‘big three’ policy journals in order to get a more representative corpus. *Foreign Affairs*, *The Washington Quarterly*, and *Foreign Policy* published a total of 20 full-length articles on missile defense during the 1983-1988 and 1997-2002 periods. I excluded three of these pieces, however. I omitted one because it focused only on the Soviet reactions to SDI and didn’t judge the intrinsic value of the program. Another article was excluded to even the balance between pro-SDI and anti-SDI pieces for the “Star Wars” corpus. One anti-SDI piece was left out because it focused narrowly on

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7 Garwin 2000; Hadley 2000; Jones and Hildreth 1984; Lindsay and O’Hanlon 2002; and Payne 2001a.
9 Schlesinger et al. 1984.
10 Wright et al. 2000.
14 Zimmerman 1986.
SDI technologies. I swapped that piece for another, published in *Daedalus*, which joined a strategic and technological assessment with broader political and economic critiques.\(^\text{15}\)

Finally, in order to even the number of pro and anti-missile defense articles for the NMD case, I added a pro-NMD piece from the policy-oriented journal *Survival*.\(^\text{16}\)

Articles represent both cases and both sides of the debate roughly equally. For the SDI case, there are four favorable articles,\(^\text{17}\) four unfavorable pieces,\(^\text{18}\) and one article with a mixed-to-negative assessment.\(^\text{19}\) The NMD corpus has five positive\(^\text{20}\) and five negative\(^\text{21}\) articles. For both SDI and NMD cases, letters to the editor feature both sides of the debate.

The primary corpus in each case also includes historically important administration texts. ‘Historical importance’ is an admittedly loose criterion; I relied on citations in the secondary literature for clues about which texts to select. For the SDI case, these include the following: Reagan’s “Star Wars” speech of March 1983,\(^\text{22}\) the President’s 1985 inaugural address;\(^\text{23}\) his speech commemorating the 5th anniversary of “Star Wars;”\(^\text{24}\) Paul Nitze’s 1985 announcement of the ‘Nitze Criteria;’\(^\text{25}\) a White House pamphlet on missile defense,\(^\text{26}\) and transcripts of every presidential press conference from 1983-1988 where Reagan addressed the SDI in one or more paragraphs.\(^\text{27}\) The NMD corpus includes two of Bill Clinton’s statements on the *National Missile Defense Act*,\(^\text{28}\) his remarks before the Russian Duma on

\(^\text{15}\) Rathjens and Ruina 1985.
\(^\text{16}\) Daalder, Goldgeier, and Lindsay 2000.
\(^\text{17}\) Payne and Gray 1984; Rivken 1985; Weinberger 1987; and Weinberg and Barkenbus 1984.
\(^\text{18}\) Bundy et al. 1984; Burrows 1983-4; Guertner 1985; and Rathjens and Ruina 1985.
\(^\text{19}\) Jones and Hildreth 1984.
\(^\text{25}\) Nitze 1985.
missile defense, Clinton’s September 2000 announcement that he would not deploy NMD, and three press conferences held by DOD officials in the Clinton administration. The corpus also features the unclassified executive summary of the 1998 Rumsfeld Report; W. Bush’s May 2001 speech announcing a “New Strategic Framework” for NMD; his announcement of the ABM Treaty withdrawal in December of that year; another Bush address on NMD, the 2002 National Security Strategy, the President’s “Axis of Evil” speech in January 2002, the leaked text of NSPD-23 from December of that year, and three speeches by OSD officials in the Bush administration. The NMD case also includes transcripts of every presidential press conference from 1997-2000 where Clinton or Bush spoke of NMD in one or more paragraphs.

After gathering all the documents, I converted them into electronic text, corrected errors from the conversion process, and imported them into NVivo qualitative data analysis software for coding. All coding was performed manually by me. The software was used

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29 “Remarks to the Russian State Duma in Moscow,” in WCPD, 1092-9, 5 June 2000.
30 “Remarks at Georgetown University,” in WCPD, 1744-8, 1 September 2000.
40 Press conference transcripts were taken from the Executive Office of the President’s Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (WCPD).
solely to organize texts, keep track of the coding, and query the data for information about the frequency of codes over time and across texts.

*Step Two: Identifying Metaphors Inductively*

After assembling the primary corpus, I identified and listed linguistic metaphors within it. There are five steps to the metaphor identification process: 1) reading the text; 2) determining the lexical units in the text; 3) for each unit, establishing semantic “tension” and “transferability;” 4) determining whether the target domain of the unit relates to the topic of interest; and finally, 5) coding the unit as a linguistic metaphor. I’ve prepared a flow chart to help readers follow the steps [see Fig. 5.3 below].
Fig. 5.3: Metaphor Identification Procedure
The first step in metaphor identification is to read the entire text to get a sense of its general meaning. Next, analysts decompose the text into its units of analysis. In this application of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), the analytical units are not words but lexical units. These are one or more words that express a single meaning (e.g., *jaunty, birdhouse*); if the lexical unit has more than one word, its meaning can’t be reduced to the meanings of its component words. For example, the multi-word expression *of course*, the phrasal verb *take off*, the idiom *kick the bucket*, and the proper noun *Richard Nixon* all have non-decomposable meanings, and are thus classified as (multi-word) lexical units. On the other hand, there are many words which, although they frequently appear together in a lexicon, are best treated as discrete lexical units because the meaning they express can be decomposed. Examples include: *utter disaster, arms control, and lend a hand*.

After marking off the lexical units, the third step is to determine whether each lexical unit is used metaphorically. This consists of three discrete tasks.\(^{42}\)

1. For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.

2. For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. … Basic meanings tend to be
   a) –More concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste];
   b) –Related to bodily action;
   c) –More precise (as opposed to vague);
   d) –Historically older;
   Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

3. If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than in the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

With these criteria, researchers work through the text, line by line, identifying lexical units that meet two conditions: 1) the meaning of the lexical unit contrasts with the target to which it refers; and 2) the meaning of the lexical unit can be plausibly connected to that target.\(^{43}\) If,

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\(^{41}\) PRAGGLEJAZ Group 2007, 26.

\(^{42}\) Points a through c below are quoted directly from *ibid.*, 3.

\(^{43}\) This procedure is meant to identify what CMT considers to be two necessary conditions of metaphor: 1) a contrast in meaning between source word/phrase and target word/phrase, and 2) the ability to transfer meaning between source and target. See Metaphor Analysis Project 2006, “Analysis Procedure.”
after taking into account what comes before and after the lexical unit, that unit is judged to meet both conditions, it is coded as a linguistic metaphor. The procedure is illustrated in Fig. 5.4 below.
1) [...] our policy must face the reality
2) of recalcitrant and outlaw states
3) that not only choose
4) to remain outside
5) the family [of democratic states]
6) but also assault its basic values.
7) There are few “backlash” states:
8) Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya.
9) For now they lack the resources
10) of a superpower, which would enable
11) them to seriously threaten the
12) democratic order being created around
13) them. Nevertheless, their behavior is
14) often aggressive and defiant.
15) The ties between them
16) are growing as they seek to thwart
17) or quarantine themselves from a
18) global trend to which they
19) seem incapable of adapting.

the verb face has a spatial-orientative meaning that is metaphorical in reference to foreign policy

the verb choose has a human-centric meaning that is anthropomorphic in reference to the noun phrase “outlaw states;” it is an entailment of the metaphor at line 2

the proposition outside has a spatial-locative meaning that is metaphorical in reference to a social category

the noun family has a social meaning that is metaphorical in reference to a group of states

the verb assault has a meaning centered on physical violence that is metaphorical in reference to a contest of moral beliefs

backlash has a meaning of a rapid, severe social reaction to a phenomenon that is metaphorical when modifying the noun “state”

the noun values acquires a metaphorical meaning when ascribed to a “family” of states; it is an entailment of the metaphor

the adverb around has a spatial-locative meaning centered on physical surrounding/encirclement that is metaphorical in reference to the formation of political regimes

the adjectives aggressive and defiant have a human-centric meaning that is anthropomorphic in reference to the noun phrases “outlaw states” and “backlash states;” they are entailments of the metaphors at lines 2 and 7

the noun phrase ties between has meanings of physical bonding and spatial location that are metaphorical in reference to inter-state relationships

the verb quarantine has a social meaning that is metaphorical in reference to foreign policy actions

Fig. 5.4: Example of Linguistic Metaphor Identification
The left-hand column contains an evocative paragraph taken from an article written in 1994 by Anthony Lake, then national security advisor to President Bill Clinton. That piece, entitled “Confronting Backlash States,” was published in *Foreign Affairs*, largely to explain and justify Clinton’s controversial “dual containment” of Iran and Iraq. In the figure, Lake’s text is broken into nineteen lines. Underlining is used to mark lexical units corresponding to source domains in metaphor, while arrows lead to boxes explaining the sense(s) in which source items are incongruous with their targets (i.e., the ‘things’ in the text to which the source language refers).

As the figure shows, source language is often identifiable as incongruous by the criterion of experiential basic-ness. That is, source language evokes conceptual domains that are more concrete, domains that are “easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste” and/or “related to bodily action.” But how does one judge whether source language has a more basic, contrasting meaning? Native speaker intuition is important here, and some linguistic metaphors are readily identifiable on that basis alone. For instance, the verb *quarantine* (line 17) is obviously metaphorical when referring to foreign policy actions. Other cases are ambiguous. Take, for example, the preposition *outside* (line 6). *Outside* has a spatial-locative meaning that clashes with the contextual meaning, which could be described as ‘exclusion from a group of countries.’ But the incongruity is easy to miss, so analysts might need to consult an external source to verify that *outside* has a more basic, spatial-locative meaning that “is still alive in the language and potentially available for the construction of metaphorical meaning.”

A good option is to look up the different senses of *outside* in a corpus-based dictionary such as *Collins COBUILD*. This serves as an external check on subjective judgment. Corpus-based dictionaries are built inductively, using computer-identified word collocations in large natural language databases. COBUILD stands for “Collins Birmingham University International Language Database.” The COBUILD corpus consists of 250 million words of English in the US and the UK. The data collected dates from the 1990s. Sources

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1 Lake 1994, 45.
2 Praggeljaz Group 2007. While source domains are usually more experientially basic, this isn’t always true. Lake’s “backlash states” metaphor (line 7 in Fig. 4) is a good example.
3 Chilton 1996b, 68.
4 Metaphor Analysis Project 2006.
6 Boers 1999, 50-1.
include television programs, books, newspaper articles, as well as spontaneous speech (e.g., interview and press conference transcripts). When a lexical item is entered into the COBUILD software, the different senses of the lexical item appear, along with examples from the corpus. The dictionary arranges the meanings in descending order of their frequency in the corpus. For example, from a list of 913 examples, Collins COBUILD infers twelve different senses of outside. The first six meanings all involve spatial location, which is obviously the primary sense of outside.

The analyst has now determined that there is a semantic tension between the contextual meaning of outside and the more experientially basic meaning. The next task is to determine whether the contextual meaning can be understood in terms of the more basic meaning. Can we understand ‘exclusion from a group of countries’ as physical separation? The answer is yes. The metaphor GROUPS ARE CONTAINERS, and its entailment that members can be ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ group-containers, are firmly conventionalized in the English lexicon. Because outside meets the criteria of semantic tension and transferability, it can now be coded as a linguistic metaphor.

Before doing so, however, the analyst must ask whether this fulfills his or her research objectives. The metaphor might be unrelated to the topic of interest. For this study, I tried to exclude from the analysis all metaphorical language without some aspect of national missile defense as a direct referent.

Determining whether language ‘directly referred’ to NMD was among the most challenging tasks of metaphor identification. It required knowledge of idiomatic English, understanding of the text and its context, and judgments about the intentions of the speaker. Semantic and pragmatic intuition was paramount; I couldn’t devise replicable rules to discipline the subjectivity of the process. Therefore, it’s worthwhile to show some examples from the corpus, so that readers can see for themselves how I determined the relevance of metaphorical language.

Here are some metaphors in the SDI corpus that I excluded from consideration:\textsuperscript{8}

...turn of the century...
...On the other hand...
...Under consideration...

\textsuperscript{7} Metaphor Analysis Group 2006.
\textsuperscript{8} Burrows 1983-4; and Payne and Gray 1984.
...without parallel in the history of aviation...
...the United States has, to a large degree, dismissed...
...depending upon...
...This brings us to the question of the impact on arms control of a determined U.S. BMD program...
...The point [of the authors’ argument] is that the United States would never...
...It is a matter of no small importance...
...There is little to indicate that the British or French have a different perspective...

Many of these examples are idioms. From a CMT perspective, they are expressions of underlying conceptual metaphors—for instance, the linguistic metaphor “large degree” evokes the conceptual metaphor IMPORTANCE IS SIZE. However, the target domain IMPORTANCE is too abstract to be directly relevant to U.S. missile defense efforts, so “large degree” was excluded from the list of conceptual metaphors. I reached similar conclusions for the other lexical units in the list.

Here are some examples, again from the SDI corpus, that were coded as linguistic metaphors:

...overt political pressures...
Hence the Soviet determination to...decouple American nuclear forces from regional conflicts...
...whatever hardware is on the shelf...
...if measures were not taken to ensure political and strategic stability...
...a layered system would not have to be perfect (i.e., “leakproof”)... to be worth the cost.
...an apparent U.S. war-fighting doctrine that makes the “Star Wars” plan appear so dangerous.
...a host of new ideas and concepts were carefully incorporated into the American nuclear lexicon.
The fog and friction of war...

Even the brief context provided should make it clear that these metaphors referred either directly to missile defense (e.g., “Star Wars;” “on the shelf” hardware) or a related concept (strategic “stability;” political “pressure”).

Ultimately, there’s no hard and fast rule for determining what concepts are “related” to NMD. This ambiguity is inevitable. As in all discourses, the boundaries between topics are fuzzy.

**Step Three: Grouping linguistic metaphors into systematic metaphors**

After identifying all relevant linguistic metaphors in the primary corpus, the next step is to group them into semantically connected sets, or “systematic metaphors.” Systematic
metaphors fold linguistic metaphors into more general categories. To make systematic metaphors, analysts build groupings of metaphor source domains, then divide these by target domains. The rationale for grouping

is both theoretical and empirical. Empirically, we need to condense the data… a long list of metaphors does not reveal very much. Theoretically, we assume that people’s minds work with connected groups or networks of ideas, and that embodied experiences in the physical world produce correlations with thought and language that lead to many conventional metaphorical expressions that are systematically connected.9

The grouping process begins with a list of linguistic metaphors. The metaphors are first lumped into sets according to source domain. This activity is largely inductive. Source domains are sorted by their intrinsic semantic relations and not their functions in the text. This gives analysts some objectivity by distancing them from the context of the discourse.10 The process is recursive: source categories are tentative, changing frequently as analysts move between the categories and the data. Fig. 5.5 below is an example from Lake’s *Foreign Affairs* article. (Although *DEFIANCE* contains four metaphors, the other source groups have only one member. This is because the excerpt is short.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Domain Group</th>
<th>Linguistic Metaphor (underlined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTION/ORIENTATION</td>
<td>[...] our policy must face the reality…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFIANCE</td>
<td>…of recalcitrant and outlaw states…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…There are a few “backlash” states…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…and defiant…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOICE</td>
<td>…that not only choose…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>…to remain outside…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>…the family [of democratic states]…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLENT ACTION</td>
<td>…but also assault…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALUES</td>
<td>…its basic values…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCLOSURE</td>
<td>…democratic order being created around…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGGRESSION</td>
<td>…often aggressive…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIES</td>
<td>…The ties between them…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROWTH</td>
<td>…are growing as they seek to thwart…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUARANTINE</td>
<td>…or quarantining themselves from a…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5.5: *Source Domain Identification*

After sorting source domains, the next step is to create systematic metaphors by dividing the source groups by their targets. The target is the idea being ‘metaphorized.’ In the example

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above, the source category DIRECTION is used to metaphorize the target POLICY OBJECTIVES. This yields the systematic metaphor POLICY OBJECTIVES ARE DIRECTIONS. The source category DEFIANCE also metaphorizes a single target; in this case, ADVERSARY STATES. The resulting systematic metaphor is ADVERSARY STATES ARE DEFIANT. In the above data, each source group refers to a single target. This is often not the case, however. Here’s an example from President Reagan’s “Star Wars” address of March 1983:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Domain Group</th>
<th>Linguistic Metaphor (underlined)</th>
<th>Systematic Metaphor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INITIATING SDI RESEARCH</td>
<td>…as we embark on a program…</td>
<td>INITIATING SDI RESEARCH IS A JOURNEY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…as we cross this threshold…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…I’m taking an important first step…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUING SDI RESEARCH</td>
<td>…as we proceed…</td>
<td>CONTINUING SDI RESEARCH IS A JOURNEY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…as we pursue…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE OF SDI RESEARCH</td>
<td>…our goal…</td>
<td>OBJECTIVE OF SDI RESEARCH IS A JOURNEY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…this could pave the way for arms control…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEANS OF ACHIEVING STRATEGIC</td>
<td>…I believe there is a way…</td>
<td>MEANS OF ACHIEVING STRATEGIC STABILITY IS A JOURNEY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STABILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5.6: Creating Systematic Metaphors

In this analysis of Reagan’s address, each of the eight metaphors listed in the central column above was subsumed under the source label JOURNEY. However, I inferred four distinct targets from the metaphors; these are listed on the right hand side of the diagram. This created the four systematic metaphors in the left column.

Step Four: Grouping systematic metaphors into metaphorical frames.

The four metaphors are clearly related. They can and should be condensed further. In step four, frame identification, analysts sort systematic metaphors into overarching metaphorical frames. Just as in source and target domain sorting, metaphors are grouped by their semantic relations. For instance, INITIATING SDI RESEARCH IS A JOURNEY, CONTINUING SDI RESEARCH IS
A JOURNEY, OBJECTIVE OF SDI RESEARCH IS A JOURNEY, and MEANS OF ACHIEVING STRATEGIC STABILITY IS A JOURNEY were lumped together (along with many other metaphors) to create the over-arching frame SDI IS A JOURNEY.

Analysts distill frames from the data to make analysis more tractable. I’ll give an example from the SDI case to show why. The primary SDI corpus yielded 214 systematic metaphors. There were several problems with this list. It was far too long for a manageable analysis, for one. Second, the list emerged from an inductive process, largely unconstrained by concerns of relevance or importance. Induction was crucial for revealing some unexpected patterns in the data (such as the large number of JOURNEY metaphors), but it also created a lot of ‘noise.’ Surely not each of the 214 metaphors was equally important to SDI policy. (I’ll discuss how I winnowed the list in a minute.) Third, the long list of metaphors obscured the semantic connections between the metaphors that appeared when I moved up the ladder of abstraction. Conceptual metaphor theory is interested in highly generative metaphors with rich sets of entailments that can be specified in many ways, like SDI IS A JOURNEY. The JOURNEY frame subsumed 25 systematic metaphors in the data. By contrast, idiosyncratic, isolated metaphors like INCREMENTAL DEFENSE APPROPRIATION IS BOILING FROGS probably weren’t as important, no matter how interesting they might be. For practical, substantive, and theoretical reasons, then, it made sense to lump the metaphors into higher-order frames, even though this put another layer of interpretation on the data, and even though the metaphors that didn’t cohere with the higher-order frames (like BOILING FROGS) fell by the wayside. Chapters 6 and 7 detail how I grouped systematic metaphors into frames; I won’t burden the reader with more examples or technical discussion here.

I do, though, want to state the criteria I used for picking which frames were the ‘important’ ones; that is, the frames I chose for further analysis. For the SDI case, for example, I selected four frames: SDI IS A VISION, SDI IS A SHIELD, SDI IS AN ILLUSION, and SDI IS A JOURNEY. I could have chosen other frames in addition to or instead of these four. Other possibilities included, for instance, STRATEGIC COMPETITION IS A GAME, STRATEGIC POLICY IS ECONOMIC TRANSACTION, and WEAPONS ARE PEOPLE. How do I know the four frames I picked were the most important ones? I used six criteria. Most importantly, I relied on the secondary literature on the SDI, which discusses the VISION, SHIELD, and ILLUSION frames extensively.

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11 Guertner 1985, 84.
(though not in much detail, and often in a theoretically-uninformed way). It was especially telling that both interpretive and non-interpretive accounts mentioned these three frames. Second, the four frames I identified were all at a similarly high level of generality, and accounted for large numbers of lower-level metaphors. Third, as we’ll see in the next chapter, the components of the frames frequently appeared clustered together in the data. Fourth, the frames cohered with each other to provide a near-complete ontology of the SDI debate: proponents argued that Reagan’s vision would ‘lead’ the US journey ‘toward’ a shield, whereas skeptics countered that the vision of the shield was an illusion, and so the US would ‘end up’ in a dangerous ‘destination.’ Finally, the frames appeared frequently and consistently throughout the primary corpus. Chapter 6 supports these claims at length.

Step Five: Validating Frames in a Secondary Corpus

Having identified the key metaphorical frames in steps one through four, I then had to ensure that they weren’t unique to the genres of text in the primary corpus (articles in policy journals, formal public addresses, and press conferences).\(^\text{12}\) Could the frames reliably account for new data? To see, I built a secondary corpus of new texts.

The secondary corpus contains Congressional debates. As with the executive branch, there’s an overwhelming amount of relevant Congressional material, so I had to be selective. I opted to focus on the Senate’s floor debates on missile defense amendments to the annual defense authorization bills.\(^\text{13}\) These debates are printed in the Congressional Record, along with supplementary texts that Senators included (for example, news articles, speeches, letters and memoranda, and excerpts from committee reports—all of which I included in the analysis). I’ve already given reasons for narrowing the study to the upper chamber. Within the Senate, I could have focused on committee and subcommittee hearings and reports instead of floor debates. Congressional hearings—particularly their unscripted question-and-

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\(^\text{12}\) As the website of the Metaphor Analysis Project (2006) warns, “The metaphors that people use do not directly reflect their conceptualizations, attitudes and values, but reflect these through the type of discourse event in which they are expressed. One implication is that we would ideally collect and analyze data of more than one type and compare metaphor use across them. This would provide stronger evidence by eliminating the effect of discourse type and context.”

\(^\text{13}\) Though the major debates surrounded the annual defense bills, there were other occasions where senators opted to discuss NMD. Because I searched the entire Congressional Record for any material related to missile defense, I was able to include these other debates as well.
answer sessions—are an excellent and under-used resource for metaphor analysis.\textsuperscript{14} The problem in this case, though, is that hearing transcripts are sometimes heavily redacted because they contain classified material. On the other hand, floor speeches aren’t just public, they usually summarize committee deliberations and reports as well.

Before moving on to discuss frame validation, I need to deal with an issue of representativeness that bears on both the primary and secondary corpora. Because my focus is on policymakers’ decisionmaking, I’ve limited both corpora to ‘inside the Beltway’ discourse. Other interpretive analyses of missile defense have dealt with media representations\textsuperscript{15} and popular culture.\textsuperscript{16} I’m not implying these latter genres aren’t important; rather, I’m interested in how they function inter-textually in elites’ metaphors. (For example, Representative Edward Markey once called Edward Teller “the original E.T.” and mocked Reagan’s \textit{VISION} as a “pin-ball outer-space war between the Force of Evil and the Force of Good.”\textsuperscript{17}) Pop culture metaphors seem to appear more frequently in unscripted talk than in formal addresses and journal articles, so the secondary corpus included mostly spontaneous speeches. The corpus includes a few news articles and opinion pieces as well—the ones that Senators themselves deemed important enough to print in the \textit{Record}. So while my focus is on decisionmakers’ discourse, the boundary between elite and popular discourses isn’t airtight. This allows the study to capture some of the metaphors that have interested cultural studies scholars.

How were metaphors identified in the secondary corpus? Unlike steps one through four, which were largely inductive, metaphor identification in step five was deductive. I already had a list of key frames and their constituent metaphors from the primary corpus, so I simply coded instances of those metaphors in the new texts. The procedure was similar to the metaphor identification procedure I used for the primary corpus [see Fig. 3]. I still read the text word by word, looking for semantic tension and transferability between source and target domains. The key difference was that I had detailed ideas about which conceptual metaphors I was looking for. This sped up the analysis, allowing me to analyze more material than in

\textsuperscript{14} Beer and Boynton 2004.
\textsuperscript{15} See Linenthal 1989; and Masters 2005.
\textsuperscript{16} See Bormann 2008; Linenthal 1989; Masters 2005; and Smith 1987.
\textsuperscript{17} Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 210-1.
the primary corpus. I used the results to verify the validity of the frames in the secondary corpus.

Though identifying metaphors in the secondary corpus was quicker than in the primary corpus, it still was very time-consuming. I planned at the outset of this study to perform this step for both case studies. Unfortunately, time and resource constraints prevented me from doing so for the second case study, NMD. I still believe the conclusions of the NMD case study are valid without this extra step, however.

**Step Six: Putting Frames in Discursive Context**

Having shown that the frames were externally valid for the SDI case, my job still wasn’t done. For both cases, I had yet to show the roles the frames played in missile defense discourse. I needed to answer some key questions: How did frames cohere with cultural commonplaces? How did they cohere with other frames? How did metaphorical frames structure literal, propositional arguments, and how might this have enabled and constrained inferential possibilities in NMD discourse? In short, how did the frames privilege some understandings of missile defense and downplay others?

The analysis I needed to answer these questions was too complex to do verbally. There were scores of interlinked metaphors, propositions, and *topoi* to keep track of. The concepts and their relationships had to be represented visually. Accordingly, I put each frame into a graph showing the elements of the frame, how those elements cohered with *topoi*, and how the frame connected with literal concepts and propositions in NMD discourse. I call these graphs *semantic networks*. Semantic networks are visual representations of the connections in a field of meaning. Constructing semantic networks made it possible to summarize the results of the entire discourse analysis in a series of intuitive pictures. They had substantive as well as expository merit, however, because semantic network models approximate the way that concepts are instantiated in the mind in conceptual metaphor theory.

To recap, the six steps of the discourse analysis are as follows: 1) Assemble primary corpus for linguistic metaphor identification; 2) Identify linguistic metaphors from primary corpus; 3) Group linguistic metaphors into systematic metaphors; 4) Group systematic
metaphors into metaphorical frames; 5) Test validity of metaphorical frames in secondary corpus, and 6) Contextualize frames in larger discourse.

**A Note on Transparency, Replicability, and Corrigibility**

Readers may wonder on what grounds they should accept my interpretation of NMD discourse. The case studies assert the presence of very specific frames with very specific effects. But how do we know that another researcher wouldn’t come up with different-looking frames—or different frames altogether? As we’ve seen, the six steps above entail some highly subjective moves. Nevertheless, for each subjective step in the discourse analysis, there is an external check on my findings, or at least the possibility for other researchers to analyze my data and reach their own conclusions.

First, although metaphor identification hinges on native speaker intuition, we’ve also seen how the Collins COBUILD dictionary works as a constraint on analysts’ judgment. Too, I’ve tried to be as explicit and transparent about the metaphor identification process as possible. I’ve produced a flow-chart diagramming each step of the procedure and listed scores of examples, many from the actual data. This material can be used as a codebook to train others to perform the analysis. Knowledge of idiomatic English is the only requirement for coders. Furthermore, all data are preserved in NVivo software and can be made available to anyone else using the program. In fact, NVivo makes it easy for researchers to collaborate remotely and assess inter-coder reliability.

Grouping linguistic metaphors into systematic metaphors is also an intuitive process requiring some tough judgment calls. Again, the software I’ve chosen to conduct the analysis makes it possible for others to repeat the analysis. Each of the thousands of linguistic metaphors and the hundreds of systematic metaphors is preserved in an NVivo database, available to any researcher with an interest in the study. Though less convenient, it’s also possible to export the data for those not working with NVivo.

I’ve also tried to be as clear as possible about the content of the frames. This is why I chose to represent them visually with semantic network diagrams. The diagrams summarize my entire discourse analysis using intuitive, visual language. With mere minutes of effort, anyone can learn to interpret the diagrams—even the complex graphs for SHIELD and
JOURNEY. Making my interpretive choices explicit and accessible makes them open to critique and revision by other scholars.

Furthermore, although the particular frames I chose for analysis may appear arbitrary, selection was guided by six criteria listed above. One criterion in particular suggests that my choices are far from idiosyncratic. One of the standards I used for selecting frames was resonance with the secondary literature on U.S. missile defense. This literature discusses five of the six frames in my two case studies. The frame that isn’t mentioned, JOURNEY, is covered at length in another metaphor analysis of U.S. foreign policy. I haven’t selected the frames in a vacuum; other scholars concur that the frames I’ve chosen are important.

**Process Tracing**

I supplemented the discourse analysis with historical process tracing for each case. Whereas the discourse analysis was quite complex, the process tracing was straightforward: I looked for evidence that the causal mechanisms posited by the rhetorical coercion framework actually took place. I also verified that the outcomes of the case matched the expectations of the rhetorical coercion approach. The details are given in the following section. Senators’ floor speeches in the *Congressional Record* offered invaluable data, as did secondary accounts (including my own narrative analysis in Chapter 2) and newspaper articles. I also studied these sources to see how well missile defense policymaking matched up to rationalist counter-explanations and reported the results at the end of each case study.

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18 See the section titled “Discourse” in Chapter 3.
Case Study Framework and Hypotheses

A set of 12 questions guided the process tracing and discourse analysis for both cases. This “structured, focused comparison” standardizes data collection and analysis, ensuring meaningful comparison between the cases [see Fig. 5.7].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Pro-BMD policy outcome?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Evidence of conceptual metaphor and coherent metaphorical frames?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Did frames entail different policy preferences?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Could policymakers have framed policies differently?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Did proponents’ frames evoke <em>topoi</em>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Evidence of framing/implication battle to seize rhetorical high ground?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Skeptics rhetorically entrapped?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Did skeptics expect public punishment for opposing BMD?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Did BMD skeptics acquiesce to the program?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Pressing strategic threat/opportunity?</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Significant vested interests/organizational support?</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Domestic political motivation?</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notation*: shaded area denotes outcome of case; non-shaded area represents possible drivers. “+” indicates presence of row’s driver in the corresponding column’s case; “?” denotes uncertainty of the presence of that driver.

Fig. 5.7: Case Study Framework

The first question concerns the policy outcome of the case: was it favorable or unfavorable to missile defense? We already know the answer is “yes” for both cases, so I’ve entered that information in the first row of the table above. Questions 2-10, which I’ll describe at length

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20 See George and Bennett 2005, chap. 3.
below, cover the metaphorical framing explanation. Questions 2-5 apply at both the individual/cognitive level and the social/rhetorical level, while questions 6-9 encompass rhetorical coercion only. Since I haven’t discussed the case studies yet, I’ve marked these cells with a question mark to indicate provisional uncertainty (of course, the case studies will resolve this uncertainty as much as possible). The final three questions ask whether factors favoring rationalist counter-explanations were present. I’ve filled in these cells already, based on the information in Chapter 2. The case studies further explain the content and significance of the values in rows 10-12.

Figure 5.7 structures the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7. Before moving to the cases, though, I need to explicate questions 2-9 from the figure. This will show the empirical metrics used to evaluate the metaphorical framing explanation in the case studies. To clarify the connection between theory and evidence, I’ll state questions 2-10 (in bold) in the form of hypotheses (in italics). Again, questions 2-5 apply to both the socio-cognitive and rhetorical coercion mechanisms, whereas 6-9 are relevant only to rhetorical coercion.

The following hypotheses apply to both the socio-cognitive and rhetorical mechanisms:

**Evidence of conceptual metaphor and coherent metaphorical frames?**

H1: *If metaphorical frames are present, then the corpora will show persistent patterns of lexical cohesion*\(^\text{21}\)* explicable in terms of conceptual metaphors.*

H2: *Also, the metaphors contained in the corpora will not be arbitrary, but will cohere into meaningful frames.*

**Did frames entail different policy responses?**

H3: *If frames are significant, then different frames will systematically privilege some understandings of strategic defense while hiding others, thus entailing different policy prescriptions.*

**Could policymakers have framed policies differently?**

H4: *If frames weren’t epiphenomenal, then it would have been possible, in principle at least, for policymakers to have framed the policy debate differently.*

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\(^\text{21}\) Lexical cohesion refers to the way that words with related meanings make the ideas in a text cohere, or ‘hang together.’ See Klebanov, Diermeier, and Beigman 2008, 449.
Did proponents’ frames evoke *topoi*?

H5: *If proponents’ frames favor strategic defense policy, then proponents’ frames will resonate with topoi, whereas opponents’ frames will not.*

A further note: To avoid circular reasoning, it is important to identify *topoi independently* of the data. This study does so. Exceptionalism, manifest destiny, absolute security, and technological optimism figure prominently in the literature on U.S. foreign and defense policy, and Paul Chilton has noted the *container-based* security *topos* in two other studies of American security policy.22

The following hypotheses apply to the rhetorical coercion route only:

**Evidence of a framing/implication battle23 to seize rhetorical high ground?**

H6: *If metaphorical frames are politically important, then policymakers will argue over which frame(s) best characterize strategic defense.*

H7: *Also, if shared frames are politically important, then policymakers will contest the implications of that shared frame for strategic defense.*

**Were skeptics rhetorically entrapped?24**

H8: *If skeptics are rhetorically coerced by proponents’ frames, then proponents will trap skeptics into positions that violate one or more topoi.*

**Did skeptics’ behavior suggest expectation of public punishment?**

H9: *Proponents’ rhetorical power is in their credible threat (which need not be explicit) to bring the public over on its side. Therefore, if rhetorical coercion is effective, skeptics will behave as though they expect public punishment for opposing NMD.*

**Did missile defense skeptics acquiesce to strategic defense?**

H10: *If skeptics are rhetorically coerced by proponents’ framing, they will reluctantly endorse missile defense after it has been framed in proponents’ terms.*

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22 Chilton 1996a and 1996b.
23 On framing and implication contests, see Krebs and Jackson 2007.
24 On rhetorical entrapment, see Schimmelfennig 2001. Similar arguments are in Bially Mattern 2001; and Krebs and Jackson 2007. The concept is also related to that of securitization (for example, Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998).
This chapter has translated the metaphorical framing approach from Chapter 4 into a framework for empirical study. I have overviewed the basic research design and discussed the two methods used in the study: metaphor analysis and process tracing. Finally, I detailed the standard set of questions applied to each case.

Having explained the research design and described the methods in detail, it’s time to apply the framework to the two empirical cases.

The whole concept was so heaven-filling, so imponderably complex… as to pass beyond physics into metaphysics, and thence into metaphor.

- Edmund Morris, authorized biographer of Ronald Reagan¹

Don’t forget that in the movie, the good guys won, because the Force was on their side. I am convinced that the Force is with us.

- Lt-Gen. James Abrahamson, first director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization²

Introduction

The first of two ‘bookend’ case studies, this chapter covers the Strategic Defense Initiative during Ronald Reagan’s presidency.

A quick glance at the case suggests that the argument for a rhetorical or discursive explanation of SDI is strong. I argued in Chapter 3 that nothing in the strategic environment or the ‘military industrial complex’ explains the rise of the program. And though Reagan and his advisers timed the SDI’s unveiling for electoral gain, that doesn’t tell us why legislators—many if not most of whom were doubtful of strategic defense—tripled its funding in three years. Little had changed in the world of BMD except the rhetoric coming from the administration. As Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana) remarked in 1985: “There has been no breakthrough. There has been no discovery. We are not on the threshold of

¹ Qtd. in Hey 2007, 95.
² Qtd. in Reiss 1992, 157.
building a new weapons system... Nothing has happened, except the President’s speech.”

The vision of a perfect, nationwide shield set forth in Reagan’s March 1983 address seems to have sparked SDI’s startling success. It’s difficult to imagine another factor that could have brought about this outcome.

That is, roughly speaking, the argument of this chapter. Broad, prima facie evidence isn’t enough, of course. We need a much more granular view of the case to show whether and how metaphorical framing worked, and to distinguish between its cognitive and rhetorical manifestations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDI, 1983–1988</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Pro-BMD policy outcome? Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Evidence of conceptual metaphor and coherent metaphorical frames? +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Did frames entail different policy preferences? +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Could policymakers have framed policies differently? +</td>
</tr>
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<td>6) Evidence of framing/implication battle to seize rhetorical high ground? +</td>
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<td>7) Skeptics rhetorically entrapped? +</td>
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<tr>
<td>8) Did skeptics expect public punishment for opposing BMD? +</td>
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<td>9) Did BMD skeptics acquiesce to strategic defense? +</td>
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<td>10) Pressing strategic threat/opportunity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Significant vested interests/organizational support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Domestic political motivation? +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notation: shaded area denotes outcome of case; non-shaded area represents possible drivers. “+” indicates presence of row’s driver in the corresponding column’s case.

Fig. 6.1: Overview of SDI Case Study

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3 Qted. in Cong. Rec. 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
Fig. 6.1 summarizes the findings and outlines the structure for the rest of the chapter. I’ll cover questions 1-12 in the order in which they appear in the table. Part one of this chapter deals with the first question; part one describes the surprising degree to which policymakers endorsed strategic defense in the mid-to-late 1980s. The rest of the chapter explains this outcome. Part two gives evidence for a metaphorical framing explanation; in terms of the table, it answers questions 2-9. The third part covers counter-explanations and raises some qualifications to the argument. The case study concludes with some broad reflections on the strength and character of the metaphorical framing account.

### Policy Outcome

Let’s begin with the outcome to be explained. The question is whether U.S. policy from 1983-1988 was favorable to SDI or not. We know from previous chapters that the answer is ‘yes.’ However, because the program’s success is so striking, the details are worth giving.

The triumph of “Star Wars” can be measured across several dimensions. Funding trends are useful comparisons across time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY84</th>
<th>FY85</th>
<th>FY86</th>
<th>FY87</th>
<th>FY88</th>
<th>FY89</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reagan administration’s request</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD SDI appropriations passed</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real growth (%)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDI as % of total military R&amp;D</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party control in Cong. (House/Senate)</td>
<td>D/R</td>
<td>D/R</td>
<td>D/R</td>
<td>D/D</td>
<td>D/D</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: DOD SDI Funding, 1983-1988 (in billions of 1990 dollars)\(^4\)

Table 6.1 shows that despite cutting Reagan’s request each year, Congress gave the president most of what he wanted for SDI. Strategic defense spending tripled from FY1984-1986, prompting Johnston to complain that “We’re dealing with multiples of dollars so big that it

ordinarily would choke a horse.”5 (By including only the DOD’s share of SDI funds, the table understates program funding by about 10%).6) Interestingly, funding continued to increase (though more slowly) after the Democrats retook the Senate in the 1986 midterm elections. By that time, “Star Wars” was the costliest R&D program in the Pentagon. It was consuming an increasingly large share of DOD’s overall R&D budget (which was relatively fixed). However, as Chapter 2 described, even at its apogee in 1986, SDI was running into more and more skepticism. Figures for FY1988-1989 reflect its declining fortunes, including a small reduction for FY1989. Even after this cut, however, annual “Star Wars” appropriations had nearly quadrupled, and SDI spending since 1984 had exceeded that of the Manhattan Project in real dollars.7 Moreover, while civilians at DOD had quietly backed away from Weinberger’s “Phase One” plan for early deployment, the new Defense Secretary called SDI “the cornerstone of our overall defense program,”8 and the president still refused to limit “Star Wars” for a new START treaty with deep offense reductions.

The political context of the time makes the initiative’s success even more apparent. Although SDI’s growth rates are “not uncharacteristic” of new military R&D programs,9 they’re odd in light of the obstacles strategic defense faced in the mid-to-late 1980s. The first hurdle was that no one (with the possible exception of Reagan himself) seemed to believe that the SDI could work according to the VISION. Second, the military opposed strategic defense on grounds of principle and self-interest. Third, the national fiscal climate discouraged costly government initiatives regardless of their merit. In the mid-1980s Washington faced what were then the largest deficits in its history. The president was very reluctant to reverse his tax cuts, so Congress mandated spending caps that threatened social and defense programs alike. One consequence was that SDI took off as other pressing DOD priorities (e.g., conventional readiness) stagnated. This fact did not escape the notice of the Armed Services Committees and the JCS.10

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5 Qtd. in Cong. Rec., 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
6 Wirls 1992, 155.
Metaphorical Framing

Clearly then, Reagan’s initiative was a resounding success—in terms of resources committed if not military results. How well does metaphorical framing explain this outcome?

The present section offers a variety of evidence to support the metaphorical framing account. It covers questions 2-9 from Fig. 1. The discussion is divided into two sub-sections. The first covers questions 2-5; those are the questions that apply to both the individual (socio-cognitive) and social (rhetorical) levels. Sub-section two discusses questions 6-9, which apply to rhetorical coercion only.

Questions 2-5: Individual and Social Levels

As covered in Chapters 4 and 5, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) infers the presence of conceptual metaphor from lexical cohesion in talk and text. Metaphorical frames appear when conceptual metaphors *themselves* cohere into superordinate categories. This suggests the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *If metaphorical frames are present, then the corpora will show persistent patterns of lexical cohesion explicable in terms of conceptual metaphors.*

Hypothesis 2: *The metaphors contained the corpora will not be arbitrary, but instead cohere into meaningful frames.*

The discourse analysis strongly supports hypotheses one and two. Analyses of both the primary and secondary corpus show persistent patterns of lexical cohesion explicable in terms of four metaphorical frames: SDI IS AN ILLUSION, SDI IS A JOURNEY, SDI IS A SHIELD, and SDI IS A VISION.

There are several ways to demonstrate this claim. The most straightforward is to list examples from the data showing the frames ‘in action,’ as they appeared in actual SDI discourse. Below are several such examples. In keeping with practice from Chapter 5, lexical units marked as linguistic metaphors are underlined.
VISION:

The President has laid out a compelling vision for SDI—the vision of a world in which strategic defense, rather than the chilling concept of mutually assured destruction, will safeguard our security; a world in which there is no longer any incentive to produce new nuclear weapons, or maintain large nuclear stockpiles. We have a responsibility to see if the President's vision can be turned into reality; a responsibility to use whatever technology that does emerge from SDI to make our world a safer, more secure one... Let us not give up the future that SDI may hold, merely because we can now only glimpse its outlines, or begin to understand the scientific and technological principles on which it will work.

The once grand dream of a world protected by defensive weapons has evaporated in the sunlight of technological reality... Ridding the world of the threat of nuclear weapons is now a fading vision... The once-clear vision of its purpose has been clouded, even distorted, by new missions and roles.

ILLUSION:

I would like to examine the concept of Star Wars for a moment. To begin with, we should examine, and I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join with us in acknowledging, that even members of the Reagan administration admit that President Reagan's determination to use the SDI system to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" is a fantasy, an illusion.

The president's public profession of his objective, as well as his and Secretary Weinberger's optimism about its realization, seem to us a triumph of wishful thinking and fantasy over reality: an act of surrender to the promise held out by technical fixes as the preferred means of dealing with nuclear arms and a difficult adversary—two situations that must ultimately be dealt with by political means.

SHIELD:

What kind of shield will this early deployment be? In fact, it isn't going to be a shield at all. It will not keep all, or even most, Soviet warheads from raining down on our country. It's only going to be a token defense that according to General Abrahamson, SDIO Director, will disrupt the "timing" of a Soviet attack. A Senate staff study which Senator Proxmire and I commissioned reported that the early system would at best only stop about 1 in 5 Soviet warheads. Four out of five Soviet warheads would come through. Some shield!

I think there was a good deal of evidence in the [Congressional Record] that you could never have what they call an astrodome roof over the United States that would be totally leakproof, that there would be some leakage, some percentage; and that when you have thousands of warheads being fired upon the United States, even a small percentage means a good deal of damage.

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14 Rathjens and Ruina 1985, 264.
The alternative which the administration offers to a modest research program is a headlong rush to unilateral development, a commitment to untold financial outlays, and a journey into the highly uncertain world of unconstrained offensive and defensive strategic deployments. Such a journey would only be begun by the formal or per se abrogation of a bulwark of arms control, the ABM treaty. No one in the administration can tell us where that path might ultimately lead. Somewhere ages and ages hence, I am firmly convinced we will all heave a long, grateful sigh of relief, if this road of unilateral reliance on speculative technologies and high-technology hubris remains a road not taken.\(^\text{17}\)

Why should a program that received so little scrutiny before it was launched receive so much funding now that it is underway? Why is there so much urgency about getting there when we don’t even know where it is we are going?\(^\text{18}\)

We are at a critical crossroad in our strategic policy. We are already moving with our rhetoric and with our arms control negotiating posture beyond a deterrent based on offensive forces to one which incorporates defenses. But before we can negotiate where we want to go—before we can even decide where we may wish to go unilaterally—it is important to understand the scope and limitations of where we can go.\(^\text{19}\)

I heard my colleagues say in the last few moments that we do not really know where we are going with this, that we do not know where it is going to wind up. It seems to me that that really avoids the reality. We do know where we are going. We do know what this research is set out to do. We know that it is set out to do it in a way that is not a mere hedge against Soviet breakout, but which is very clearly, as rapidly as possible, bringing the United States to the point of deciding whether or not to deploy or not deploy… But, in the final analysis, if you look at what has happened, if you were to deploy this system, perfect or less than perfect, we have merely reached the point where we still maintained assured destruction of each other… A system where you have the ability to defend up to a certain point is still a system where total destruction lies at the end of the road. And that is what we are going to have to make judgments about down the road.\(^\text{20}\)

The frames are the best explanations available for the lexical cohesion in each of the above extracts (and hundreds of others that could be provided from the corpora). These examples are evidence for the constitutive role of metaphor in SDI discourse.

Because the corpora are so large, I can present only a tiny fraction of the data in such detail. Quantification is necessary to summarize the discourse analysis.

\(^{17}\) Sen. Carl Levin, in Cong. Rec. 132 (104), S10265, 4 August 1986.
\(^{18}\) Sen. Charles Mathias (R-Maryland) in Cong. Rec. 132 (104), S10227, 4 August 1986.
\(^{19}\) Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kansas) in Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S1039, 5 August 1986.
Table 2 breaks down the coding data for the four frames. In all, I coded 6,305 lexical units (abbreviated as “LUs” in the table) as instances of these frames. This is strong evidence for the presence of the metaphorical frames in SDI discourse. Even the least-used frame, VISION, was referenced over 300 times.  

Table 2 also shows that the initial findings from Corpus1 were valid for Corpus2 as well. Recall from the previous chapter that the primary corpus was analyzed inductively while the secondary corpus was analyzed deductively. Here we see that the primary corpus, including journal articles and administration statements, furnished just 16% of all lexical units. The rest came from Senate floor debates in Congressional Record; that is, the secondary corpus. It’s clear, then, that the frames identified inductively at the outset of the study also appeared in the secondary corpus.

Moreover, the frequencies with which the frames appear are similar for each corpus: JOURNEY has by far the most references, followed by either SHIELD or ILLUSION. VISION is the least-used frame in both corpora. This similarity is noteworthy given the wide variety of texts the corpora include. The frames appear with similar frequency in journal articles, presidential news conferences, other administration texts (i.e., Corpus1), and Senate floor debates (Corpus2).  

This suggests that the frames aren’t peculiar to any particular genre of text, but rather, that they reflect the metaphorical structure of SDI discourse.

Similarities in frame distribution hold even when Corpus2 is disaggregated chronologically.

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21 These figures lack context. It would be helpful to compare metaphorically used words with the total number of words appearing in the corpora. Unfortunately, NVivo software lacks capability to create such a word count.

22 Floor debates themselves include newspaper extracts, official reports, and other materials.
Figure 6.2 shows the percentages of frames in Corpus1 on the left hand side. Moving from left to right, we see that the frequency with which the frames appear for each year of Senate floor debates are roughly similar to each other and Corpus1. This suggests that the similarity between the two corpora isn’t likely due to grouping effects.

Thus far, we know that the corpora have thousands of lexical units coded as linguistic metaphors, and that these metaphors cohere into four core frames: SDI IS AN ILLUSION, SDI IS A JOURNEY, SDI IS A SHIELD, and SDI IS A VISION. We’ve seen stable patterns in the distribution of these frames across Corpus1 and Corpus2, and, within Corpus1, across time.

But how valid are the frames themselves? How do we know the metaphors in the four frames aren’t just arbitrary groups, but actually cohere into meaningful categories? In the excerpts above, some semantic links are more apparent than others. The adjectives “clear,” “clouded,” and “distorted,” for example, are indubitable entailments of the VISION frame. Other semantic associations are more opaque. For instance, how are the phrases “raining down,” “come through,” and “leakage” connected to SHIELD? How do we know that these
linguistic metaphors aren’t arbitrary, but instead cohere meaningfully to constitute the SHIELD frame?

Typically, metaphor analysts illustrate coherence by simply listing the systematic metaphors they’ve identified for each frame. This makes the contents of each frame explicit and open to critique. Below is a complete list of the systematic metaphors associated with each frame:

VISION:

1. SDI IS A VISION/DREAM
2. OFFENSIVE NUCLEAR INEFFECTIVENESS IS IMPOTENCE
3. MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION IS A MEXICAN STANDOFF
4. MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION IS PRISON
5. MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION IS INSANITY
6. MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION IS A HOSTAGE SITUATION
7. NUCLEAR ARMS ARE A BURDEN
8. NATIONAL EXISTENCE IS SURVIVAL
9. TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC PROWESS IS STRENGTH

ILLUSION:

1. REAGAN’S VISION IS AN ILLUSION/MIRAGE
2. REAGAN’S VISION IS FANTASY/WISHFUL THINKING
3. REAGAN’S VISION IS A DREAM
4. REAGAN’S VISION IS AN ESCAPE
5. REAGAN’S VISION IS A FRAUD
6. REAGAN’S VISION IS A HOAX
7. REAGAN’S VISION IS SORCERY
8. REAGAN’S VISION IS RELIGION
9. REAGAN’S VISION IS HUBRIS
10. TECHNOLOGY IS SEDUCTION
11. MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION IS REALITY

SHIELD:

1. STRATEGIC OFFENSE IS A SWORD
2. SDI IS A SHIELD
3. SDI IS A COVER
4. SDI COMPONENTS ARE LAYERS
5. ROBUST STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS THICK
6. ROBUST STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS HEAVY
7. SDI IS AN UMBRELLA
8. WARHEADS ARE RAIN
9. DEFENSE FAILURE IS LEAKAGE/SATURATION
10. US IS A CONTAINER

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23 In other contexts, this expresses a literal proposition. In SDI discourse, however, it is entailed by the central metaphor SDI IS AN ILLUSION.
11. US IS A HOME
12. SDI IS A ROOF
13. VULNERABILITY IS OPENNESS
14. VULNERABILITY IS NADEDNESS
15. US IS A FORTRESS
16. DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION

JOURNEY:

1. SDI IS A JOURNEY/QUEST/VENTURE
2. SDI IS EXPLORATION
3. SDI CREATES NEW FRONTIERS
4. SUPERPOWERS ARE TRAVELERS
5. SDI IS A RACE
6. SDI IS A VEHICLE
7. STARTING SDI IS EMBARKING/DEPARTURE
8. SDI IS A PATH
9. POLICY CHOICES ARE DIRECTIONS
10. STRATEGIC STATES ARE POSITIONS/LOCATIONS
11. TIME IS LOCATION
12. SDI IS PURSUIT/SEEKING
13. SDI OBJECTIVES ARE GOALS
14. DIFFICULTIES ARE OBSTACLES
15. PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS ARE MILESTONES
16. MAJOR TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT IS BREAKTHROUGH
17. SDI OBJECTIVES ARE DESTINATIONS
18. COMPLETING SDI OBJECTIVES IS PROGRESSING
19. COMPLETING SDI OBJECTIVES IS MOVING
20. COMPLETING SDI OBJECTIVES IS CLOSING DISTANCE
21. COMPLETING SDI OBJECTIVES IS STEPPING
22. COMPLETING SDI OBJECTIVES IS ARRIVAL
23. ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE IS LOOKING AHEAD
24. ARMS CONTROL IS CONSTRAINT
25. ARMS CONTROL IS A CONTAINER

Lists like these are helpful, but they don’t explicitly show the connections between the metaphors. They leave readers themselves to make the associations in a network of meaning, which is difficult when the network has more than a few metaphors. For complicated semantic networks, coherence should be represented explicitly and visually. One way to do this is with semantic network diagrams. These diagrams not only help orient readers, they also offer an approximation of conceptual organization in the mind. Figures 3-6 diagram the semantic networks of VISION, ILLUSION, SHIELD, and JOURNEY, and respectively.
Fig. 6.3: Semantic Network of VISION
Fig. 6.4: Semantic Network of ILLUSION
Fig. 6.5: Semantic Network of SHIELD (pt. 1)
Fig. 6.5: Semantic Network of SHIELD (pt. 2)
Fig. 6.6: Semantic Network of JOURNEY (pt. 1)
Fig. 6.6: Semantic Network of JOURNEY (pt. 2)
Take a look at Figure 6.5, the SHIELD network. I’ll illustrate how to interpret that diagram. (Once the reader learns what the elements in the figure mean, s/he can easily understand the other diagrams.) The first step is to read the list of 16 systematic metaphors in the SHIELD frame: the diagram is much clearer once one is familiar with the metaphors that comprise the frame. Second, look at the diagram. Notice the many ovals connected by arrowed lines. Nearly all the arrows run from left to right; the diagram should be read accordingly. Together, the ovals and lines depict the semantic structure of the frame as it appears in both corpora.

Each oval, or node, in the network corresponds to a concept in the corpora. White nodes like “offense” and “morality” depict literal concepts. Shaded nodes represent the source domains of systematic metaphors. These latter nodes contain numbers indicating how many lexical units associated with the source domain were coded in the corpora. For example, the node “weight” on the left-hand side of the diagram represents the source domain of the systematic metaphor ROBUST STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS HEAVY. The corpora include three lexical units that I coded as instantiations of that metaphor:

…only in the event of heavy deployment of strategic systems…¹
…A light, nationwide defense…²
…Even a light U.S. BMD…³

Readers will also notice that some nodes have thick black lines around them. Thick lines denote a topos. Topoi will become important later on in the analysis.

For now, let’s ignore the topoi and turn to the connectors. The arrowed lines represent semantic links between the nodes. These connectors’ labels show how concepts in the discourse ‘hang together.’ Nodes cohere in three different ways: metaphorically, axiomatically, and propositionally.

Since the diagram is meant to show the metaphorical structure of the discourse, most connections between the nodes are metaphorical. In the upper left-hand corner of the diagram, for example, “SDI” is connected to “roof” with the label “is a.” This denotes a metaphorical association between SDI (the literal target concept, in white), and “roof” (the metaphorical source domain, in grey). Combined with the information in the roof node, the

¹ Payne and Gray 1984, 840.
² Rathjens and Ruina 1985, 251.
³ Rivkin 1985, 94.
connector indicates that the corpora contain 87 examples of the systematic metaphor SDI IS A ROOF. Not all connections in the semantic network are metaphorical, however. Some are axiomatic. For instance, the diagram indicates that “shields” have “weight” and that “umbrellas” protect against “rain.” These connections are self-evident and as such don’t appear explicitly in the corpus. Therefore, I did not code for them in the corpora. I include them in the network diagram to show the rich ways that the metaphors cohere with each other. Finally, other connections are propositional. According to the diagram, for example, “offense” and “nakedness” both violate “morality.” These and other propositions were also not coded for. They reflect my own interpretation of the larger discourse. They appear in the diagrams in order to put the strategic defense metaphors in a broader context. In this case, the tension between “offense” and “nakedness” on one hand, and “morality” on the other, highlights the normative connotations of the SHIELD frame. This aspect of the frame is opaque when examining metaphors in isolation.

Before moving on, I’d like to reiterate that Figs. 3-6 are my own interpretations of the semantic structure of SDI discourse. As such, the four frames in the diagrams are ideal types and not exact depictions of each and every text in the corpora. Also, the borders between the frames are fuzzier than the diagrams suggest. SDI skeptics, for instance, frequently blended elements of the ILLUSION and SHIELD frames in their rhetoric. Nor is it obvious where the frames end and where the larger SDI discourse begins. For example, I included the ARMS RACE metaphor in the JOURNEY frame because RACE shares with JOURNEY the notion of a PATH with a STARTING and ENDING POINT, MOVEMENT along the path, and much else. However, another analyst might have excluded ARMS RACE from that frame. And, as noted in the last chapter, other frames beyond the four I identified that could plausibly be inferred from the SDI data. Delimiting fields of meaning is notoriously tricky in discourse analysis, and this study is no exception. It’s difficult to devise clear, replicable rules to govern the process, and even if such rules could be devised, different interpreters would no doubt produce somewhat different results.

That said, I can conclude this discussion of coherence on a brighter note: there is evidence that the four frames I indentified ‘carved’ SDI ‘at the joints.’ Not only do the frames cohere internally, as Figs. 3-6 show, but they also mesh with each other. Two examples from the Congressional Record will demonstrate this. Each excerpt is divided into
columns according to the frames it evokes. As usual, linguistic metaphors are underlined. The examples should be read normally, from left to right and top to bottom.
My concern is that we are proceeding not at a pace designed to give us an opportunity to make decisions about strategic defense in the future, but at a pace which implies that the decisions have already been made. Clearly, there is no consensus about SDI.

The vision of an umbrella protecting us from strategic missiles persists. Now, the Air Force is weighing in with plans for the raincoat—the air defense initiative—to protect us against those air breathing systems against which our SDI umbrella would be ineffective.

Yet, military systems must be designed to fulfill missions, not visions.

We need to begin now to define where we expect to go with SDI.

Are we interested in developing a thin, point defense to possibly enhance deterrence? Or are we committed to making an all-out effort to emasculate nuclear weapons?

These two goals, which might represent nearly opposite ends of a spectrum of strategic defense possibilities, would probably not be served best by programs of the same size, direction, or pace. 4

Mr. President, I conclude that it is irresponsible to continue funding for the SDI Program based on the illusion that it might lead to a nationwide impenetrable shield. We are not developing a shield. 5

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Note how the four frames cohere to produce a near-complete ontology of SDI discourse. In this ontology, the SDI is a JOURNEY guided by a VISION (or ILLUSION, depending on which side one is on) of a nationwide SHIELD.

Thus far, I have demonstrated the presence and coherence of SDI metaphors. Not only do metaphors cohere into frames, but the frames themselves structure the overall policy debate. This strongly supports the first and second hypotheses.

But how can we know if the frames were politically significant? Hypotheses 3-5 specify what evidence to look for:

Hypothesis 3: If frames were significant, then different frames will systematically privilege some understandings of strategic defense while hiding others, thus entailing different policy prescriptions.

Hypothesis 4: If frames were not epiphenomenal, then it must have been possible, in principle at least, for policymakers to have framed the policy debate differently.

Hypothesis 5: If proponents’ frames favor strategic defense policy, then proponents’ frames will resonate with topoi, whereas opponents’ frames will not.

I’ll now discuss these hypotheses for each of the four frames, beginning with the VISION that Reagan articulated in his March 1983 address and developed further in subsequent remarks. After that, I turn to the ILLUSION frame that skeptics used to counter Reagan’s VISION. The next frame is the SHIELD, followed by JOURNEY. For each frame, I’ll offer some introductory remarks before touching on the hypotheses.

VISION

Ronald Reagan introduced the VISION frame in his watershed national address on 23 March 1983, when he shared with Americans “a vision of the future which offers hope.”

He prefaced his VISION by underscoring “the necessity to break out of a future that relies solely on offensive retaliation for our security.”\(^6\) This was the first of many phrases that likened the strategy of mutually assured destruction (MAD) to a PRISON. Reagan went on

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to question the stability and reliability of offensive deterrence—in subsequent speeches, he and his supporters would question its rationality as well, with the metaphor OFFENSIVE DETERRENCE IS INSANITY. When speaking extemporaneously, the president put this graphically by comparing MAD to a “Mexican stand-off” with “two men holding nuclear pistols to each other’s heads, and if one man’s finger flinches, you’re going to get your brains blown out.”

But in the 23 March address, his language was more graceful and the immorality of MAD was the dominant theme. “I’ve become more and more deeply convinced,” the president declared, “that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence.” Though it had kept a precarious peace for a generation, and though it would have to continue until the day that the VISION materialized, offensive deterrence was “a sad commentary on the human condition.” Reagan then posed a rhetorical question: “Wouldn’t it be better to save lives than avenge them?” In later discourse, the notion of individual preservation was extended to the U.S. nation-state with the metaphor NATIONAL EXISTENCE IS SURVIVAL.

Saving the nation through defensive deterrence would require turning to America’s strengths in technology.” In his address, the president thus called upon “the scientific community… to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace” and “give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.”

Reagan framed this goal as a purely defensive one: “defensive systems…raise certain problems and ambiguities,” he conceded. “If paired with offensive systems [as they would have to be until thoroughly reliable defenses were developed], they can be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy, and no one wants that.” The president assured his audience that “We seek neither military superiority nor political advantage. Our only purpose—one all people share—is to reduce the danger of nuclear war.” In fact, Reagan even claimed that strategic defense could “pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate” ICBMs. Elsewhere in the speech, Reagan referred not to ICBMs specifically but “nuclear weapons” generally, implying that complete nuclear disarmament was possible, thanks to America’s

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benign intentions. In the frenetic run-up to the “Star Wars” speech, his aides tried to change the reference to all nuclear weapons, but Reagan, who played an uncharacteristically active role in drafting the address, insisted on his own wording. In fact, he continued to argue for total disarmament long after the speech. Here’s an excerpt from a press conference he held in February 1985.

But if we can say that [SDI] virtually makes those weapons, if not obsolete, certainly most ineffective—the nuclear weapons—then we’ve got a real reason for saying now let’s all do away with them. Because we’ve come up with this defensive weapon.

As his advisers knew, the general phrase “nuclear weapons” was misleading. Strategic defenses are ineffective against gravity bombs, cruise missiles, short and medium-range ballistic missiles, and the proverbial ‘suitcase bomb’—any or all of which the Soviets might’ve used to circumvent U.S. defenses. As early as March 1984, the administration officially acknowledged that offensive nuclear arms would be necessary to deter these threats, even in the highly unlikely event that SDI worked perfectly against ICBMs. SDIO was less forthcoming about what this meant: the continuation of offensive deterrence “in the foreseeable future.” This was the opposite of Reagan’s “dream,” and it put policymakers in a precarious position: the VISION condemned the basis of their strategic planning without offering a realistic replacement. Reagan’s advisers were also in the awkward position of having to privilege an incredible VISION over more feasible programs like the B-1 bomber or the MX. If “Star Wars” was meant to shore up America’s offensive deterrent, why should it get more priority than other programs that did the same thing with proven technology at a fraction of the cost?

The nature of the total Soviet threat wasn’t the only thing the VISION concealed. Its faith in American technological prowess hid the fact that the Pentagon hadn’t had any major breakthroughs in strategic defense. It also yielded some impossible-to-rebut arguments like these:

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8 Lakoff 2007, 49.
9 FitzGerald 2000, 259.
13 See, for example, Sen. Bennett Johnston, in Cong. Rec., 132 (104), S10227, 4 August 1986.
Naturally, many claim that efforts by one side or the other to expand and improve defenses will be accompanied by the development of more offensive weapons designed to defeat the new defenses. This would be true if the new defenses deployed could be countered easily by the proliferation of offensive weapons. However, an effective defense, such as the one envisioned by the president, could not be countered in this way. Consequently, such a defense would not encourage proliferation of offensive missiles.\(^\text{15}\)

If we have a system that is going to work, I’m not sure that [building countermeasures] is going to be the Soviet response.\(^\text{16}\)

These claims beg the question of whether effective defenses could ever be built. But as long as the focus was on Reagan’s VISION, questions of technical feasibility were less pressing.

As well as appropriating the rhetoric and goals of the Nuclear Freeze movement, the frame downplayed the offensive potential of nationwide defenses, and the reaction this would trigger in the Soviet Union. The “Star Wars” speech alluded vaguely to potentially “aggressive policies” and offered a facile reassurance that “no one wants that.” Reagan also voiced the hope that SDI could somehow facilitate arms control. But the VISION glossed the three reasons why the US and USSR both forswore strategic defenses in the SALT accords: they didn’t work, trying to make them work would spark an arms race, and it would raise the risk of nuclear war if either side thought defenses might work. These three arms control tenets enjoyed widespread (though not universal) acceptance at the time.\(^\text{17}\) The president swept them aside with the vague acknowledgement that strategic defenses “raise certain problems and ambiguities.” With the potential downsides to SDI effectively hidden, acceptance of the VISION practically compelled acceptance of SDI. After all, who could disagree that it is “better to save lives than avenge them?”

As important as what the VISION hid was what it emphasized. The gist of the metaphor was that Reagan could “see” the future. He thus invoked the “primary metaphor” KNOWING IS SEEING. Recall from Chapter 4 that primary metaphors are commonsensical across cultures because they draw on correlations in humans’ embodied experience. Its embodied grounding makes the VISION metaphor comprehensible—even if audiences find its content implausible. In the case of SDI, Reagan’s clear, simple vision cut through the uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity that a transition towards defenses would involve. The

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\(^{15}\) Weinberger 1987, 14, emphasis added.

\(^{16}\) Sen Daniel Quayle (R-Indiana), in Cong. Rec. S 7127, 13 June 1984.

\(^{17}\) Glaser 1990, 111.
media pitched in by literally *showing* detailed renditions of yet-to-be-engineered SDI weapons in action. The dramatizations led JCS Chair William Crowe to quip that, from all he’d seen and read, “Star Wars” “is out there in the parking lot and we don’t know where to put it.”18 Even Ronald Reagan warned that the media’s mockups were “way ahead of” the actual program.19

Of course, the *vision* was powerful even without this reification. The frame highlighted future aspirations and hid SDIO’s ongoing struggle for techno-scientific support and a palatable strategic rationale. Emphasizing the long-range *vision* become increasingly important as the program’s purpose shifted towards publicly unpopular point defenses to complicate Soviet first-strike plans. As Sen. Johnston remarked on the fifth anniversary of the “Star Wars” speech in March 1988, “Today, nobody except the president talks about the original goal of SDI. It has been relegated to the status of a *vision*.”20 There was a good reason why the administration spoke of *visions* more than goals. The *vision* metaphor enabled supporters to legitimate the program while ducking the awkward fact that SDI could never do what the *vision* entailed. On Capitol Hill and in its scripted pronouncements, the administration never quite *said* that a 100% effective shield was feasible. SDIO Director Abrahamson himself testified to Congress that “Nowhere have we stated that the goal of the SDI is to come up with a leakproof defense.”21 Instead, officials voiced “hope” and “optimism” that, thanks to American resolve and ingenuity, Reagan’s *vision* might one day materialize.22

The president’s *vision* was useful in other respects. With interlocking themes of innocence, morality, survival, technological redemption, and male sexual vigor, it rearticulated the identity equation by which: “America = male = virtue = technology = power.”23 The *vision* simultaneously evoked *topoi* of U.S. exceptionalism, absolute security,

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18 Qt. in *Cong. Rec.* 133 (144), S12430, 22 September 1987.
20 Qt. in *Cong. Rec.* 134 (37), S2937, 23 March 1988.
22 See FitzGerald 2000, 253, 261.
23 The equation is from Smith 1989, 116. I modified it to include gender.
and technological optimism. Indeed, “Star Wars” epitomized the optimistic strain in American political culture generally, which Reagan himself embodied.\textsuperscript{24}

How do we know that the VISION evoked these commonplaces? The administration’s texts, quoted briefly above, offer the best data. But senators’ rhetorical moves in the \textit{Congressional Record} offer more clues. Because the VISION contained potent justifications for SDI, skeptical senators\textsuperscript{25} had political incentives to contest the frame—even more so because many of them saw the VISION as a subterfuge. If, however, the VISION evoked cultural commonplaces, then we would expect critics’ rhetoric to have been cautious. Wary of breeching acceptable discourse, skeptics would have attacked the VISION obliquely, if at all. This was the case during the floor debate on SDI. Skeptics seldom attacked the VISION itself. Senators referenced Reagan’s VISION a total of 202 times.\textsuperscript{26} SDI critics invoked the frame far more than proponents did; they made 159 references, nearly 80\% of the total. Of those 159 references, I classified only 10, or 6\%, as rejecting the frame outright.\textsuperscript{27} The criticism mostly concerned the term “mutually assured survival,” which skeptics described as either meaningless or misleading. The rest of their references to the frame were either neutral or positive. \textit{All} debaters used metaphors describing MAD as \textsc{insanity}, \textsc{prison}, and a \textsc{hostage situation}. Tellingly, even stalwart skeptics like Carl Levin, John Kerry, and Joe Biden were careful to note their support for the VISION:

I share the \textit{dream} of President Reagan of a nuclear weapons free world.\textsuperscript{28}

No one is going to disagree with the goal that we want to make nuclear weapons \textit{impotent} and obsolete.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{24} FitzGerald 2000. Quoting his own March 1983 address, Reagan once said that what he liked most about SDI was that it “offered a vision of the future which offers hope.” Qtd. in Frank Greve, “Out of the Blue: How “Star Wars” Was Proposed,” \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer}, 17 November 1985, A24.

\textsuperscript{25} I differentiated ‘skeptics’ from ‘supporters’ by building an SDI support index. The index is of a ratio of a senator’s pro-SDI votes to all votes he or she cast on strategic defense from June 1984 to August 1988, up to a total of 14 votes. (The index accounts for the fact that senators served for different lengths of time, and that senators didn’t always vote on every SDI motion during their tenure.) The scale ranges from 0 (no favorable votes) to 1 (all favorable votes). Senators with scores at or below .5 are considered ‘skeptics’ or ‘critics,’ while senators with scores at or above .51 are classified as ‘proponents’ or ‘pro-SDI’ senators. The index classified 54 Senators as ‘anti-SDI and 69 Senators as ‘pro'-SDI (the total is 123 because 123 different legislators served in the chamber from June 1984-August 1988). Speech from ‘pro'-SDI senators accounts for slightly more of the \textit{Congressional Record} data than speech from skeptics (about 226,000 words vs. 183,000 words, respectively).

\textsuperscript{26} This figure excludes material not actually spoken on the Senate floor; hence it is lower than the total for VISION in Table 2.

\textsuperscript{27} Lexical units were coded as “rejection” if the speaker used quotation marks, irony, adjectives like “supposed” and “so-called,” and other verbal indications that speakers rejected the frame.

I honestly believe that Reagan’s vision is the correct vision, that some day we may want to find a way to get rid of nuclear weapons in this world, and that defensive may be the only way to do it.30

The President’s SDI speech…set forth his vision of a world free from the tyranny of nuclear war, a vision which all of us would join in.31

The President has spoken repeatedly and beguilingly about the new era of… mutual assured survival. Obviously, given the choice of whether you are for mutual assured destruction or mutual assured survival, you would choose mutual assured survival.32

What’s interesting about the above excerpts is that two of the speakers were the very skeptics who came closest to rejecting the vision wholesale. Biden pronounced it “fraudulent” in a searing speech,33 and Al Gore (D-Tennessee) panned it as a “stalking horse” for unrelated agendas.34 The men nonetheless stopped short of rejecting the frame itself. After denouncing the administration’s SDI policy, Gore concluded that “The president’s vision of a world without nuclear weapons has struck many as wildly implausible. I think it probably is, too.” “But,” Gore conceded, “it is a noble vision. It is not one that should be discarded out of hand.”35

Though Reagan was perhaps predisposed towards it, there was nothing necessary about the vision metaphor. It’s common for politicians to enunciate policy goals in visionary terms.36 Indeed, as Army Chief of Staff Gen. Edward Meyer put it at the time, “It’s naive to critics, but Reagan did what a leader does. He waves toward the horizon instead of toward the ground.”37 (Reagan’s successor George H.W. Bush might have been a one-term president owing to what Bush famously called “the vision thing.”) However, as Johnston’s distinction between visions and goals suggests, leaders can also cast policy objectives as concrete objectives. This was the tack President John F. Kennedy took when drumming up support for the Apollo program, to which SDI was often compared. During his “Man on the Moon” address in May 1961, JFK declared “I believe that this nation should commit itself to

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33 Ibid.
36 Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech is perhaps the best-known example from American politics.
achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the earth.”

Kennedy’s objectives and timeline were quite precise compared to Reagan’s “Star Wars” speech.

ILLUSION

Critics immediately responded to Reagan’s speech by panning the VISION as ILLUSION. In the days and weeks following Reagan’s address, the ILLUSION frame was elaborated in diverse and often humorous ways. Commentators drew on science fiction, video games, the President’s own filmography, and other snippets of popular culture to mock the as-yet-unnamed SDI.39

“Star Wars” became popular shorthand for strategic defense in the Reagan years. The original 1977 film showed “the power of humanity over machinery when a young man armed only with a tiny space ship and a distilled version of Taoist philosophy overcomes a moon-sized weapon capable of annihilating a planet.”40 The “Death Star” was the epitome of technological hubris—skeptics made the same critique of SDI. Though the origins of the “Star Wars” label are obscure, Ted Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) used it to describe the program on the Senate floor the day after Reagan’s speech.41 The term quickly became ubiquitous, prompting the president himself to complain about it periodically.42 However, even some SDI supporters used it, suggesting that the epithet’s subtext wasn’t always recognized.

The ILLUSION counter-frame illuminated precisely what the VISION concealed: population defense was technically infeasible and trying to achieve it would likely increase arms race and crisis instability. These propositions downplayed American innocence: if the Soviets found SDI threatening enough to accelerate the arms race or even contemplate a first

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39 The best summary is Linenthal 1989, chap. 3
41 Linenthal 1989, 14-5.
strike, there must have been something threatening about “Star Wars”—or perhaps America itself. And if the US couldn’t surmount technical obstacles to strategic defense, then there was a limit to the country’s technological genius. Moreover, ILLUSION cast the morally suspect MAD doctrine as an inescapable REALITY. This pessimistic counter-frame augured against America’s identity of innocence, virtue, and ingenuity.

Occasionally, SDI opponents elaborated the frame by impugning proponents as wishful thinkers—or worse, faith-driven fanatics, technophiles, and even fraudsters.

Unsurprisingly, SDI critics used the frame heavily while supporters usually avoided it. Senators invoked ILLUSION 640 times during floor debates from 1984-1988. Only 10% of those references came from senators I identified as SDI supporters based on their strategic defense votes. (And most members of this group simply used the conventional “Star Wars” moniker.) The remainder came from senators classified as skeptics.

Perhaps critics favored the ILLUSION counter-frame because it cohered with Reagan’s VISION; both metaphors evoked the primary metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING. However, opposition could have been framed in other terms. For example, a senior aide in Reagan’s Office of Science and Technology Policy called Reagan’s March 1983 speech “laetrile” after hearing it. Biden once panned Reagan’s VISION as a “nightmare.” And the VISION could also have been attacked literally as a misconception, a false hope, etc. These alternatives didn’t mesh with popular culture the way that “Star Wars” did, but ILLUSION was nevertheless one of several available frames.

SHIELD

Nor was the SHIELD frame inevitable. As Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) observed, “We are not developing a shield. The SDI is a collection of weapons and associated sensors and computers.” Echoing other critics, Harkin went on to note that SDI systems “could be used defensively to attack ICBMs and they could be used offensively to attack space-based battle

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44 This figure excludes material not spoken on the Senate floor; hence it is lower than the total for ILLUSION in Table 2, which includes news excerpts, committee reports, etc.
45 Lakoff 2007, 50.
46 Qtd. in Cong. Rec. 131 (73), S7474, 5 June 1985.
stations and sensor satellites.”

Even in anti-missile mode, moreover, defenses complemented a first-strike strategy. In that context, SDI was conceptualized quite differently from a SHIELD. For example, two observers on opposite sides of the debate once called missile defense a “lid” over U.S. adversaries. The Kremlin referred to SDI technologies as “space-strike weapons.” (Of course, it would also have been possible to describe SDI with a more neutral descriptor like ‘system.’)

Clearly, then, SHIELD highlighted the defensive applications of “Star Wars” and hid its offensive potential. Framed this way, SDI resonated with three topoi: exceptionalism, absolute security, and a CONTAINER-based notion of security.

First, as a SHIELD, the program fit America’s exceptionalist identity as an innocent and benevolent force in world affairs. As Reagan put it, “Vengeance is not the American way.” Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyoming) also represented this righteous strain in American politics, observing that

What is at issue is the survival of our Nation and the morality of seeking to defend the people from nuclear terror. Some of us have thought for a long time that it is the morality alone, yet alone the military value [of strategic defense], which ought to guide the decisions of this country. Many people have decried the advance in weaponry, the weaponry of death and destruction. Here, all of a sudden, is the weaponry of safety, the weaponry of defense.

Other SDI advocates pointed to history for proof of American exceptionalism. Sen. Howell Heflin (D-Alabama) proclaimed that “The history of our nation discloses proudly that we are not an aggressor nation.” Chief of Naval Operations Adm. James Watkins concurred, insisting that strategic defense was uniquely “American … Historically we based all the justification for our armed forces on the defense of the United States. And therefore we should get back to that, not offense.” For his part, Reagan drew on post-WWII history to reassure audiences that SDI was an expression of American virtue:

We proved, I think pretty definitely, that we are not expansionist, that we’re not aggressive. Because we had, to begin with, a monopoly [on nuclear arms] and then, for a number of those...

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48 Ibid.
49 See Reagan science advisor George Keyworth qtd. in Cong. Rec. 132 (104), 1027, 4 August 1986; see also Garwin 2000.
51 Cong. Rec. 133 (139), S12068, 15 September 1987.
53 Qtd. in Hey 2007, 84, emphasis added.
30 years [after the Soviets acquired nuclear weapons], we had such a superiority... You have to ask yourself how many nations in the world could have had the monopoly that we had and not have taken advantage of it. And we didn’t.54

The SHIELD frame also downplayed the argument that the Soviets didn’t see strategic defense in such a benign light. If the SDI is a SHIELD and America is innocent, then NMD can’t be provocative, because the US would never contemplate a first strike.55 In Reagan’s reckoning, “Star Wars” would eliminate any of the protests that some of the people on the Soviet side have made that we’re seeking a first strike capability. I don’t think anyone could honestly believe that the United States is interested in such a thing or ever would put itself in that position.56

The SHIELD also evoked the topos of absolute security. This topos was linked to exceptionalism because the righteous nation required infallible protection from a fallen world. In the words of Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), SDI promised a “Fortress America” that would “shut us off from a dangerous, unstable, and intractable world.”57 The SHIELD metaphor implied a return to America’s pre-WWII state of geographic invulnerability.

The frame cohered with a third topos as well; that is, Americans’ intuitive understanding of security. This was due in part to fundamental tensions between strategic reasoning and folk logic on the nature of offense, defense, and security. In Cold War-era nuclear strategy, the common meanings of offense and defense were reversed, and to appreciate how a SHIELD could be offensive, one had to consider first and second strike scenarios, counter-force vs. counter-value targeting, etc. The SHIELD metaphor elided these subtleties, concealing the fact that offensive counter-value forces were, by the logic of nuclear strategy, defensive. Sen. Pete Wilson (R-California) called it “strange... that our safety depends upon our giving absolute guarantees to the Soviets on our vulnerability.”58 On the other hand, the SHIELD frame was simple and intuitively plausible. It was intuitive because it evoked the folk meaning of security, which, according to Paul Chilton, centers on the notion of a CONTAINER safe from PENETRATION.59 Ironically, this topos cohered with the

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55 To SDI proponents, defenses in Soviet hands were, of course, a different story.
57 Cong. Rec. 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
58 Cong. Rec. 133 (140), S12151, 16 September 1987.
embodied discourse of nuclear strategy, in which STATES ARE CONTAINERS, NMD IS A COVER, and DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION.\(^{60}\) But nuclear strategy and popular wisdom parted ways on a key point. MAD entailed a vulnerability-based security concept that violated Americans’ understanding of what it means to be protected: secure containers are ‘closed’ and ‘covered’ do not ‘expose’ their ‘contents’ to ‘penetration.’ In contrast, classical deterrence theory entailed a notion of security based on ‘openness’ to ‘penetration.’ \(^{61}\) Even Senators presumably more familiar with deterrence logic than average Americans repeatedly professed U.S. “nakedness”\(^{62}\) to attack to be both “shocking” and “absurd.”\(^{63}\)

Recalling the somatic marker theory from Chapter 4, we might surmise that this reaction to MAD was a (literally) visceral response triggered by cross-domain mappings in the SHIELD frame. The metaphors within the frame triggered unconscious and/or preconscious somatic anxieties about sex, violence, and death. One concern, no doubt familiar to most Americans, was COVERING one’s NUDITY. Another involved PENETRATING CONTAINERS (and the BODY POLITIC within the container) with SWORDS. This latter scenario, though remote from most Americans’ everyday experience, may have evoked universal unconscious fears. In his work on the psychology of killing, Lt. Col. Dave Grossman shows how soldiers across the world and throughout time have been extremely reluctant to thrust with hand-held edged weapons. Such weapons serve as symbolic extensions of the soldiers’ own bodies. As Grossman explains, “To reach out and penetrate the enemy’s flesh and thrust a portion of ourselves into his vitals is deeply akin to the sexual act, yet deadly, and is therefore strongly repulsive to us.”\(^{64}\) In close combat, soldiers nearly always disregard their training and either slash with their weapon or reverse it and use the blunt end as a club. Combatants’ fear of thrusting into the enemy is exceeded only by their fear of being likewise penetrated—historically, they’ve fled (exposing themselves to greater danger) rather than engage with piercing weapons. Since this is a universal behavioral tendency among infantry, it’s plausible that civilians in all walks of life harbor unconscious fears of death by sexual violation.

\(^{60}\) For more arguments that nuclear strategy itself isn’t too far removed from folk discourse, see Chilton 1996b; Cohn 1987; and DeNardo 1995.

\(^{61}\) Chilton 1996b, 235-7.

\(^{62}\) See, for example, Sen. Dan Quayle (R-Indiana), in Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10391, 5 August 1986.

\(^{63}\) For example, Sen. Don Nickles (R-Oklahoma) qtd. in Cong. Rec. 133 (140), S12151, 16 September 1987.

\(^{64}\) Grossman 1995, 120-1.
By highlighting the defensive side of NMD, moreover, SHIELD hid the tight linkage in arms control discourse between offensive and defensive arms. In the arms control cannon, secure second-strike weapons on both sides ensure a stable mutual deterrent. On the other hand, defensive arms beget offensive countermeasures, which lead to more defenses, and so on *ad infinitum*. Counter-intuitively, building a SHIELD actually *decreases* stability by raising mutual fears of surprise attack. This is why arms controllers believed that “offense is good, defense is bad,” as John Kerry summarized. But if the focus is *solely* on the SHIELD, then it’s very hard to see how SDI could provoke the Soviets. After all, as Jesse Helms (R-South Carolina) observed, SDI “does not kill anybody. It does not destroy any property. It merely knocks down missiles that would kill people and destroy property.” Such reasoning led supporters to conclude that, “Defense is not provocative—it is the opposite.” After all, “what could be more stabilizing than the ability to defend one’s homeland against nuclear attack?”

The SHIELD metaphor also misled the public about SDI’s strategic objectives, in what Sen. Gore and former Defense Secretary Harold Brown both called a “bait and switch.” The president, in his own words, promised that “Star Wars” “would never be just another method of protecting missile silos” and command and control centers. Other administration officials made similar claims about population defense, even though SDI supporters tacitly conceded that a “leaky” system of force protection was the best SDI could do. Nevertheless, advocates continued to invoke the SHIELD frame in their remarks and in a number of television advertisements, probably because, as Gore observed, the SHIELD was a “more politically popular” goal. To be sure, a partial point defense would complicate Soviet first-strike plans; in that sense it could be considered an *indirect* form of population defense. But if we stretch the concept of the SHIELD that far, then *offensive deterrence* also qualifies, as Nunn pointed out when questioning Undersecretary of Defense Richard DeLauer at a 1984 Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

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65 Qtd. in *Cong. Rec.* 131 (71), S7274, 3 June 1985.
69 *Cong. Rec.* 132 (104), S10227, 4 August 1986.
70 Qtd. in *Washington Post*, 27 March 1988, A01, emphasis added.
71 *Cong. Rec.* 132 (104), S10227, 4 August 1986.
72 Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 250.
NUNN: I have not heard population protection mentioned anywhere in any of these presentations. Are you talking about a system to protect U.S. cities?

DELAUER: Let me answer it this way… What we are trying to do is enhance deterrence [by force protection]. If you enhance deterrence and your deterrence is credible and holds, the people are protected.

NUNN: That is also true of massive retaliation.

In the minds of most Americans, SHIELDS protect cities and people, not missile silos. To lay observers, then, the SDI debate seemed to be about ‘moral’ population defense vs. ‘immoral’ offensive retaliation: building “better shields rather than sharper and more deadly swords,” just as Reagan said.73 (The media no doubt reinforced this impression with fanciful images of Soviet missiles bouncing harmlessly off of umbrellas, shields, roofs, and the like.) Policymakers knew better, of course. On the Senate floor, SDI skeptics denounced the VISION of the SHIELD as deceptive.74 Rather than admit to misleading the public, however, advocates responded by continuing to blur the lines between point and population defense, subsuming both under the SHIELD frame. Reagan, for example, used this tactic in a February 1985 press conference.75

Q: Mr. President, you've talked at times of two different kinds of a defense. One, defending cities, the whole population. Somebody referred to it as an astrodome defense, so to speak. And you seem now to be talking about a defense that would be around our missiles. Which is it?

A: I want a defense that simply says that if somebody starts pushing the button on those weapons, we've got a good chance of keeping all or at least the bulk of them from getting to the target. Because if [defenses are] around missile sites—that's the type of weapon anymore [sic] in which there's no way to restrain that from killing any number of people. Or now, as a great many reputable scientists are telling us, that such a war could just end up in no victory for anyone because we would wipe out the earth as we know it... [Nuclear winter is] possible, so I think if you have a defensive weapon—I don't think of it in terms of let's put it around this place and that place. Let's put it in such a way that those missiles aren't going to get to their target.

Reagan rightly noted that even a counterforce strike would endanger the U.S. population.

And, technically speaking, his SDIO Director was also correct that “if you can stop any

[Soviet missiles] from coming through, then you’re protecting the population.” However, to most Americans, population defense surely did not mean a system like DOD’s “Phase One” system that could intercept, at best, 1 out of 5 Soviet warheads. This was not, Kerry noted, “the peace shield advertised on television,” but rather “an exceptionally expensive and complex way of closing the window of vulnerability” that Reagan ran against in 1980. “So much for the leak-proof guarantee on the family roof,” Johnston harrumphed.

Not all SDI proponents wanted to protect MX silos, however. We saw in Chapter 2 that administration pragmatists wanted to trade SDI for cuts in Moscow’s ICBMs. Meanwhile, some hardliners seemed to care less what specific systems emerged from the program as long as they doomed the ABM Treaty. These goals were antithetical—pragmatists would revive arms control and hardliners would smother it—but the SHIELD and VISION metaphors obscured this, making pro-SDI arguments seem more coherent and gluing together a coalition of political actors with opposing objectives. For instance, the President’s “dream” was among the few major foreign policy initiatives that the feuding Secretary of State Shultz and Defense Secretary Weinberger agreed on (albeit for very different reasons). Without the vocabulary of the SHIELD, this consensus would have been more difficult to achieve.

Because the SHIELD occluded supporters’ real goals, moreover, it let them condemn offensive deterrence as immoral—even as the Pentagon sought to enhance MAD by protecting U.S. retaliatory forces! (The irony was compounded by the fact that it was the Soviets who’d argued for the virtue of defenses in the late 1960s when American arms controllers were trying to sell them on SALT.) A few outspoken skeptics defended the morality of massive retaliation in the absence of an alternative. But, as we saw above, even these strident critics ultimately endorsed the thrust of Reagan’s VISION. How could one argue against a SHIELD protecting Americans from nuclear devastation?

Interestingly, although the SHIELD frame privileged SDI proponents—and judging from their complaints, many critics knew it—skeptical senators invoked the frame more often than supporters did. Senators mentioned the SHIELD a total of 503 times; skeptics made

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77 Cong. Rec. 133 (144), S12430, 22 September 1987.
78 Ibid.
over 2/3 of the references. The context of these references is particularly important. While some of the critics’ 338 references questioned the possibility of achieving the SHIELD, only four references rejected the frame itself by proposing that SDI should be seen as an offensive weapon. In fact, senators on both sides of the debate seemed to use many SHIELD-related metaphors unreflexively. Metaphors involving PENETRATION, LEAKAGE, COVER, CONTAINER, OPENNESS, THICKNESS, and other embodied source domains appeared in the data without quotation marks, irony, adjectives like “supposed” and “so-called,” or other indications that speakers were conscious of their metaphorical nature. From a conceptual metaphor theory perspective, these embodied metaphors were part of the unconscious conceptual system used by speakers of U.S. foreign policy discourse, and they cohered strongly with SHIELD. This could explain why skeptics didn’t often contest the SHIELD frame despite ample political incentives to do so. Within the discourse, the notion of a protective COVER to protect against PENETRATION was commonsense.80

VISION, ILLUSION, and SHIELD weren’t the only major metaphors in the SDI debate. It’s striking how often senators framed their arguments in terms of a JOURNEY. (Recall that JOURNEY was by far the most frequently used frame, with over 3,600 lexical units in the secondary corpus.) JOURNEY metaphors framed propositions about the program’s goals, outcomes, progress, and political support—among much else. Senators repeatedly asked with respect to the program, “Where are we going?”81 Both sides invoked hackneyed images of “standing at the crossroads” to emphasize the importance of SDI policy choices.82 The issue was which DIRECTION and/or down which PATH the nation was MOVING, and the related question of what DESTINATION lay “on the horizon”83 or “at the end of the road.”84 Would the “Star Wars” PATH direct America away from massive retaliation and toward “a better, more

80 However, when using the words “shield,” “astrodome,” and “umbrella,” all Senators usually spoke in the conditional, which suggests general awareness that the VISION was uncertain.
82 See, for example, Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kansas), in Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10325, 5 August 1986; and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), in Cong. Rec. 134 (65), S5423, 11 May 1988.
secure, more moral world,” as President Reagan predicted? Or, as critics claimed, did the PATH lead straight back to MAD, where the US began its JOURNEY? Skeptics worried that the US would ARRIVE at a “leaky” point defense, while supporters said that point defenses were just a STEP to the ultimate DESTINATION of population defense. One critic complained that SDI’s rationale was incoherent because it pointed to all these locations simultaneously: “This program has been running in six different directions at once, and it’s time it paused to catch its breath long enough to figure out what it is trying to do.” SDI’s progress was often discussed in terms of DİSTANCE. SDI proponents noted that the Soviets were on the strategic defense PATH too, and claimed that Washington had “fall[en] behind” and needed to “catch up.” Supporters also said that “Star Wars” had made tremendous technological STRIDES and passed crucial MİLESTONES on the “long road” to the President’s VİSİON. Critics replied that the technological OBSTACLES were insurmountable and that a perfect defense was impossibly FAR in the future. MOVEMENT was another point of contention. Skeptics fretted that SDI would soon “move beyond research” and become a “headlong dash” to deployment. The program, in their view, was “gaining a dangerous momentum” and was “on a collision course with the most important and effective arms control agreement we have, the ABM Treaty.” They urged their colleagues to “slow down the SDI program” and “proceed at a measured pace.” Johnston pleaded that “We are being asked to go way too fast to get to a destination we know not of and the purpose of the trip is as yet undefined. So I say, let us slow it down a little bit.” Proponents retorted that the program’s speed was appropriate; if anything it was too slow given Soviet efforts in strategic defense. Finally, the two sides

95 Sen. Charles Mathias (R-Maryland), in Cong. Rec. 132 (10), S10284, 4 August 1986.
96 Cong. Rec. 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
clashed over the nature of the JOURNEY itself. Critics called it a “quixotic venture,”\textsuperscript{97} likening supporters to “lemmings headed for the sea,”\textsuperscript{98} while supporters invoked America’s duty to EXPLORE defensive technologies and perhaps even find the “Holy Grail” of population defense.\textsuperscript{99}

The frame SDI IS A JOURNEY helped simplify the “Star Wars” debate and give a coherent structure both sides’ arguments. The strategic, technological, and political questions that SDI raised were exceedingly complex. Al Gore complained that “The technologies are exotic, the nomenclature is hard to grasp, [and] the justifications [are] shifting and obscure.”\textsuperscript{100} In the opinion of several senators, “Star Wars” was the most complicated subject ever debated in the chamber.\textsuperscript{101} Some admitted openly that they and their colleagues were having trouble understanding the issues.\textsuperscript{102} The JOURNEY frame collapsed complex and abstract questions of causality, motivation, and temporality into simple spatial schemata tied directly to bodily experience.

From a conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) perspective, it’s quite natural that this frame would be represented so strongly in the data. SDI IS A JOURNEY instantiates several more general conceptual metaphors that cohere to form what CMT calls the “Event Structure” metaphor system.\textsuperscript{103} The target domains of this system include aspects of events such as states and changes between states, causes of change, and purposeful action. Here are a few metaphors within the Event Structure system, along with examples from the Congressional Record:

\begin{quote}
PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION
…if we go ahead with a defensive shield…\textsuperscript{104}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION
Congress should “take vigorous steps now to research future options for ensuring stability over the long term through effective strategic defenses.”\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{98} Sen. John Kerry, in \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{101} See, for example, Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona), in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 131 (73), S7474, 5 June 1985.
\textsuperscript{103} The discussion of the Event Structure system follows Kövecses 2002, 134-8.
\textsuperscript{105} JCS Chair William Crowe, qtd. in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 132 (105), S10325, 5 August 1986.
MEANS ARE PATHS
Our amendment suggests that a far more prudent course to chart lies on the path of programmatic and budgetary restraint.106

DIFFICULTIES ARE OBSTACLES
The Nunn-Levin amendment is “a roadblock in the path of achieving a strategic defense initiative to safeguard the United States from nuclear missile attack.”107

According to CMT researchers, the Event Structure system is the most common way that English speakers metaphorically conceptualize events. It’s little surprise, then, that JOURNEY metaphors appeared so frequently in the corpora.

Unlike VISION, ILLUSION, and SHIELD, JOURNEY didn’t have many obvious pro or anti-SDI implications. At first glance, it seems only to have provided a generic tableau upon which senators on both sides projected their arguments. The data bear this out this first impression. Of the 3,009 JOURNEY references spoken on the Senate floor, skeptics and supporters made almost exactly 50% each. This doesn’t mean that the frame was unimportant, however—or that it was wholly neutral. It privileged “Star Wars” proponents in three ways.

First, the notion of the quest evoked the topos of manifest destiny: space was the latest FRONTIER to be EXPLORED and conquered by America’s technological dynamism. Barry Goldwater recalled

the days that I first served on the Space Committee just after it was first formed. I remember President Kennedy making the statement over in the other house that we were going to put a man on the moon, and everyone thought he was sort of half crazy, but those of us on the Space Committee who did not quite have all of his confidence recognized that there were problems, just as there are problems in this SDI program, problems that could be overcome, and… they were overcome, and we put a man on the moon, and we have satellites now in space that enable us to use them for television, telephone, telegraphy, radio, for any purpose that we want to. We now are thinking of exploring in more depth the planet Mars.

There is no end… in my humble opinion, to what this country can do if it makes up its mind to do it, including perfecting a system that will not just be 90 percent effective against incoming missiles; I think we can perfect one that will shoot down any missile that is fired in our direction.108

As Goldwater’s speech shows, JOURNEY resonated with the American narrative of progress, exploration, and expansion.

On a more abstract level, the prototypical JOURNEY entailed linear movement towards a final, fixed destination. But framing SDI this way downplayed the “action-reaction” dynamic between defense and offense that had led McNamara and other arms controllers to oppose strategic defense since the mid-1960s. In a Foreign Policy piece, Gary Guertner argued that

> The problems associated with strategic defense are not static obstacles that can be leaped or sidestepped. It is foolish to talk about low costs or favorable cost-exchange ratios between defense and offense as if there will be a time and a clearly delineated posture that, once reached, will permit the defense to declare final victory.\textsuperscript{109}

From opponents’ perspective, the problem with JOURNEY, and the closely-related ARMS RACE metaphor, was that they were linear and not cyclical. Paul Warnke, Washington’s lead SALT negotiator, coined an alternative in a well-known 1975 article.\textsuperscript{111} In Warnke’s words, the superpowers were not on a quest for strategic superiority; instead, they were “apes on a treadmill.” “A true race needs a finish line,” he wrote, but “the continued expenditure of billions for quantitative additions and qualitative improvements does not bring doomsday any closer. Instead, it may be that [the US and the USSR] are jogging in tandem on a treadmill to nowhere.” In this context, being “first off the treadmill” is “the only victory the arms race has to offer.”\textsuperscript{112} Warnke’s metaphor gained attention in policymaking circles. But it didn’t feature in the SDI debate, despite the fact that, like JOURNEY, it cohered with the Event Structure system.

In addition to concealing the cyclical aspect the offense-defense dynamic, JOURNEY, like VISION and SHIELD, privileged proponents by reconciling force protection with population defense. As early as fall 1983, supporters had suggested that since the space-based weapons needed for the VISION wouldn’t be available for decades, if ever, SDI should be deployed in phases.\textsuperscript{113} Initial phases would consist of “near-term” technologies useful for silo defense or a “light” area defense; space-based directed energy weapons would be added later to create a “layered” system. In the vocabulary of the JOURNEY, point defense became the first STEP on the PATH leading to progressively more elaborate defenses, and eventually space-based

\textsuperscript{109} On the importance of McNamara’s action-reaction hypothesis to arms control discourse, see Freedman 2003, 240-1.
\textsuperscript{110} Guertner 1985, 77.
\textsuperscript{111} Warnke 1975.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 12-3, 29.
\textsuperscript{113} FitzGerald 2000, 253.
DEWs sometime in the next century. But because force protection was the first “stepping stone to full deployment,” not only did it have to be done, it had to be done first. “Full deployment” probably wouldn’t happen, of course. But this perfectly suited the hardliners, who had no use for the VISION and just wanted to get back to defending silos and keeping abreast of the Soviets in the defense race.\footnote{115}{Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyoming), in Cong. Rec. 134 (66), S5552, 12 May 1988. See, for example, Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-South Carolina), in Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10391, 5 August 1986; and Cong. Rec. 133 (140), S12170, 16 September 1987.}

Questions 2-5: Summary

This sub-section presented findings from my analysis of U.S. strategic defense discourse from 1983-1988. The task was to see whether and how metaphorical framing might explain SDI’s success during this period. Specifically, the discussion addressed questions 2-5 from the case study overview in Fig. 1; those were the questions applicable to both the individual (socio-cognitive) and social (rhetorical) levels of the metaphorical framing account.

Before moving on to rhetorical coercion, let’s review the evidence adduced so far. Analyses of the primary and secondary SDI corpus showed persistent patterns of lexical cohesion explicable in terms of conceptual metaphors. These metaphors cohered into four larger frames: SDI IS AN ILLUSION, SDI IS A JOURNEY, SDI IS A SHIELD, and SDI IS A VISION. I used excerpts from the secondary corpus to show how the frames cohered with each other. Together, the frames formed a concise ontology of the overall debate: strategic defense was a JOURNEY guided by either a VISION or ILLUSION of a nationwide SHIELD. The sub-section also discussed the frames individually. I used semantic network diagrams to show how the frames cohered internally, and how they formed the conceptual foundation of metaphorical cognition. The discussion then turned to those aspects of SDI each frame highlighted and those that it hid; I also noted whether and how frames cohered with commonplaces in U.S. foreign policy discourse. Both of these factors affected the policy prescriptions of the frames. VISION and SHIELD strongly favored SDI. In more subtle ways, JOURNEY did too, despite the fact that its plasticity made it adaptable to arguments from both sides. The ILLUSION frame clearly augured against “Star Wars.” Finally, I discussed alternatives to each frame. Despite
their “apparent naturalness and integration in complex networks of association,”\textsuperscript{116} the frames weren’t inevitable; instead, they were contingent aspects of SDI discourse. (Indeed, as I’ll argue below, the administration and its supporters employed VISION and SHIELD deliberately to achieve their political ends.)

How are these findings theoretically significant? Unlike most metaphor analyses, this study isn’t just about how metaphor constitutes policy discourse, making certain policies possible. I also try to trace causal mechanisms linking metaphor with policy outcomes. Chapter 4 identified two related mechanisms at different levels of analysis: metaphorical cognition (at the individual level) and rhetorical coercion (at the social level). So far, I’ve inferred metaphorical cognition from speakers’ lexical choices. By mapping semantic networks and analyzing metaphors’ highlighting and hiding functions, I’ve shown plausible pathways linking metaphor to policymakers’ decisionmaking.\textsuperscript{117}

But the story doesn’t end at the individual level of metaphorical framing. In discussing how frames did or did not evoke topoi, this sub-section touched on the social level. But nothing was said about how frames and their associated topoi shaped political behavior at that level. That’s where rhetorical coercion comes in.

**Rhetorical Coercion**

This section argues that SDI proponents rhetorically coerced skeptical senators by framing “Star Wars” with the evocative SHIELD, VISION, and JOURNEY frames. The frames transformed SDI votes into referenda on American survival, morality, and technological prowess, thus trapping the program’s critics into making socially unacceptable arguments. Fearing public punishment, skeptical senators acted against their own preferences and refrained from cutting back the program. Their reluctance to do so helps explain SDI’s startling success in the 1980s.

\textsuperscript{116} Chilton 1996a, 202.
\textsuperscript{117} Because there are no discernable differences in metaphor use and processing between individuals, these pathways theoretically apply to elites and the public both. However, except for news articles printed in the *Congressional Record*, I did not analyze popular SDI discourse. I therefore cannot assume that the public used the same metaphors as policymakers.
Before going fleshing out the story, let’s briefly review how rhetorical coercion works. Rhetorical coercion requires rhetorical contestation. According to Krebs and Jackson, rhetorical contests take one of two forms. The first is a framing contest in which debaters advance rival issue frames, such as VISION and ILLUSION. The second is an implication contest. Here, contestants share one or more frames but dispute the entailments of the frame(s). For instance, SDI critics and supporters usually agreed that strategic defense was a SHIELD, but disputed whether a partially effective SHIELD was better than none at all. Krebs and Jackson elaborate on how rhetorical coercion succeeds. Their illustrative scenario involves three actors: the claimant (C), an opponent (O), and a public audience (P) that judges the debate.

Engaged in either an implication contest or a framing contest, C seeks through its claims and counter-claims to alter the rhetorical environment within which political battle is waged. While C might ideally prefer to persuade O, it must design a political strategy that can attain its desired ends even if persuasion proves impossible. The public plays a crucial role: both C and O must craft their appeals with an eye to some audience which sits in judgment of their rhetorical moves. If C can shift the rhetorical basis on which O justifies its stance to P, C can limit the range of O’s possible responses and policy options, transcending the erstwhile implication or framing contest. Put simply, rhetorical coercion has taken place when this strategy proves successful—when O, regardless of its private beliefs, can no longer sustain its public opposition.

This sub-section contains a process tracing narrative addressing questions 6-9 in Fig. 1. Each question relates to an aspect of rhetorical coercion as Krebs and Jackson define it. The four questions, stated in the form of hypotheses, are as follows: If SDI skeptics in the U.S. Senate were rhetorically coerced, then we expect to see four things. First, given the high stakes involved, Senators would’ve contested the different frames and/or their implications. It would be especially telling if Senators were to have reflected on this contest (by noting, for example, the political consequences of a particular frame). Second, if skeptics were coerced by dominant frames, then proponents would have used the frames to ‘trap’ critics into positions that violated one or more topoi. Third, from a rhetorical coercion perspective, advocates’ power lay in their ability to marshal public opinion in favor of SDI. If skeptics were coerced, then we’ll see evidence that they expected public punishment for opposing “Star Wars.” Finally, if rhetorical coercion was at work, then rather than violate topoi by

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118 Krebs and Jackson 2007, 44.
119 Ibid.
cutting back the program, SDI critics would’ve begrudgingly accepted its growth. I find strong support for all four hypotheses.

Rhetorical Contestation and Entrapment

Proponents’ rhetorical strategy hinged on purposeful deception. As FitzGerald concludes, “administration officials and SDI advocates in Congress were quite consciously manipulating the American public for their own ends.”\(^{120}\) In late 1982 and early 1983, a few political functionaries sought a way to soften the president’s hardline image, distract attention from the MX basing fiasco, and undercut the Nuclear Freeze movement so that the Pentagon could continue modernizing its offensive arsenal. Reagan was a heartfelt technological optimist and was repulsed by nuclear weapons. He took the opportunity to introduce his VISION of the SHIELD in his March 1983 address. Taken aback at first by the speech, Reagan’s officials and Congressional allies lined up behind it once the president’s commitment was clear, and when it became apparent that his VISION was useful for legitimating tangential goals (mainly point defense and arms control leverage). All this was covered in Chapter 2. What I didn’t stress was just how deliberate the administration’s framing strategy was. In early 1985, as they were preparing a media blitz to drum up support for SDI, officials acknowledged to a reporter that they wanted the VISION “to dominate what they see as a narrow and practical debate about research into promising technologies.”\(^{121}\) (By highlighting technological ‘realities,’ the ILLUSION counter-frame epitomized this “narrow and practical debate.”) To ensure that the VISION drowned out rival frames, officials and Congresspersons repeatedly misled the public about the program’s goals. Here are some representative statements:

The defensive systems the President is talking about are not designed to be partial. What we want to try to get is a system... that is thoroughly reliable and total. I don’t see any reason why that can’t be done.

—Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, 27 March 1983\(^{122}\)

Even now we’re performing research as part of our Strategic Defense Initiative that might one day enable us to put in space a shield that missiles could not penetrate, a shield that could protect us from nuclear missiles just as a roof protects a family from rain.

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\(^{120}\) FitzGerald 2000, 262.


\(^{122}\) Ibid.
The aim of the SDI is to determine the feasibility of a thoroughly reliable defense against Soviet strategic and shorter-range missiles.

– SDIO Report to Congress, 26 June 1986

The purpose of the SDI has been steadfast since its inception—to examine the feasibility of enhancing deterrence through defense systems which could destroy ballistic missiles before they could reach any of their targets.

– Caspar Weinberger, 26 June 1986

The Strategic Defense Initiative offers the promise of rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.


Ex-National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane admitted in *Foreign Affairs* that the administration had engaged in “romantic and manipulative hyperbole.” As the main public relations man for “Star Wars” until his resignation in late 1985, McFarlane was responsible for much of the hoopla. His memoir quotes a memo he wrote for Reagan in early 1985 on strategy for the upcoming SDI media campaign. The memo stressed that the VISION gave the administration the moral high ground: “you have thrown the left into an absolute tizzy. They are left in the position of advocating the most bloodthirsty strategy—Mutual Assured Destruction—as a means to keep the peace.” And yet, earlier in the memo, McFarlane had described SDI as *supplementing* and not replacing offensive deterrence.

The President had the bully pulpit and was free to describe the program however he liked (though aides like McFarlane worked hard to script him). His officials, however, were more constrained. McFarlane’s strategy was tougher to execute under oath in the committee rooms of Congress, where OSD officials and program managers had to speak of SDI in more realistic terms. As ranking member and later chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn experienced this firsthand:

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123 Qtd. in *Cong. Rec.* 132 (104), S10227, 4 August 1986.
124 *Ibid.* SDIO did not remove references to “eliminating the threat posed by nuclear ballistic missiles” from its annual report to Congress until 1987; the previous two reports featured the theme prominently. See *Washington Post*, 27 March 1988, A01.
127 McFarlane 1988, 38.
128 Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 261. See also Lettow 2005, 114.
129 See FitzGerald 2000, 254-5; and Sweedler 1988, 60.
The thing that is frustrating to me is if you listen to the administration experts, none of them will support the President’s own definition of strategic defense. They do not say that right now, but when you ask them question after question and pull them back to this definition, I can find no scientific administration testimony that supports the definition. They do support his program, but not the definition.  

DOD’s reticence also frustrated “Star Wars” advocates like Pete Wilson. At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in spring 1984, Wilson proclaimed himself “mystified, and frankly, angry” at DARPA Director Robert Cooper’s testimony. Cooper had said that he couldn’t foresee “any combination of technology we have today guaranteeing” the “elimination of offensive strategic forces.” To appease Wilson, Dr. Cooper ventured that he did “hold out the hope that we can do that.” Wilson’s reply was telling: “I wish that you [had] said it with precisely that clarity earlier. I think you are going to have to say that because otherwise you are going to find there isn’t support for the kind of R&D that is essential.” Senator Wilson clearly felt that the VISION frame was essential to sustaining public support for SDI. Consequently, although the program’s own managers knew an alternative to offensive deterrence didn’t exist, the Senator urged them to speak as if it did.

It’s no wonder that SDI proponents wanted the VISION and SHIELD to dominate the debate: the frames were powerful means of trapping skeptics into making socially unacceptable arguments.

For one thing, SHIELD concealed the fact that offensive nuclear weapons were integral to America’s defense. This allowed pro-SDI Senators to tar critics as ‘anti-defense,’ as in the following examples:

Well, heavens above, the armed service crowd is supposed to be defending the United States and they say we cannot spend any money [on SDI] to defend ourselves.  

One suspects that [SDI opponents] do not want America defended, so they are at pains to think up reasons why it won’t work.  

This is the time for Congress to either fish or cut bait, to make a decision whether we are going to defend this country—and that is why we have a defense budget—or whether we are not.

130 Cong. Rec. 131 (71), S 7274, 3 June 1985.  
131 Qtd. in Sweedler 1988, 60, emphases added.  
During the last 15 years, the Soviet Union has spent an estimated $150 billion on strategic defenses, while the United States has spent one tenth of that amount. I certainly feel that the people of the United States are as worthy of protection as the people of the Soviet Union.\(^\text{135}\)

Does anyone in here argue that the people of the United States should not be defended, if that is within our capability? Who would make that argument?\(^\text{136}\)

This entrapment must have especially irked skeptics because one of their leaders was Bennett Johnston, who had a fairly hawkish record.\(^\text{137}\) Other SDI critics, notably Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) and John Kerry, were highly decorated combat veterans. Skeptics of all backgrounds, however, realized the trap that they faced. Sen. Dale Bumpers, for example, complained that arguments against weapons systems in the Senate were always suspect. You can be accused of being weak on defense. How many times do you hear in the privacy of the cloakroom right there, “Nobody is going to get to the right of me on defense,” and so we keep spending more money for things you and I both know are nonsensical, and never will be completed.\(^\text{138}\)

Some, like William Proxmire (D-Wisconsin) tried to ward off attacks from the right by claiming that they took “a back seat to no one in favoring a strong defense for this nation.”\(^\text{139}\) Strategic defense had clearly put critics on the defensive.

Sam Nunn, an independent-minded legislator who supported strategic defense but not the President’s VISION, sympathized with critics. In a prominent address to the Arms Control Association in 1988, he argued that “It is fundamentally wrong to believe that only SDI is designed to protect the U.S. population.”\(^\text{140}\) All America’s military assets served that purpose—including the conventional programs that were enduring cuts and freezes so “Star Wars” could proceed.

In the same speech, Nunn tried to defuse another trap critics faced: that they were promoting an immoral policy of massive retaliation. “Above all,” Nunn admonished, “we need to agree that neither offensive nor defensive weapons are inherently more moral than the other.”\(^\text{141}\)

\(^\text{135}\) Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-South Carolina), in Cong. Rec. 133 (144), S12430, 22 September 1987.
\(^\text{137}\) To determine this, I consulted voting scorecards compiled by the right-wing defense lobby group American Security Council.
\(^\text{139}\) Cong. Rec. 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
\(^\text{140}\) Qtd. in Cong. Rec. 134 (67), S5684, 13 May 1988.
\(^\text{141}\) Ibid.
Skeptics, though, didn’t argue for the moral equivalency of offensive and defensive arms. Instead they often conceded the immorality of MAD\textsuperscript{142} and tried to reframe SDI as a budget issue. For example, in 1984, Foreign Relations Committee Chair Charles Percy (R-Illinois) proposed trimming $100 million from the SDI budget for the upcoming fiscal year. He assured his colleagues that voting for the amendment was “not a referendum on the doctrine of mutually assured destruction. It will not indicate whether a Senator is in favor of nuclear retaliation as opposed to strategic defense.”\textsuperscript{143} Because the VISION dominated the debate, however, it was hard to sustain this argument. Sen. John Tower (R-Texas) rebutted Percy by invoking the VISION:

Remember that these programs are designed to… kill weapons, not people. [Percy] said that cutting [SDI] funds is not an endorsement of the doctrine of mutually assured destruction, but by George, it comes pretty close.\textsuperscript{144}

Tower’s entrapment tactic was repeated often during Senate debates:

For some reason, Members of this body and of the public at large are willing to conclude, and to argue as an article of faith, that the technologies will not work and that it is impossible to provide a means to defend our country, and our allies, against ballistic missile attack. These same people, of course, thereby put themselves in the odd position of advocating a policy of the continuation of… “MAD,” as the acronym appropriately reads. Perhaps they should consider upon [sic] the resulting conundrum.\textsuperscript{145}

Those who are arguing against SDI… are content to rely upon mutually assured destruction—God knows, a bankrupt theory, both morally and militarily, in its reliance, its exclusive reliance upon a very precarious balance of nuclear terror.\textsuperscript{146}

You have the bitter-enders who want mutually assured destruction—MAD—rather than mutually assured defense... They will not see that we live in a different world.\textsuperscript{147}

Some of us hope to see some kind of a diminution of the level of terror.\textsuperscript{148}

Thanks to the VISION and its emphasis on “American genius,”\textsuperscript{149} moreover, “Star Wars” proponents were able to tag critics as technological pessimists:

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\textsuperscript{142} See, for example, Sen. John Kerry, in Cong. Rec. 131 (71), S 7274, 3 June 1985.
\textsuperscript{143} Cong. Rec. S7121, 13 June 1984.
\textsuperscript{144} Cong. Rec. S7124, 13 June 1984.
\textsuperscript{148} Sen. Malcolm Wallop, in ibid, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{149} Sen. Carl Levin, in Cong. Rec. 132 (104), S10284, 4 August 1986.
This Senator was among the earliest supporters, I think, of the strategic defense initiative back when the mere mention of the acronym brought guffaws and snickers, back we were more often ridiculed than praised for our support of that important system. We supported that first of all because we believed in it and believed in the ability of the American people to achieve whatever they can conceive in a technological sense. We supported [SDI] because of our faith in the American people and the faith that a free country has certain advantages over totalitarian states, particularly in the area of research and production.\textsuperscript{150}

American workers, scientists, and engineers can still out-invent, out-produce, outwork, and out-compete any nation on the face of this Earth.\textsuperscript{151}

I don’t think anything in this country is technically impossible. We have a nation which can indeed produce miracles.\textsuperscript{152}

To bolster their case, advocates pointed to the history of U.S. technological triumphs, particularly the Apollo program. SDI opponents were portrayed as ignoring that history. Even worse, they were “naysayers”\textsuperscript{153} who contravened the can-do spirit of the “real America:”

Almost everyone can still tell you 20 reasons why you can’t do things… But America wasn’t built by people who said, I can’t. Every pioneer who crossed our frontier said, I can. Every man or woman who ever started a new business, discovered a new invention, explored a new idea said, I can… I’ve always thought that the best hope for America’s future was to get as many things as possible out of the gloomy, pessimistic halls of Washington and back to the optimistic air of the real America, where people don’t say, I can’t, they say, I can.\textsuperscript{154}

Because proponents linked technological optimism to American identity, opposing “Star Wars” became almost unpatriotic.

Supporters also put a security spin on their identity arguments. Because the defense of “the free world” relied on U.S. “superiority in technology”\textsuperscript{155} versus the quantitatively superior Soviets, SDI cuts undermined Washington’s sole advantage in the superpower arms race.\textsuperscript{156} After all, advocates averred, America’s edge in applied technology was precisely why the Soviets were hysterical about “Star Wars,” and why Moscow had returned to the arms control table in Geneva:

\textsuperscript{150} Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-New Hampshire), in \textit{ibid}.
\textsuperscript{152} SDIO Director Abrahamson, qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 248.
\textsuperscript{155} Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-South Carolina), in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 132 (105), S 10325, 5 August 1986.
\textsuperscript{156} See, for example, JCS Chair Adm. James Watkins, qtd. in Lettow 2005, 94.
They are back because they fear American technology; because, by having a repressive government that denies human freedom they cannot unleash that spark of creativity that has done more than anything else in the postwar period to preserve our freedom and to keep the peace… What we are doing here is taking away the one advantage that we really have.\footnote{Sen. Pete Wilson (R-California), in Cong Rec. 133 (140), S 12151, 16 September 1987.}

Why should the US be bound by a treaty that kept it from playing its trump card?

Skeptics had an answer, of course: SDI wouldn’t work. However, facing the topos of technological optimism, critics didn’t question the infallibility of U.S. technology per se; instead, they worried that a ceaseless offense-defense contest would make strategic defense ineffective:

It is not a question of whether [intercepting Soviet ICBMs] is technically feasible. I agree that within 15 years we will look at what we have now as obsolete. I think that technology is running at such a pell-mell pace that, in a short period of time, we can achieve almost anything technologically. The question I am raising is the context in which we are pursuing this… The Soviets’ reaction to our building a defensive system… would be to try to overwhelm [that] system.\footnote{Sen. William Cohen (R-Maine), in Cong. Rec. S 7127, 13 June 1984.}

For critics, the problem was that Soviet countermeasures were downplayed by the simplistic VISION of the SHIELD.

Also, these future-oriented frames were impossible to disprove. How could critics be certain that American scientists and engineers couldn’t make SDI work—especially since skeptics insisted on starving the program? Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kansas) elaborated:

Some will see [the VISION] as unrealistic. These people—the crowd that coined the term “Star Wars”—claim that we don’t have the resources, the scientists, the knowledge, the technological capability to turn SDI into reality. Well, maybe they are right. I do not know for sure. But the real point is, nobody knows for sure. Every day, in a hundred ways, each of us uses an invention, a technology, that didn’t exist; was impossible; a decade ago. Our SDI program—still in its infancy—is already marked by examples of technologies which are far more advanced today than when they first surfaced; which today offer real potential for practical application when, only yesterday, they seemed merely the gleam in some visionary scientist’s eye.\footnote{Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10391, 5 August 1986.}

Few of its advocates believed “Star Wars” would work, but Dole had a point: nobody could say for sure.
So far, I’ve explained how the VISION and SHIELD frames let SDI supporters label their opponents “anti-defense” and “anti-technology,” as Bennett Johnston lamented. As we’ll see in more detail below, Johnston and his fellow critics were well aware of the discursive challenge they faced.

Nonetheless, only two Senators directly contested the SHIELD frame. Sen. Paul Simon’s dissent is worth quoting for its eloquence:

The President and General Abrahamson have characterized SDI as a defensive weapons system. But weapons, for whatever purpose, are weapons. In this enlightened century, we are far more aware of the semantic connotation of words—their power, their potential for abuse, their potential for misinterpretation. In speaking of the technologies of Star Wars as defensive, we must also recognize its obverse; that SDI can, in its broadest sense, be construed as a system which can enhance offensive war-making potential. In the interconnected world of nuclear strategy, I do not believe that any element which impinges on the nuclear question can be removed from the strategic equation. Of greater importance, I do not believe the Soviets believe this.

Simon’s was a loquacious but lonely voice. As noted above, the SHIELD frame suffused the discourse of skeptics and supporters alike. Critics for the most part accepted the frame and tried to challenge its implications. But their argument in the implication contest, that the SDI “peace shield” was dangerous and provocative, was awkward. As one of their House counterparts put it, “It was hard to argue the counter-intuitive.”

While skeptics left SHIELD largely unchallenged, they did deploy rhetorical assets of their own to move the debate onto more favorable terrain. But critics faced an uphill fight because the VISION and SHIELD had “a hold on the public imagination,” as Sen. Larry Pressler (R-South Dakota) put it. They tried several tactics nonetheless.

First, critics attempted to shift the debate away from morality and security by reframing SDI as a ‘normal’ budget issue, where it would be subject to tradeoffs with other national priorities. To this end, skeptics described the program with colorful metaphors suggesting that it was taking too many resources from worthier programs. In critics’

160 Qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 376.
161 See remarks by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), in Cong. Rec. 134 (106), S9619, 14 July 1988; see also Paul Simon in Cong. Rec. 132 (104), S10284, 4 August 1986.
164 Pressler 1986, ix.
parlance, SDI became a “black hole,” a “drain,” and a “great gobbling monster.”

Even moderate BMD supporters framed the DOD’s R&D budget as “unbalanced.” However, the VISION of the SHIELD allowed fervent advocates to argue that fiscal restraint was dangerous. If SDI systems were “requirements that Americans need[ed] for survival,” then funding cuts were existential threats.

Critics also tried steering the debate away from the attractive VISION and towards the controversial goal of force protection. As mentioned above, they did this by contesting the implications of JOURNEY. Instead of a noble QUEST for safety, SDI was a RUSH to a DESTINATION that was unknown and/or dangerous. (Unfortunately for skeptics, this implication clashed with the manifest destiny topos that JOURNEY evoked. Too, it ran against the VISION’S spirit of technological optimism.) On two occasions, skeptics challenged one of JOURNEY’S most important entailments: the notion of point defense as a STEP on a PATH to a nation-wide SHIELD. Framed thus, force protection was a “near-term” GOAL on the ROAD to comprehensive, DEW-based defenses. This formulation allowed supporters to reconcile silo defense with the President’s more beguiling VISION, as Gore pointed out in a colloquy with Pete Wilson:

GORE: These “near-term options,” as the Senator from California refers to them, are really intended to enhance the survivability of our retaliatory forces… would not the Senator from California agree that that is almost the opposite of what the President of the United States has outlined as the purpose of the program, to make offensive forces obsolete and to replace deterrence?

WILSON: They are indeed different but not necessarily inconsistent. I think that those who have been concerned with this program would concede that the kind of thing that the President of the United States hopes can be attained will require a great deal of research, a great deal of time. No one, I submit, can tell you either when or if that result is ever to be attainable. We cannot tell you what the cost of attainment will be. We can say that if it is possible, every effort should be bent toward achieving that result. I would think we could all agree that it is better to save lives than to avenge them.

However, in the near term, it is possible, in the view of many—and apparently many on both sides of this aisle—to deploy far more fundamental technologies that do hold promise of enhancing the survivability and therefore the deterrence capability of our retaliatory force.

GORE: I am very concerned that the President's idea or vision of a leak-proof population defense is serving as a kind of stalking horse for a very different concept… The President's

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168 In 1986, the Armed Services Committee Report, generally favorable to SDI, proposed to transfer some funds out of the program to conventional defense R&D. The Report described this as the “Balanced Technology Initiative.”
dream is offered, and yet the program is actually pursued in a very different way. I think we have to choose. Is it supposed to replace deterrence, or is it supposed to enhance retaliatory capability? Which is it?

The American people support the idea of exploring the chance that we could create a population defense. I believe that is probably going to prove to be impossible. Yet, it will be explored. But I do not believe that the American people really support an effort to go back and undo the ABM Treaty and get into two arms races instead of one—defensive as well as offensive—because that is what this is going to do, if it ends up being what I suspect it will end up being.170

In the previous excerpt, Gore placed “near-term options” in quotes, implicitly identifying the rhetorical device that allowed Wilson to fudge the distinction between point and population defense. In the following colloquy with Wilson, Bennett Johnston was more explicit. He pointedly refuted the STEP metaphor, and Wilson responded by defending it:

WILSON: [The SDI] is a long road, as it was a long road from the Model T to modern automobiles, a long road from Kitty Hawk to an advanced technology bomber... What we are dealing with is phased development of a very complex set of systems... [SDIO is] proceeding quite logically and by a process that does not take anything for granted, not just to a near-term deployment but hopefully to a phase 2 that would bring about the [futuristic, directed energy] weapons the Senator from Louisiana apparently thinks are the answer. I hope we can get there, but I can tell him we will not get there by cutting spending... What we have to do very quickly is to be aware of what the impact is if we fail to follow the path that has been set. [After force protection has been developed], the next step is to go to directed energy systems and active discrimination sensors and after that to advanced directed energy weapons and support technologies, all of which will take time and most assuredly it will take money.

JOHNSTON: I think the Senator from California, and indeed the SDI Office, are making a fundamental mistake when they speak about the phased deployment of SDI as if [point defense technologies] are a necessary first step to get to the beam weapons. I think the Senator from California says it was a long step from Kitty Hawk to the Stealth bomber. And the suggestion is, therefore, that we need to go to [silo defenses] before we go to the beam weapons... I can assure the Senate... it is not a step. It is a choice. You can have one or the other but you cannot have both unless we have found some new pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

WILSON: What escapes [Johnston], notwithstanding the graphic explanation just offered him and what has been repeatedly made clear by General Abrahamson and the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, is that we need both [point defense and population defense] at different times and that we are on a path. 171

As was the case with SHIELD, however, only two Senators directly challenged the STEP metaphor. Perhaps this was because the lexicon of the JOURNEY was so deeply woven into the discourse of both sides that metaphors like STEP and PATH were ‘commonsense’ and beyond conscious reflection, much less contestation.

170 In Cong. Rec. 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
171 In Cong. Rec. 133 (144), S12430, 22 September 1987, emphases added.
Skeptics’ final tactic was to deploy the ILLUSION counter-frame to peg “Star Wars” supporters as either naïve or duplicitous. I found no evidence of a coordinated strategy among critics regarding the ILLUSION frame. It nonetheless formed the heart of anti-SDI discourse, as in the passage below, which appeared in Foreign Affairs in 1984:

The inescapable reality is that there is literally no hope that Star Wars can make nuclear weapons obsolete. Perhaps the first and most important political task for those who wish to save the country from the expensive and dangerous pursuit of a mirage is to make this basic proposition clear. As long as the American people believe that Star Wars offers real hope of reaching the President's asserted goal, it will have a level of political support unrelated to reality.\textsuperscript{172}

Like Sen. Gore in his exchange with Wilson, McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Robert McNamara, and Gerard Smith were wary of the popularity of Reagan’s VISION. The four ex-officials emphasized popular opinion and its link to political support. This is because, as they pointed out elsewhere in their article, no policymaker except the President and Defense Secretary Weinberger were willing to fully stand behind the VISION.\textsuperscript{173} Policymakers were in no danger of being deceived by rhetoric of leak-proof SHIELDS; they knew better. The risk was that the public would buy into the ILLUSION. Because the VISION, SHIELD, and JOURNEY frames evoked powerful topoi, this was a distinct possibility.

\textit{Skeptics Feared Public Punishment}

In fact, as discussed in Chapter 3, several polls showed majorities of Americans supporting SDI. Policymakers agreed that public support stemmed from Reagan’s framing. “The reason why there is overwhelming support amongst the American people for the Strategic Defense Initiative,” Sen. John McCain (R-Arizona) explained, is “that it gives us an opportunity to erect a defensive shield in space as opposed to the continued buildup of offensive nuclear weapons on the ground.”\textsuperscript{174} Kerry concurred:

If you look at where the American people, the people we represent, are on this issue, every single indication overwhelmingly shows that the only reason they support the concept of an

\textsuperscript{172} Bundy et al. 1984, 269, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Ibid.}, 266-7.
\textsuperscript{174} \textit{Cong. Rec.} 133 (140), S12151, 16 September 1987. See also Sen. Larry Pressler, in Pressler 1986, ix.
SDI... is because it is linked inexorably to the notion that that is how we will get rid of nuclear weapons, that it will make them safer, that it will not put them at greater risk.\textsuperscript{175}

Only a handful of hardliners disagreed and argued that SDI could “maintain a public constituency” without the VISION of the SHIELD.\textsuperscript{176}

Public opinion, of course, is notoriously elusive. Regardless, actual public attitudes are neither necessary nor sufficient for rhetorical coercion. If election-minded policymakers expect public censure, that is, in theory, sufficient to mute their opposition. As we’ve seen, SDI opponents tried hard to re-frame the debate. However, the Congressional Record suggests that they feared that they had failed, and that they would incur political costs for opposing the program.

For instance, on the Senate floor, skeptics like John Kerry complained about pro-SDI television ads with heart-warming images of SHIELDS protecting American families:

> Many of my colleagues... have come to the floor and have clearly articulated the different kinds of SDI that exist. But we must remember this is the President’s program. And at that program’s heart is the promise of invulnerability. Unfortunately, this premise has already resulted in clever advertisements selling the notion that American kids are going to have their homes protected by this invisible shield that is going to prevent any nuclear weapons from hitting them.\textsuperscript{177}

Kerry cited opinion polls (the same ones referenced in Chapter 3) to explain why the SDI spots were “clever:”

> When proposed to the American people as a peace shield, Star Wars gets some support. But when proposed to the American people as... a so-called point defense or defense of our own missile systems... it is a wholly different animal... When you ask the American people if they support this form of Star Wars... they overwhelmingly say no, they do not.\textsuperscript{178}

Skeptics had a huge problem on their hands. Although the ILLUSION frame appeared frequently in the media, so too did SHIELD and VISION,\textsuperscript{179} and critics feared the “peace shield” was dominating public discourse on SDI. They complained about it openly on the Senate floor:

\textsuperscript{175} Cong. Rec. 132 (107), S 10677, 7 August 1986. See also Sen. Nunn qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 251.
\textsuperscript{177} Sen. John Kerry, in Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10325, 5 August 1986. See also, for example, Sen. James Exon (D-Nebraska) and Sen. Dale Bumpers, in Cong. Rec. 134 (65), S5423, 11 May 1988.
\textsuperscript{179} Linenthal 1989.
Politically, the hope of population defense has great popular appeal. We all acknowledge that.\footnote{180}

_\textit{I do not think the American people know} at this moment that the President, in contemplation of a system, will supposedly put a shield over the United States, that that is not at all what we are talking about.\footnote{181}

Condemning "the doctrine of mutual assured destruction" as immoral, the President has expressed the goal of replacing it with "a doctrine of assured survival." Like much of the President's sorcery, \textit{this image has proven popular with the public}. Unfortunately, such popularity can reinforce illusion.\footnote{182}

\textit{The image left in the minds of the American people} is the image of a leak-proof population defense... if the American people really understood that the principal purpose for this program is to defend our weapons and to go back to the course of action the United States rejected during the 1969 and 1970 debate over the ABM Treaty, they would not support this program.\footnote{183}

Skeptics obviously thought that the public was being misled by proponents’ rhetoric. Even Sam Nunn, who supported SDI but not Reagan’s framing of it, was worried. He chastised the President for speaking of the program as a SHIELD. Addressing an SDI symposium in 1985, Nunn argued that it was

\begin{quote}
Essential that this debate be clearly understood. I think it would be a great tragedy if the American people were convinced that what we are building is purely a shield over the United States and if they believed...that shield would be impenetrable...Right now that rhetoric is very popular, but in my view it is irresponsible.\footnote{184}
\end{quote}

Frances FitzGerald writes that “Nunn was reduced to pleading with the administration to stop, for under current circumstances he and his colleagues could not convince the public that SDI would not produce an impenetrable shield.”\footnote{185} This may sound like an overstatement, but remember that most Americans thought the US \textit{already had} an effective ballistic missile defense—a fact that came up several times in Senate debate.\footnote{186}

The deceptive rhetoric made it politically difficult to slash SDI funding. Several critics said that they felt that the program was getting far too much money, and that either a

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\begin{enumerate}
\item Sen. Lincoln Chafee, in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 131 (72), S 7326, 4 June 1985, emphases added.
\item \textit{Cong. Rec.} 133 (144), S 12430, 22 September 1987, emphasis added.
\item Sen. Al Gore, in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985, emphasis added.
\item \textit{Qtd. in FitzGerald} 2000, 264, emphasis added.
\item \textit{Ibid.}
\item See, for example, Sens. Donald Nickles (R-Oklahoma) and Pete Wilson, in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 133 (140), S12151, 16 September 1987.
\end{enumerate}
funding freeze or an outright cut was warranted. However, they conceded that slowing SDI’s growth was the best that they could do in the new landscape in which the VISION of the SHIELD had aroused the American public:

The President’s vision of a defensive system to make nuclear weapons “obsolete” has gained enough popular support to convince [SDI opponents] that a frontal attack on the program is futile.

The 3.5 percent real growth in SDI allowed by this amendment will take the program to $3.7 billion. Given our other pressing defense needs… I continue to believe that is too much money. But apparently that is the figure that is politically achievable.

Every amendment to be offered recognizes the political reality, and the political reality is that SDI research is going to be expanded at a very significant rate. Nobody is going to suggest at this time that we try to eliminate funding for SDI, even though I suppose what the President asked for is probably the biggest increase in peacetime for any weapons system.

The political climate in this country is such that a great deal of money is going to be authorized for the Strategic Defense Initiative no matter what. We may just as well face that. With that as a given, let us exercise some caution about how the money is spent…

Rather than rolling back SDI outright, skeptics attacked incrementally. With little success, they tried to limit yearly funding increases. They also attempted to bind the administration to the original, “narrow” interpretation of the ABM Treaty, to starve the “Phase One” program, and to increase oversight of SDIO. At least one Senator, John McCain, called skeptics out on their strategy of attacking “Star Wars” at the margins. Critics, in his view, were “attempting to kill the SDI program by nibbling it to death because they know full well that the American people will never support an overt attempt to eliminate SDI.” McCain was probably correct.

The key question, though, is whether critics anticipated public pushback if they opposed SDI. Although Senators never explicitly admitted as much, it’s reasonable to infer it

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191 Sen. Al Gore, in ibid, emphasis added.
from the evidence above. Note that that evidence is separate from the ‘dependent variable’ in the rhetorical coercion framework, which I’ll describe next.\textsuperscript{193}

\textit{Political Acquiescence}

Skeptics’ acquiescence to SDI resulted from the rhetorical contestation, entrapment, and expectation of public punishment described above. The argument in this sub-section is that proponents’ framing shifted the “Star Wars” debate from ‘Why would Congress fund this program?’ to ‘How much?’

The consequences of this shift were striking. Senators appeared to be seriously debating strategic aims that many if not most of them privately thought preposterous. And the debate itself, though passionate, was surprisingly limited. In the opinion of one participant, there was \textit{less} controversy over SDI than the MX ICBM or the B-1 bomber, despite the relative feasibility of the latter two programs.\textsuperscript{194} Finally, BMD funding had quadrupled in four years.

This isn’t to say that there was no opposition to SDI. By 1988, in the twilight of Reagan’s presidency, the funding increases stopped, and critics like Bennett were still vehemently attacking “Star Wars” on the Senate floor. And from June 1985 on, the Senate saw several cliffhanger votes on SDI funding (Vice President Bush had to break a tie once). The issue wasn’t purely partisan either, as a few moderate Republicans broke ranks and rejected large funding increases. The question is not whether critical senators fought SDI; the question is on what \textit{terms}. It is here that their fundamental acquiescence becomes clear.

The plainest evidence is in the motions \textit{themselves} rather than the yeas and nays. The full Senate held 14 roll-call votes on SDI during Reagan’s presidency. None of them proposed reducing the program’s funding beyond that of the previous fiscal year. (This was the case even as other defense priorities were being “shorted” in DOD’s zero-sum budgeting process.)\textsuperscript{195} The closest they came was to call for freezing real funding and blocking the SDIO from activities that would violate the ABM Treaty—and those motions were tabled.

\textsuperscript{193} It’s possible to infer skeptics’ expectation of public rebuke solely from their acquiescence to SDI. But the rhetorical coercion framework then explains acquiescence as a result of expected punishment. Having separate evidence for skeptics’ expectation of public punishment avoids circularity.

\textsuperscript{194} FitzGerald 2000, 264.

For its part, in its report for FY 1987, the Armed Services Committee flatly rejected the VISION and criticized the program’s funding levels, yet it still called for a $1 billion boost over FY 1986. To be sure, the committee cut the administration’s request each year, and the numbers that emerged from conference were lower still. But strategic defense appropriations rose most every year regardless [see Table 1 above]. Moderate Republican Bill Cohen was correct in observing that “This is not a debate over support or opposition to a well-funded, robust SDI program.”

Few SDI advocates were as charitable as Cohen. Many attacked skeptics for slashing the President’s program—and thereby putting the VISION in jeopardy. Critics objected that they “were not out to kill SDI, as some have accused;” they too favored a “robust” strategic defense. They weren’t advocating cuts, but sensible, sustainable growth. Johnston protested that “I have never been for an SDI cut. Every amendment which I have put in here increases SDI.” His defensiveness is evident in many more of his speeches:

I may be accused of being an opponent of SDI, of wanting to spend only $3.7 billion, which is the largest R&D project in all the Department of Defense, but I can tell you that I believe in a robust R&D program, and we [are] dealing with what the proper size of that program should be.

Furthermore, when introducing his amendment to limit “Star Wars” to a real 3% increase for FY 1987 over the previous year, Bennett claimed that, “If we adopt this amendment, we are not saying no to SDI; we are saying a loud, resounding yes.” Later on in the debate, fellow critic Dale Bumpers reiterated the point:

Let me remind my colleagues and say this as emphatically as I can. We are not scrapping the SDI concept; we are not saying this will never work; we are not saying that we should never deploy it. We are simply saying that $3.24 billion is enough to do everything we need to do to continue research in SDI.

This was disingenuous. The ILLUSION frame implied precisely that SDI was misleading, that it would never work, and that it shouldn’t be deployed. Skeptics often made these claims explicitly, in fact. These Senators plainly thought poorly of the program.

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And yet they proposed to increase its budget. Pete Wilson pointed out the resulting conundrum:

If [skeptics are] right, how do they justify expending anything for it? If it is too complicated to work, if in fact it will not work, why are they saying we should spend $3 billion? The logic of their premise would be to spend nothing and yet this is not what they are asking.\(^{202}\)

Johnston credited Reagan for critics’ timidity. In June 1985, the Senator attributed his own amendment to limit SDI’s funding increase to 3% after inflation to the President’s influence:

I want to stop for a brief moment and pay tribute to the President of the United States, the Great Communicator, because I think this amendment is a real tribute and edifice to the Great Communicator and his skills… What we are seeing tonight is almost a surreal world.\(^{203}\)

After his amendment was rejected, Johnston suggested that he and his colleagues, despite their private beliefs, were calibrating their votes to the rhetorical terrain.

Mr. President, I do not know how we got into this surrealistic, metaphysical debate. It is just amazing to me. The whole landscape of this place has been changed by men smart enough to know better. As a matter of fact, they do know better. I am not going to point around this room, Mr. President. But I know Members of this body who know better but for various reasons, political and otherwise—and please do not think I exclude myself from making an occasional political vote, maybe even on this very day. On this very day, some of us may have made political votes.\(^{204}\)

Sam Nunn’s tone was more measured. Nevertheless, the ranking member (and later chair) of the Armed Services Committee also noted a gap between Senators’ votes and their attitudes:

I think it is clear that there is a lack of confidence in the direction of the program at this point by a lot of people… Even those who voted against the amendments [to limit SDI funding] have had unease in terms of where this program is going.\(^{205}\)

I can sense what is happening here. I have been through these debates for a few years. What is happening is the Strategic Defense Initiative and the enthusiasm for it is waning here in the Senate very rapidly. It is not reflected in the votes so far, but it is reflected in what you are hearing and what people are saying. The reason is because people just do not have confidence in [Reagan’s rhetoric]… There is a lot of skepticism in the Senate.\(^{206}\)

Nunn was right about the prevailing skepticism. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the President’s idea of transcending offensive deterrence lacked credibility amongst the technically

\(^{202}\) Sen. Wilson in \textit{ibid.}, emphasis added.
\(^{203}\) \textit{Cong. Rec.} 131 (72), S 7326, 4 June 1985.
\(^{204}\) Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana) in \textit{ibid.}, emphasis added.
\(^{205}\) Sen. Samuel Nunn (D-Georgia), in \textit{Cong. Rec.} 131 (72-3), S 7373, 4 June 1985, emphasis added.
\(^{206}\) \textit{Ibid.}, emphasis added.
informed. Senators knew this—many of them, particularly Nunn and his colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, were highly knowledgeable themselves. By 1985, the major newspapers had described in detail how practically the entire administration, hardliners included, was appalled when it first got wind of SDI. In the words of National Security Advisor John Poindexter, Reagan’s advisers thought the President’s VISION “didn’t make any sense,” and most of his officials agreed. These views were usually expressed privately, but it’s doubtful that they escaped the notice of Congress. Furthermore, members of the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees had heard program managers verify repeatedly that SDI could never make offensive arms “impotent and obsolete.” This testimony must have made an impression: once, in the summer of 1985, Johnston “went to the floor if the Senate without any preparation—just cold—and asked if anyone believed in an astrodome defense. A dead silence followed.” Later, Sen. Dale Bumpers quoted an unidentified Republican colleague as saying, “We know that this is a crazy idea. This is what we call on our side of the aisle the humor-the-President program.” Nonetheless, proponents were touting the SHIELD despite private incredulity, and skeptics were cowed into curtailing the program at the margins.

In short, the evidence in this sub-section suggests that Reagan’s framing had maneuvered skeptical Senators into a corner, trapping them into publicly endorsing positions on strategic defense that they found anathema.

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207 Lettow 2005, 106.
208 For example, see Sen. John Kerry’s account of one such hearing in Cong. Rec. 131 (71), S7274, 3 June 1985. See also FitzGerald 2000, 256.
209 Jim Bruce qtd. in FitzGerald 2000, 370. Bruce’s account doesn’t mention how many Senators were present on the floor at the time.
211 Not all SDI supporters endorsed Reagan’s framing. Among strategic defense advocates, Sam Nunn was the VISION’s most prominent critic. Nunn repeatedly called it “unrealistic” (see, for example, Cong. Rec. 132 (104), S10227, 4 August 1986.). Ernest Hollings was blunter. He once referred to the idea of a perfect SHIELD as “nonsense.” Qtd. in Cong. Rec. 132 (105), S10391, 5 August 1986. See similar remarks in Cong. Rec. 133 (140), S12170, 16 September 1987.
Conclusion

Three questions remain. First, which aspect of metaphorical framing offers more purchase on the case, metaphorical cognition or rhetorical coercion? Second, how do the two pathways relate to each other; in particular, are they competing or complementary? Finally, to what extent do factors other than metaphorical framing explain SDI’s success from 1983-1988?

Let’s assess metaphorical cognition first. On the positive side, the corpora contain ample evidence of metaphorical frames in policymakers’ discourse. Moreover, senators’ voting was broadly consistent with the frames they used. Those who most often voted in favor of SDI tended to frame the program as a noble JOURNEY guided by the VISION of the SHIELD. Senators who predominately voted against “Star Wars” alleged that the VISION of the SHIELD was an ILLUSION, and that the program was a JOURNEY to nowhere.

Of course, this doesn’t prove the frames actually affected legislators’ voting. The available evidence is totally correlational; all I can claim is that the patterns in the data are consistent with a metaphorical cognition account. This is bound to leave readers unsatisfied. How do we know that the metaphors weren’t epiphenomenal? The hardest case is probably proponents’ use of the VISION and SHIELD. Virtually no one took these frames seriously, readers might protest, so weren’t advocates just paying them lip-service?

The answer is complicated. On one hand, because the VISION was so wildly improbable, and because even supporters often spoke of it in the conditional, it’s a stretch to suppose that advocates wholly ‘believed’ it. But it’s also problematic to assume that proponents’ use of VISION and SHIELD was all ‘cheap talk,’ with no traces of cognitive activity. To explain why, I’ll reprise Chapter 4’s claim that even instrumental metaphor has a socio-cognitive substrate. As I pointed out there, all rhetoric is constrained and enabled by networks of meaning. So, while SDI supporters might have described the program as a “peace shield” for rhetorical effect, this representation was intelligible only because of other metaphors in SHIELD’s semantic network: NATION-STATES ARE CONTAINERS, VULNERABILITY IS OPENNESS, DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION, etc. These less obvious metaphors, used by SDI critics and supporters alike, enabled proponents to frame “Star Wars” as a SHIELD in the first place, and discouraged the use of alternatives like “weapon” or the more neutral
descriptor “system.” Similarly, both sides agreed that **OFFENSIVE DETERRENCE IS A PRISON**. This metaphor favored the **VISION** frame even though the **VISION** itself lacked credibility. Arguably, metaphors like **VULNERABILITY IS OPENNESS** and **OFFENSIVE DETERRENCE IS A PRISON** weren’t ‘beliefs’ in the representationalist sense. Rather, they worked as schemata, unconsciously motivating the inferences and lexical choices speakers made—even as they justified self-serving policies. After all, as I noted in Chapter 4, most conceptual metaphor is unreflexive, constituting the tacit meanings actors reason from and not about. This seemed to be the case in the SDI debate. For instance, as we’ve seen, senators were circumspect with their use of the words “shield,” “astrodome,” and “umbrella.” However, terms invoking **PENETRATION**, **LEAKAGE**, **COVER**, **CONTAINER**, **OPENNESS**, **THICKNESS**, and other embodied source domains appeared in the corpora largely free of irony, quotation marks, adjectives like “so-called” and “supposed,” and other indications that speakers were conscious of their metaphorical nature. The upshot is that many of the metaphors identified in this study shaped senators’ cognition regardless of whether they were ‘believed.’

But this still doesn’t explain skeptics’ basic acquiescence to SDI. If “Star Wars” was “chasing an illusion,” as Johnston put it, why fund it at all? 212 Why did critics not try to cut its budget outright? Why did they position themselves, disingenuously, as champions of a “robust” research program? There was a gap between skeptics’ rhetoric and their behavior that metaphorical cognition can’t explain.

Rhetorical coercion, on the other hand, explains skeptics’ acquiescence quite elegantly. Even better, it does so without direct recourse to the unknowable mental states of legislators. 213 As Krebs and Jackson argue:

> Public semiotic codes constrain social actors regardless of whether they ‘believe’ in these codes’ content, and thus the question of ‘actual’ belief is of little relevance… It does not matter whether actors believe what they say, whether they are motivated by crass material interest or sincere commitment. What is important is that they can be rhetorically maneuvered into a corner, trapped into publicly endorsing positions they may, or may not, find anathema. Rhetoric affects political outcomes even when all actors are cynical operators with little interest in genuine deliberation. 214

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213 Above, I did infer expectation of public punishment from skeptics’ comments, but strictly speaking, this is not necessary to a rhetorical coercion account, in which all that matters is the (in)ability of debaters to offer socially sustainable arguments to support their positions.

214 Krebs and Jackson 2007, 42.
Whereas deceptive rhetoric complicates the cognitive account, it poses no problem for rhetorical coercion. On the grounds of parsimony and explanatory power, then, the rhetorical coercion mechanism is preferable to metaphorical cognition for the SDI case.

This doesn’t mean the two pathways are completely orthogonal. In fact, I argued in Chapter 4 that they are actually interdependent, despite Krebs and Jackson’s attempt to bracket mental processes. In a rhetorical contest where the public (P) judges the arguments of a claimant (C) and their opponent (O), both C and O calibrate their rhetoric to resonate with P. If O thinks that P accepts C’s frames and rejects those of O, then O has no further room for maneuver, and it must acquiesce to C’s arguments. The important point is that the contest requires C and O to both operate with some understanding of how P thinks. In the SDI case, metaphorical cognition is relevant because supporters and skeptics presumably had to think metaphorically *themselves* to assess public reaction to their rhetoric. How else could advocates have known to trumpet the *VISION* of the *SHIELD*—and how else could critics have concluded that they had lost the contest? Indeed, as we’ve seen in this chapter, skeptical senators frequently and explicitly discussed the consequences of proponents’ framing. To be sure, their assessment of public opinion may have been largely intuitive. However, that fits with the conceptual metaphor approach, in which metaphorical inference is largely unconscious or preconscious. Thus we can conclude that metaphorical cognition is a necessary part of the rhetorical coercion account. Both aspects of metaphorical framing, social cognition and rhetorical coercion, shaped senators’ political behavior.215

Do the findings apply to the House of Representatives as well? There’s little reason to expect the content of the frames to have been significantly different. The four frames were identified inductively, from a primary corpus that didn’t rely on the *Congressional Record* at all. They proved valid for Senate floor debates, and I see no reason why they wouldn’t apply to the other chamber as well. And if the frames were similar, then we can assume that skeptical representatives also faced rhetorical entrapment. However, the House poses a tougher test for the rhetorical coercion account, because that chamber was more liberal and had a Democratic majority throughout the years in question (Democrats took control of the

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215 Krebs and Jackson, who would be keen to keep cognition out of their model, might reply that senators’ assessment of public opinion hinged on *inter*-subjective understandings. This is true, but it is also true that shared meanings are instantiated in individual minds; this is encapsulated in the label *socio-cognitive*. The socio-cognitive and rhetorical pathways merge at this point.
Senate only in January 1987). Indeed, the House consistently authorized less SDI funding than the Senate. Most important, unlike their Senate counterparts, representatives proposed to cut funding drastically on several occasions (though the motions did not pass, and members ultimately assented to yearly real increases for FY 1985-88). Does this mean that “Star Wars” skeptics in the House were less cowed by proponents’ framing? A detailed analysis, like the one conducted on the Senate floor debates, would be needed to explore this possibility. In the meantime, it’s prudent to caution that the results from the Senate might not be completely generalizable to the lower chamber.

That leaves us to deal with counter-explanations. If the metaphorical framing account of SDI’s success seems far-fetched, the alternatives fare worse. As I noted in Chapter 3, counter-arguments fall into the categories: strategic motivations (as in realism), vested interests (as in liberalism and Marxism), and domestic politics (liberalism). Chapter 3 dealt with each of these issues in broad terms; I’ll avoid repetition when possible. My main focus will be on how these factors played out on the floor of the U.S. Senate. As the discussion proceeds, bear in mind that alternative accounts all deal with policymakers’ motives for supporting BMD. Strictly speaking, motives are not relevant to rhetorical coercion.

First, what role did strategic considerations play in senators’ SDI support? We already know that few if any members supported the program because they thought it would replace offensive deterrence. SDI advocates did claim that point protection would help restore the strategic balance. Skeptics vehemently disagreed, though, so the point defense rationale surely didn’t factor into their votes. Critics were more amenable to the argument that SDI gave Washington “leverage” over the Soviets at arms control talks in Geneva. On this view, even if “Star Wars” didn’t work, it had brought Moscow back to the bargaining table, and it might be useful for extracting concessions. “SDI is a great bargaining chip, and I’ve always thought so,” Kerry acknowledged. This perspective didn’t inform the 1984 floor debates however, and it grew less and less relevant as it became clear that the administration would never give up SDI. “The problem,” Kerry continued, was that Reagan

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216 One senator who claimed SDI would probably never work claimed he supported the program for just this reason. See Sen. Larry Pressler, in Cong. Rec. 132 (104), S10284, 4 August 1986; and Pressler 1986, 71. Of SDI’s many critics in the Senate, only Bennett Johnston contested this claim.

showed “no inclination” of actually “bargaining it away.” Indeed, the progress the White House eventually did make on arms control occurred despite the SDI. In addition to bargaining leverage, another common claim was that strategic defense research was a necessary “hedge” against Soviet “breakout” from the ABM Treaty. Moscow was vigorously pursuing missile defense, the argument went, and the US needed to “keep up,” especially because the Soviets seemed to be violating the Treaty. But this doesn’t explain why senators, particularly skeptics, would fund the program at such high levels. The US already had a “hedge:” a BMD research program funded at about a billion dollars a year. The day before Reagan’s March 1983 speech, Pentagon officials told Sam Nunn that this figure was all that DOD could reasonably and prudently spend. Moreover, the ‘BMD gap’ that supporters pointed to didn’t exist. According to DOD’s widely-known estimates, the US was ahead of the Soviets in nearly all key areas of missile defense R&D. Of course, proponents disputed this by ‘cherry-picking’ intelligence reports, but the fact remains that the so-called “Red Shield” emerged as a concern after Reagan proposed SDI, not before. A similar thing happened with ABM Treaty violations. Only after “Star Wars” was on the agenda did proponents politicize Soviet compliance. Before, compliance issues had been addressed quietly through the Treaty’s Standing Consultative Commission. In short, these pro-SDI arguments were post-hoc at best, which suggests that support for the Strategic Defense Initiative wasn’t really about strategic defense.

Two caveats are in order here. First, I’m not suggesting that the program’s senate supporters—and opponents, for that matter—weren’t truly concerned about US competitiveness in the defense race, or that they didn’t privately endorse the arguments they made. We can’t know because we lack access to legislators’ minds. My argument is simply that the ‘objective’ situation did not demand “Star Wars.” Second, regardless of whether strategic rationales for SDI were sincere or warranted by the evidence, they were surely necessary to legitimate the program. Senators had to articulate security needs to justify their votes, and in that sense, we can say that strategic considerations were necessary to explain acquiescence to SDI. This is ultimately a weak argument for realism, however, because the

218 Ibid.
219 FitzGerald 2000 offers a thorough account of the role SDI played in the superpower arms control negotiations.
221 For example, see remarks by Sen. John Kerry, in Cong. Rec. 131 (72), S7326, 4 June 1985.
same is true of all defense programs, most of which are driven to various degrees by parochial interest and inter-service rivalry as well as security requirements. For this reason, I did not identify strategic considerations as an influential factor in the case overview diagram at the start of the chapter [Fig. 1].

As for vested interests, Chapter 3 debunked that explanation at some length. I noted there that at first strategic defense didn’t have a politically active constituency in the Pentagon, the national research labs, or outside contractors. The administration eventually cultivated support by strategically awarding contracts. However, a study of congressional roll call votes on SDI from 1987-1988 (after many lucrative contracts had been dispersed) showed no significant correlation between members’ votes and SDI contracts in their state or district.

Partisan politics is a more probable explanation of at least some senators’ votes. Once the administration made it clear that strategic defense was a top priority, dissent within the White House was “smothered,” according to one insider. It’s likely that senators felt pressure to toe the line as well. A few moderate Republicans broke ranks and opposed “Star Wars.” But generally speaking, “if you supported Reagan, you supported SDI,” as one observer recalled—no matter how one privately felt about the program. Indeed, I’ve already noted that one Republican senator allegedly called SDI the “humor-the-President program.” Partisanship may go a long way towards explaining supporters’ votes, and insofar as it does, it competes with a metaphorical cognition account. Party politics has trouble explaining Democrats’ acquiescence, however. The official party line was against SDI, but Democratic senators consistently voted to increase the program’s budget.

To put these alternative explanations in perspective, I’ll revisit a point made at the beginning of this chapter. The biggest argument in favor of metaphorical framing is that the administration’s rhetoric was the only significant factor that shifted in 1983. Little else had

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222 See, for example, Saplosky, Gholz, and Talmadge 2009.
223 See Reiss 1992; and Pratt 1990.
224 Lindsay 1991.
225 Qtd. in Fred Kaplan, “Senate Study Contributes to Avalanche of Doubts on SDI,” Boston Globe, 12 June 1988, no page given.
227 The 1984 Democratic platform explicitly rejected “Star Wars,” while the 1988 platform advocated a ban on “space weapons.”
changed, and within a few years, SDI funding had quadrupled, the program was being billed as a “cornerstone” of the administration’s arms control and military strategy, and there was even talk of deployment within a few years. All of this was practically unthinkable before Reagan’s March 1983 speech. While partisanship and strategic rationales probably bolstered the shaky case for strategic defense, it was the President’s brilliant rhetoric that made it possible in the first place.
Missile defense is about preserving America’s ability to wield power abroad. It’s not about defense. It’s about offense. And that’s exactly why we need it.

- Lawrence Kaplan, editor of National Review¹

Introduction

This second and final case study covers national missile defense from 1997-2002.

As in the previous case, the evidence for the metaphorical framing explanation is strong. To be sure, competing causal drivers were at work, including threat perceptions, electoral politics, and vested interests [see Fig. 1 below]. However, as I’ll argue in the conclusion, these factors weren’t individually or even jointly sufficient to explain why NMD skeptics in the Senate wound up ceding so much ground to proponents of missile defense. A favorable discursive terrain was required for these drivers to work. That terrain was dominated by the SHIELD, ROGUE STATE, and PROLIFERATION metaphors, which made it politically tricky for senators to oppose NMD. Once again, lawmakers were ‘metaphorically coerced’ into approving NMD: it was difficult to slow America’s JOURNEY towards a SHIELD against unstable, evil ROGUES to whom WMD and ballistic missiles autonomously and ineluctably SPREAD.

¹ Kaplan 2001.
Figure 7.1 outlines these findings and gives the structure for the rest of this chapter. As in the SDI case study, I’ll cover questions 1-12 in the order in which they appear above. Part one of this chapter concerns the first question; here, I discuss the triumph of strategic defense beginning late in Clinton’s presidency. The rest of the chapter accounts for NMD’s success. Part two gives evidence for the metaphorical framing explanation (questions 2-9). The third and final part addresses counter-explanations (questions 10-12), the limitations of my argument, and how its parts fit together.
**Policy Outcome**

The years from 1997 to 2002 saw a series of important victories for missile defense advocates.

Annual BMD appropriations reflect these advances.

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Table 7.1: *DOD BMD Funding, 1997-2002 (in billions of dollars)*

For example, FY01, the last Clinton budget, saw BMD appropriations rise by a quarter [see Table 1 above]. Of course, the election of President George W. Bush ensured even larger increases. In FY02, funding again rose by nearly two-thirds (in both absolute terms and as a percentage of overall military R\&D)—despite the Senate reverting to Democratic control.

NMD’s success will grow even clearer if I briefly recount the narrative from Chapter 2. As readers may recall, Congressional Republicans had pushed hard for NMD since they swept both houses in fall 1994. Two years later, Clinton and the Joint Chiefs deflected deployment pressure with their “3+3” plan. Their policy was to spend three years developing a system that could be deployed in another three years—*if* needed. This attempt to mollify missile defense supporters failed. In 1997, 1999, and 2000, Congressional advocates authorized NMD funding in excess of the administration’s requests, and skeptics couldn’t

\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Annual DOD R\&D expenditures taken from AAAS 2011, 60.
muster the votes to stop them. Supporters also introduced bills mandating a defensive deployment “as soon as technologically possible.” Skeptical senators fended off deployment legislation in 1997, and by a single vote in 1998. Proponents, however, were buffeted by three events the following year: India and Pakistan’s unanticipated nuclear tests, the release of the Rumsfeld Commission report, which claimed a ROGUE STATE ICBM threat could materialize within five years, and North Korea’s surprise launch of a 3-stage ICBM, which seemed to vindicate the Commission’s analysis. By early 1999, the Clinton administration was rapidly ceding ground to NMD proponents. Defense Secretary Cohen conceded that the administration had underestimated the ICBM threat and boosted NMD funding for the next six years. Although many in the intelligence community felt the threat was over-hyped, analysts incorporated the Rumsfeld Commission’s pessimistic methodology into their authoritative National Intelligence Estimates. And skeptics’ resistance in the Senate all but collapsed—in 1999, Senators passed the National Missile Defense Act by 97-3. (The House easily passed similar legislation.) The Act mandated deployment of a strategic defense as soon as technology permitted. In sum, during the Clinton administration, the terms of the debate had shifted from whether to deploy a missile defense to when. The Bush White House, of course, was determined to field a defense as soon as possible, a system far more expansive than Clinton’s mid-course homeland defense. To that end, Bush upgraded the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization to agency rank and shielded it from Pentagon oversight. He also withdrew from the ABM Treaty in late 2001. A year later, the President announced his intent to deploy defenses by autumn 2004.

NMD’s success from 1997-2002 is striking for several reasons. First, the Rumsfeld Commission report notwithstanding, the consensus amongst the intelligence community and the military brass was that non-ballistic missile threats to American territory were most pressing. The Chiefs’ view was the same as it had been since the Reagan administration: strategic defense was worth investigating, but a rush to deployment was not in America’s security interest. For one thing, the Chiefs, along with all informed observers (even defense hawks) knew that strategic defenses were nowhere near operational effectiveness. Finally, although right-wing pressure groups tried to raise public awareness of the missile threat, the issue didn’t seem to resonate with most Americans, even after 9/11. In short, there wasn’t a
lot of pressure for strategic defense apart from the NMD lobby itself. How did advocates pull it off?

Metaphorical Framing

This section argues that metaphorical framing had a lot to do with it. I present the analysis as I did in the SDI case study, dividing the discussion into two sub-sections. The first covers questions 2-5 from Fig. 1; those are the questions that apply to both the individual (socio-cognitive) and social (rhetorical) levels of metaphorical framing. Sub-section two discusses questions 6-9, which apply to rhetorical coercion only.

Questions 2-5: Individual and Social Levels

The reader might recall from the previous chapter the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: If metaphorical frames are present, then the corpora will show persistent patterns of lexical cohesion explicable in terms of conceptual metaphors.

Hypothesis 2: Also, the metaphors contained the corpora won’t be arbitrary, but will instead cohere into meaningful frames.

Once again, the discourse analysis strongly supports hypotheses one and two. Lexical cohesion in the primary corpus is explicable in terms of four metaphorical frames: JOURNEY, SHIELD, ROGUE STATE, and PROLIFERATION.

Readers will remember JOURNEY and SHIELD from the SDI analysis. Because I’ve already discussed them exhaustively, and because their structure remained virtually unchanged from the previous case, I’ll simply introduce the two new frames, ROGUE STATE and PROLIFERATION. For each, I’ll list their constituent metaphors and give a few examples from the NMD corpora before mapping their semantic networks.

Here is an analysis of the ROGUE STATE frame:
ROGUE STATE:

1. STATES ARE PEOPLE
2. MILITARY POWER IS STRENGTH
3. STATES ARE LEADERS
4. INTER-STATE CONTACTS ARE RELATIONSHIPS
5. SIMILAR STATES ARE LIKE-MINDED
6. ALLIED STATES ARE PARTNERS
7. ALLIED STATES WORK TOGETHER
8. POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE LINKS
9. SIMILAR STATES FORM COMMUNITY
10. NUCLEAR STATES ARE A CLUB
11. CONTIGUOUS STATES ARE NEIGHBORS
12. ALLIED STATES FORM CIVILIZATION
13. RIVAL STATES CONDUCT BLACKMAIL, EXTORTION
14. RIVAL STATES ARE ROUGES
15. RIVAL STATES ARE ENEMIES
16. RIVAL STATES ARE EVIL
17. RIVAL STATES ARE AGGRESSIVE
18. RIVAL STATES ARE UNTRUSTWORTHY
19. POLITICAL LIBERTY IS FREEDOM
20. ALLIED STATES ARE FRIENDS
21. ALLIED STATES ARE LAW-ABIDING
22. RISKY BEHAVIOR IS GAMBLING
23. THREATENING ATTACK IS HOLDING HOSTAGE

Examples:

The true threats facing the United States are threats from terrorist nations, nations that they call rogue nations, nations that are developing weapons of mass destruction that may be pointed at us, may be pointed at our friends the Israelis or other allies we have, to hold us hostage, conduct international blackmail.⁵

Not so long ago the threat was a massive Soviet missile attack, but today it is more likely to be one or two ballistic missiles in the hands of a calculating national leader or government determined to operate outside civilized norms.⁶

If there is a real potential of a rogue nation—and I underscore “if” there is a real potential of a rogue nation—firing a few missiles at any city in the United States, responsible leadership requires the most thoughtful steps possible to prevent losses as a consequence thereof... All of us in the civilized world need to take steps to try to protect ourselves against the potential of that ever happening.⁷

[Iraq] has something to hide from the civilized world. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could

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attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.\textsuperscript{8}

Since I did not analyze Corpus2 for the presence of the frames, nodes in Figs. 7.2 and 7.3 contain references for Corpus1 only.
Fig. 7.2: Semantic Network of ROGUE STATE (pt. 2)
Let’s turn now to the Proliferation frame:

Proliferation:

1. Acquiring WMD/Ballistic Missiles is Proliferation
2. Increasing WMD/Ballistic Missiles is Growth
3. Advancing Weapons Technology is Organism Development
4. Advancing Weapons Technology is Evolution
5. Coping with Increasing WMD/Ballistic Missiles is Adaptation
6. Strategic Context is Environment
7. WMD/Ballistic Missile Dispersal is Spread
8. WMD/Ballistic Missile Dispersal is Flow
9. Means of Weapons Dispersal are Channels
10. Transferable WMD/Ballistic Missiles are Loose

Examples:

The Rumsfeld Report in 1998 clearly demonstrated the growing missile threat from rogue nations. In spite of international agreements to control the spread of missile technology, these nations are resorting to whatever means it takes to acquire this capability. Because of this growing threat, we must do more to decide whether a defense is practical and can deliver the protection it promises.¹

Nations… must make a habit of adapting to the changing realities of security… This habit of adaptation—the constant reevaluation and reappraisal of the threats of our day and age—is the reason that the United States is moving forward in areas such as ballistic missile defense. We must recognize the iron law of modernity: as technology spreads and improves, the security threats beyond our borders—and the security expectations within our borders—both increase.²

[Proliferation] is coming from Russia, where the government appears either disinclined, or incapable of controlling the flood of hardware and technical assistance flowing to rogue states around the globe.³

In many cases these nations have borders that are thousands of miles long, but local governments do not have the infrastructure or ability to monitor, patrol, or secure them. These borders are particularly permeable, including points of entry into Iran on the Caspian Sea and other rogue nations. We must continue to plug these porous borders abroad.⁴

² Cohen 2000.
Fig. 7.3: Semantic Network of PROLIFERATION
The ROGUE STATE and PROLIFERATION frames account for the lexical cohesion in the quotes above. Combined with the semantic network diagrams, and lists of conceptual metaphors, the extracts show the constitutive role of metaphor in NMD discourse.

Table 7.2: Overview of NMD Discourse Analysis

Table 7.2 above offers further evidence. The table summarizes the findings from the metaphor analysis of Corpus1. Over 1,300 lexical units were coded as instances of SHIELD, JOURNEY, ROGUE STATE, or PROLIFERATION.¹ Because of time and resource constraints, I was unable to cross-check these results against a formal metaphor analysis of Corpus2, as I did with the SDI case. Nonetheless, most of the above quotes came from Corpus2, and I’ll offer many more examples in this chapter. This anecdotal evidence suggests the findings from Corpus1 would hold up if Corpus2 were analyzed formally.

Moreover, as in the SDI case, the frames I’ve identified mesh with each other, giving a coherent structure to missile defense discourse. The following examples from the Congressional Record illustrate this:

¹ Readers may be wondering what happened to VISION and ILLUSION from the previous chapter. These frames nearly disappeared from strategic defense discourse by the late 1990s, as Table 2 shows. They had scarcely 40 mentions between them, and many of those were references to the SDI era.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOURNEY</th>
<th>ROGUE STATE</th>
<th>SHIELD</th>
<th>PROLIFERATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutual assured destruction has been exposed for the sham that it was, and we are moving toward deployment of a robust, multilayered ballistic missile defense system and toward providing the American people the protection they need from the growing and imminent threat of ballistic missiles in the hands of rogue states such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and others.²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those reactions to a unilateral withdrawal from the [ABM] treaty on our part would be serious because they could result in more nuclear warheads on the territory of other nations and could lead to an increased risk of the theft or proliferation of such warheads or their materials to rogue states or terrorists.³

Can you imagine our country being vulnerable and not even taking the first step, the first step to a policy that says we are not going to leave ourselves open when countries are threatening that they have ballistic missiles that will reach our shores, based on an obsolete treaty that is not even in the best interest of Russia, which is the country that this administration says is the other party to the treaty? I think we would sit down

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with Russia, and it would be in both our best interests to have a defense for both of our countries from rogue nations that have already shown that they have ballistic missile capabilities, and some even have nuclear capabilities to put right on one of those ballistic missiles.  

In our zeal to erect a national missile shield, the danger exists of committing such a vast array of resources—money, people, research priorities—that we could shortchange other necessary initiatives to protect our national security.  

Finally, let us not for a moment forget the importance of working actively and diligently to reduce the number of existing nuclear warheads and curb the proliferation of nuclear...
As in the previous case, it seems that the four frames together comprise a complete ontology of missile defense discourse. In this ontology, PROLIFERATION to ROGUE STATES requires that the US complete its JOURNEY toward a nationwide SHIELD. The main difference between supporters and skeptics, as we’ll see, is how far and how fast the JOURNEY should go.

Up to this point, I’ve demonstrated the presence and coherence of metaphors in the NMD corpus. The discussion showed how metaphors cohered into frames, and how the frames meshed with each other to structure the overall policy debate. This evidence strongly supports the first and second hypotheses.

But how do we know whether the frames were politically significant? Hypotheses 3-5 show what evidence to look for:

Hypothesis 3: *If frames were significant, then different frames will systematically privilege some understandings of strategic defense while hiding others, thus entailing different policy prescriptions.*

Hypothesis 4: *If frames were not epiphenomenal, then it would have been possible, in principle at least, for policymakers to have framed the policy debate differently.*

Hypothesis 5: *If proponents’ frames favor strategic defense policy, then proponents’ frames will resonate with topoi, whereas opponents’ frames will not.*

This section adduces evidence for the hypotheses. I’ll preface the analysis with some general thoughts on how and why NMD’s discursive landscape had changed since the 1980s. Next, I discuss a frame that hadn’t changed: SHIELD. I then consider the ROGUE STATE threat that the SHIELD was intended to address. The sub-section moves on to PROLIFERATION and then JOURNEY.

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Decline of VISION and ILLUSION

VISION and ILLUSION nearly dropped out of strategic defense rhetoric in the late 1990s and early 2000s [see Table 7.3]. For Corpus1, references to the VISION fell by to nearly a quarter of their former total; ILLUSION’s ebb was even more drastic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VISION</th>
<th>ILLUSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LUs in SDI Corpus1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUs in NMD Corpus1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3: Decline of VISION and ILLUSION

This makes sense in light of the changed political context. The ethical imperative of Reagan’s VISION faded along with the prospect of mutual destruction, lessening the frame’s power.

Clinton didn’t much care for missile defense, so he never bothered to replace it with a similar moral justification. George W. Bush came closer by promulgating the “new strategic framework,” discussed in Chapter 2. Like Reagan’s VISION, the framework de-emphasized offensive deterrence and nuclear weapons—but without replacing them. The VISION was formulated in stark, compelling terms: total disarmament, absolute safety, no nuclear retaliation. It was a “vision of courage, morality, and security,” as Sen. James Inhofe (R-Oklahoma) said in tribute.6 Neither the left nor the right could oppose it—and they didn’t. Bush’s framework, by contrast, was a dry rehash of right-wing views. Its appeal was limited to the community of conservative arms control skeptics. Bush and his officials gamely promoted the framework, but judging from the Congressional Record and news articles at the time, it never caught on the way the VISION did. This isn’t to say that NMD lacked a principled rationale in the Clinton and Bush years. As we’ll see, the ROGUE STATE frame supplied the moral foundation for the program.

That leaves us with the ILLUSION frame. In one sense, it’s surprising that it would peter out. The prospects for reliable, operationally effective strategic defense weren’t much

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brighter in the late 1990s and early 2000s than they’d been under Reagan. And although the program’s main focus was on kinetic interception, the Republican right still championed distant, exotic technologies like plane and satellite-based lasers. Plus, the “Star Wars” epithet was used widely in the 1980s, and it wasn’t as if science fiction tropes were no longer available. As it happened, the frame did pop up occasionally, usually in its well-worn “Star Wars” guise. In 1998, for example, then Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota) called NMD “Son of Star Wars.” The following year, another Democratic skeptic panned it as “Star Wars lite—a shrunken relic of the Cold War.” But by and large, although skeptics continued to assert the literal proposition that national defenses weren’t ready for deployment, they avoided the more colorful metaphors of the ILLUSION frame. This may have been due to a change in NMD’s mission rather than its technological prospects. Because the USSR was gone, mutual deterrence was less precarious, and the number of warheads defenses had to intercept fell from 10,000 Soviet charges to “a few tens” of warheads at most. Strategic defense had a more feasible goal, so detractors had a harder time tarring it as unrealistic. As one supporter stressed on the Senate floor,

This is not Star Wars. Star Wars was aimed at—speaking simplistically, if I may—putting a security umbrella over the United States to protect us from a massive ICBM attack from the Soviet Union. This is a highly limited system aimed at trying to preserve a measure of security for our people against limited missile attack from rogue nations.

Defending against a “limited missile attack” was orders of magnitude simpler.

At any rate, with the death of the ILLUSION frame, the debate over NMD’s technical feasibility in the Senate shifted dramatically: instead of arguing that missile defenses would never work in principle, as per the frame, most skeptics asserted simply that defenses weren’t ready for deployment.

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9 Slocombe 2000, 80.
Although ILLUSION and VISION faded from the missile defense debate, the SHIELD frame remained. It endured despite Bush officials’ explicit efforts to downplay it. Whereas Reagan and many of his supporters had cavalierly described strategic defense as a SHIELD, the Bush team was reticent. For example, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld once corrected a reporter who used the term: “The word shield, we don’t use. The program that we’re designing...we think of it as a capability that would be broad and that would be able to deal with relatively limited numbers of ballistic missiles.” Rumsfeld preferred the technocratic descriptors “program” and “capabilities.” In a speech plugging Bush’s “new strategic framework,” Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage used the term “system.” As he put it, NMD is not an umbrella or shield which makes the world 100 percent safe from missiles. But it is a system, which will be able to protect ourselves and our allies from a handful of missiles, and, therefore, greatly increase the difficulty for any potential enemy in an attack on us.

Missile defense advocates apparently decided to concede the limitations of a deployed system to preempt criticism that NMD wouldn’t work. This required renouncing the SHIELD frame. Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Arizona) put it this way:

> What Secretary Rumsfeld and the President have in mind doing is fielding, as soon as possible, whatever technology we have, understanding that it is not necessarily the best and it may not work in all circumstances. Now, is that an indictment of what they intend to do? I do not think so. It is an honest acknowledgement of the fact that there is no such thing as a perfect shield, and that we are in the beginning stages of actually fielding this equipment.

These quotes suggest that, in the Bush administration’s reckoning, the vocabulary of the SHIELD was associated with SDI, which NMD supporters had admitted would never have worked. Mindful of the budgetary axe that eventually befell the over-sold SDI, advocates may have wanted to cast missile defense in more prosaic terms. To others, the vocabulary of the SHIELD may just have seemed less apt for a system designed to intercept launches of ones...
or twos. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota), for example, often referred to missile defense as a “catcher’s mitt.”

Despite the historical association between SHIELD and the discredited SDI, the frame continued. Although supporters rejected over-the-top descriptors like UMBRELLA, ROOF, and ASTRODOME, they still evoked the SHIELD frame in more subtle ways. Although SHIELD appeared least often of the main frames in Corpus1, it was used 115 times. Each time a speaker uttered the word “shield” or one of its cognates, he or she activated the frame in the minds of interlocutors—even if the speaker’s purpose was to reject the frame! “When we negate a frame, we evoke the frame,” George Lakoff argues in his aptly titled Don’t Think of An Elephant!

Most of the time though, speakers evoked the SHIELD frame unreflexively. Recall that SHIELD rests upon an extensive web of deeply ingrained conceptual metaphors, for example, STATES ARE CONTAINERS, VULNERABILITY IS OPENNESS, and VULNERABILITY IS NUDITY. These constructs hinge on cognitive mappings that are resistant to change—even to awareness. SHIELD seemed to be working unconsiously despite key proponents’ attempts to avoid it. For example, when Rumsfeld described missile defense as “a capability that would be broad,” the word “broad” evoked the deep conceptual metaphor MISSILE DEFENSE IS A COVER. Unlike the VISION and ILLUSION frames, SHIELD may have been resilient because it drew upon embodied, commonsense associations like PROTECTION IS COVER. This might also explain why the frame continued to suffuse media coverage of missile defense throughout the 1990s and 2000s, with headlines like “Clinton Says No to Shield,”17 “US Says Plans for Missile Defense Shield Not Finalized,”18 and “Pentagon Urges Construction of National Missile Shield,”19 to take a few examples.

Of course, the frame continued to evoke the same topoi it did during the SDI era. First, as I suggested above, it cohered with the CONTAINER-based notion of security. As

16 Lakoff 2004, 3. Lakoff offers a powerful example to his Cognitive Science 101 class at Berkeley. “Whatever you do, do not think of an elephant,” he instructs students. Unsurprisingly, students find this quite impossible. Because the word “elephant” is defined relative to the ELEPHANT frame, Lakoff notes, it’s impossible to hear the word without activating the associated frame.
17 Denver Post, 2 September 2000, A01.
academic Natalie Bormann argues, the SHIELD re-inscribed U.S. identity, determining who “the dangerous outside” was and who was “the defending inside.”

CONTAINER metaphors in turn were linked to a second topos, that of absolute security. For example, one Senator described that topos as “our uniquely American feeling of invulnerability; our feeling of safety within our shores, our borders, behind two vast oceans.”

Another Senator justified NMD by invoking the yearning to return to “our homeland...shielded...by geography, by two oceans.”

Other missile defense supporters made similar appeals. Finally, the SHIELD jibed with American exceptionalism—the notion that the US is, in the words of one Senator, “the greatest Nation on Earth.”

But “No great nation ought to leave itself vulnerable,” continued another, particularly to “nations that have not shown themselves to have a commitment to civilized behavior.”

Framed in exceptionalist terms, NMD represented “the hope for peace and opportunity,” not just for Americans, but for “all peoples who wish to make the world safer, more secure, more prosperous, more peaceful.”

Not only did these connections to topoi endure, but SHIELD’s main function—highlighting the defensive aspect of NMD and hiding its offensive purpose—continued as well. Unlike SDI, the circumscribed systems envisioned by Clinton and Bush posed no danger to Russia’s robust retaliatory capability. NMD couldn’t support a first-strike against Moscow. Beijing was a different story, however. NMD was a serious threat to China’s minimal deterrent—which was precisely why China hawks on the Republican right endorsed it. Senators repeatedly expressed concern that China’s 18-20 ICBMs could deter the US from defending Taiwan in a conflict with the mainland.

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acquired WMD and ICBMs, these ROGUE STATES would be “off limits for U.S. intervention” as well.\textsuperscript{30} In fact, if one’s primary concern is preserving America’s ability to project force around the world, then even theatre-range missiles targeted at foreign countries become threats to the US. Suppose that, in 1990, Saddam Hussein had possessed nuclear arms and missiles capable of striking Europe, and that he had threatened to launch them if coalition forces tried to roll back the annexation of Kuwait. Could Washington still have persuaded Europeans to participate in the invasion?\textsuperscript{31} And might the prospect of a nuclear attack on Europe have tipped the balance in Congress against the Gulf War resolution? (The Senate vote was only 52-47 in favor.) The potential for regional missile strikes to stymie U.S. intervention was probably why George W. Bush insisted on a global defense against all ballistic missiles. John McCain (R-Arizona) endorsed that approach, claiming that

> America’s defenselessness to missile attack, and the vulnerability of our overseas forces and our allies to rogue regimes with advanced missile capabilities, are the Achilles’ heel of American foreign policy.\textsuperscript{32}

The US was the sole superpower with strategic interests spanning the globe; its ability to rapidly project force anywhere mustn’t be compromised by ‘asymmetric threats’ from ROGUE STATES.

The need to preserve power projection capability was particularly pressing because it tied into America’s exceptionalist identity. In theory if not in practice, naval and air forces allowed the US to intervene abroad without entangling itself in the messy politics of debauched foreign cultures. Power projection was, and remains, “the American way of warfare.”\textsuperscript{33}

The Clinton and Bush administrations agreed on the necessity for maintaining America’s force projection capabilities, despite their contrasting plans for NMD and their philosophical differences on the proper means and ends of US military power. In 1999, Robert Walpole, the officer responsible for strategic intelligence in the Clinton administration, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that “Acquiring long-range ballistic missiles armed with a weapon of mass destruction probably will enable weaker

\textsuperscript{30} Kaplan 2001.
\textsuperscript{33} Saplosky, Gholz, and Talmadge 2009, 23-5.
countries to do three things that they otherwise might not be able to do: deter, constrain, and harm the United States.”³⁴ That year’s National Intelligence Estimate made a similar point.³⁵ The following year, “full-spectrum dominance” officially became the basis for defense doctrine. The term referred to “the ability of U.S. forces, operating unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations.”³⁶ Though they believed NMD was over-hyped and that deployment was premature, the Chiefs saw a “possible” role for strategic defense in fulfilling this mandate.³⁷ Civilians at DOD were less equivocal. Defense Secretary William Cohen declared that “we cannot wait to begin to deal with this threat until we are in the midst of a crisis in which one of these rogue states attempts to blackmail the United States from carrying out its alliance obligations and protecting its interests.”³⁸ Cohen’s deputy Walter Slocombe put it this way: “Without defenses, potential aggressors might think the threat of strikes against U.S. cities could coerce the United States into failing to meet its commitments.”³⁹ As the language of “blackmail,” “commitments,” and “protecting interests” suggests, the Defense Department under Clinton was fixated on the same scenario that preoccupied the George W. Bush administration.

Bush himself was characteristically blunt on the SHIELD’s purpose. He told a reporter that

> there’s a threshold question for a person who wants to be president. And that is: How internationalist are you? If the answer is not very, then the nuclear shield we’ve got now [i.e., offensive retaliation] is perfect. Don’t dare tread on us, or we’ll blow you up. If you want to be more aggressive, then you have to identify the true threats. My instincts and my logic—at least I thought it was logical—led me to believe that.⁴⁰

The president’s logic was codified in National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 23, issued right after the US withdrew from the ABM Treaty in December 2002. Among the three rationales it offered for missile defense, NSPD-23 implies that the most important one

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³⁴ Qtd. in Kaplan 2001.
³⁶ JCS 2000, 6.
³⁷ Ibid, 27.
³⁹ Slocombe 2000, 79.
⁴⁰ Qtd. in Graham 2003, 343-4.
is that ROGUE STATES “seek to keep us out of their region.”\footnote{United States 2002.} A secondary justification was that NMD would dissuade adversaries from acquiring ballistic missiles and WMD in the first place. The third, which received relatively little attention, was that defenses could shield Americans from an actual strike. Bush’s unscripted remarks on the subject showed a similar pattern. The President didn’t dwell much on the use of ballistic missiles against the US. He focused primarily on how rivals’ threats to use the weapons could crimp American foreign policy. Here are two examples from the primary corpus:

\begin{quote}
The true threats facing the United States are threats from terrorist nations, nations that they call rogue nations, nations that are developing weapons of mass destruction that may be pointed at us, may be pointed at our friends the Israelis or other allies we have, to hold us hostage, conduct international blackmail.\footnote{George W. Bush, press conference, 15 August 2001, in WCPD, page unavailable, emphases added.}

And in the appropriate time, when we figure out the best way to address the true threats, which is [sic] the ability to intercept twos—launches of twos or threes that could hold us hostage and affect all our foreign policies—then we will work on the development.\footnote{George W. Bush, press conference, 23 July 2001, in WCPD, page unavailable, emphases added. See also George W. Bush, press conference, 12 June 2001, in WCPD, page unavailable.}
\end{quote}

It’s clear, then, that the Clinton and Bush administrations both saw NMD as “not simply a shield but an enabler of U.S. action,” as a RAND study put it.\footnote{Cited in Kaplan 2001, original source unavailable.} The key difference between the administrations was not just that Bush was more outspoken on the offensive applications of NMD, or that he proposed a global rather than a limited system. Even more important was Bush’s emphasis on what he called “pre-emption” against ROGUE STATES.\footnote{See, for example, National Security Council 2002.}

That’s why it’s so significant that the SHIELD frame endured—it spotlighted the protection of the American ‘homeland’ even though advocates were concerned foremost with force projection. John McCain alluded to this phenomenon in 2002. “Much of the missile defense debate has focused on defense of the U.S. homeland, and this is important,” he noted. “But,” the senator continued, “development of effective missile defenses is critical not only to protect America, but to preserve our military options overseas.”\footnote{Qt’d. in Cong. Rec., “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003,” S6006, 25 June 2002.} McCain differentiated two imperatives that SHIELD conflated: defending US territory and defending US power.

There are several parallels with the SDI era here. First, as we’ve seen, SHIELD
switched the meanings of offensive and defense in NMD discourse, just as it had done in the 1980s. Second, a defensive framing was easier to understand, as it was the Reagan years. Skeptics kept arguing that “deploying a missile shield is likely to make us less secure,” and this remained as counter-intuitive as ever. The US was vulnerable to ballistic missiles, the lay logic went, and a SHIELD would protect it. “Now, what could be more straightforward and more protective for the American people?” Jon Kyl asked. It’s difficult to see how missile defenses could be provocative in this context. Grasping the offensive application of NMD after the Cold War meant that one had to both understand the logic of deterrence and apply it to hypothetical matchups between Washington and ballistic missile-armed adversaries. It also required familiarity with the broader political milieu, because it was mainly in the context of “full-spectrum dominance,” offensive (though reduced) nuclear forces, and the “Bush Doctrine” of preemption that a missile SHIELD looked like a tool for an aggressive foreign policy.

Third, because it was more intuitive, because it resonated with America’s benign self-image, and because it didn’t alarm international audiences, the defense framing was easier to promote. “‘Force projection’ has an unpleasant, bellicose ring to it,” remarked Bill Keller, then a reporter at the New York Times. An offensive framing of NMD, Keller went on, would’ve inflamed states like Russia and China. It would also have raised a troubling question: if Washington was building defenses to ensure that it would be undeterrable, wouldn’t that spur an offense-defense race with potential adversaries like China—a race that would yield a net security loss? This argument is similar to one raised against the Strategic Defense Initiative.

The demise of the USSR brought new questions as well. For example, would a missile SHIELD tempt Washington to push its interests too hard in a crisis, thereby raising the risk of a ROGUE WMD attack on American territory? And given the U.S. experience in Vietnam (and later Iraq), was it necessarily a good thing if a SHIELD lowered the threshold for

49 Koster 2005.
51 Powell 2003.
U.S. intervention?\textsuperscript{52} The SHIELD frame obscured these questions by hiding the offensive uses of NMD.

So powerful was the defense frame that not a single legislator raised these issues on the Senate floor. Rather than ask searching, “theological questions”\textsuperscript{53} about the purpose of missile defense and its consequences for U.S. defense policy, opponents—even left-leaning Democrats—raised \textit{pragmatic} objections: Were defenses affordable? Would they work? Would they work better than alternatives like arms control? Were they worth withdrawing from the ABM Treaty?\textsuperscript{54} The voices asking the deeper questions, foreign observers\textsuperscript{55} and left-wing Americans like Noam Chomsky,\textsuperscript{56} were largely absent from the domestic debate. As we’ll see in detail below, even skeptical U.S. legislators had largely bought into strategic defense.

In addition to downplaying the offensive role of NMD, SHIELD presupposed, and arguably reified, the ballistic missile threat.\textsuperscript{57} It’s easy to forget that the ROGUE ICBMs the SHIELD was designed to counter didn’t actually exist—over ten years later, they still don’t, as far as the intelligence community knows. Yet the rhetoric of protection and vulnerability implied imminent danger. “I believe right now,” one Senator declared, “I don’t think there is a Senator here who doesn’t believe this—that there could very well be a missile headed [in] our direction as we speak.”\textsuperscript{58} It mattered little that the military and intelligence establishments thought that ballistic missiles were the \textit{least} likely way that rivals would attack the US with WMD. The “defensive \textit{umbrella}”\textsuperscript{59} diverted attention from the likelihood that attackers would “simply go cruise missile, go \textit{underneath}, or [use] any other alternative” means, as John Kerry pointed out.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{52} It’s possible that even the armed forces, which generally dislike war because of the intrusion it brings into their operations (Sapolsky, Gholz, and Talmadge 2009, 3), would want a check against rash military action. For instance, after Vietnam, the Army put crucial combat assets in the National Guard and Reserve forces precisely to trigger a national debate over military mobilization prior to intervention (ibid., 12, 31).

\textsuperscript{53} Lindsay and O’Hanlon 2002.

\textsuperscript{54} Keller 2001.

\textsuperscript{55} Kaplan 2001.


\textsuperscript{57} Bormann 2008, 116.


Also, the SHIELD destroys missiles during their flight. But what about arms control, non-proliferation, and counter-proliferation, which can destroy missiles “before they leave the ground?”\textsuperscript{61} The SHIELD metaphor deflected attention from policy alternatives.

ROGUE STATE

Paul Chilton argues that metaphor becomes especially important at moments of conceptual crisis, when entrenched categories crumble and discourses are in flux.\textsuperscript{62} For U.S. policymakers—particularly those whose budgets and prestige depended on the Soviet threat—the abrupt end of the Cold War constituted a conceptual crisis. As Chapter 2 described, the ROGUE STATE frame emerged from the Pentagon’s quest to fill in the “threat blank” left after the Cold War. For U.S. defense planning, “the rogues had supplanted the Reds.”\textsuperscript{63}

Policymakers soon appropriated the ROGUE metaphor to serve their own purposes. Early in the Clinton administration, the White House used the frame to justify the “dual containment” policy towards Iran and Iraq.\textsuperscript{64} The core of dual containment was troop deployments and economic sanctions rather than missile defense. But Republicans—including Clinton’s Defense Secretary Cohen—soon began invoking the ROGUE STATE threat to support NMD. By the late 1990s, the administration, its supporters, and its Republican critics all agreed that a ROGUE STATE WMD attack was “the greatest threat… this nation faces as we enter the next century,” as Carl Levin, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, put it.\textsuperscript{65} By that point, the Senate was already considering NMD deployment as soon as technology permitted, via the \textit{American Missile Protection Act of 1998}. Once policymakers from both sides of the issue accepted the ROGUE STATE menace, the decision to deploy turned largely on the timing of the threat. Two events in 1998 would make the danger

\textsuperscript{62} Chilton 1996b.
\textsuperscript{63} Litwak 2000, 297. The fact that ROGUE STATES were nearly always spoken of in the plural was significant. Because no state alone posed a significant threat to the United States, its adversaries had to be grouped together (Lott 2004, 92).
\textsuperscript{64} See, for example, Lake 1994.
\textsuperscript{65} Qtd. in \textit{Cong. Rec.}, “The American Missile Protection Act of 1998;” S4623, date unavailable.
appear much closer than it was. The first was the Rumsfeld Commission, which re-framed the debate from when ROGUES were likely to acquire ICBMs to when they could possibly get them. The second was North Korea’s surprise 3-stage missile test. These events helped set the stage for the passage of the National Missile Defense Act the following year. In a tacit admission of the frame’s importance, Secretary of State Madeline Albright announced in July 2000 that her department would henceforth replace ROGUE STATE with the dry euphemism “states of concern.” The reason wasn’t missile defense; rather, the Clinton administration had concluded that the ROGUE demonology precluded “engagement” of Iran and North Korea.66

Interestingly, “states of concern” vanished right after Albright announced it. Neither the Clinton nor the W. Bush administrations seems to have used the term again,67 and it appears in the Congressional Record only once, in a reprinted news article.68 ROGUE STATE may have been too firmly embedded in the U.S. foreign policy lexicon at that point; perhaps the Clinton White House didn’t try hard enough to re-frame its policy—or both. In any case, Clinton’s successor took the opposite approach, dialing up the demonization in early 2002 with the famous epithet “axis of evil.” Bush’s rhetorical move may have had more to do with the impending war in Iraq than missile defense per se. However, as seen above, his administration saw NMD and preemptive war as two sides of the same coin.

Now that I’ve covered the history and political uses of ROGUE STATE, I’ll describe its structure and how it functioned in strategic defense discourse. The frame’s core consists of two linked metaphors: NATION-STATES ARE PEOPLE comprising an INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (or sometimes CIVILIZATION). The boundaries of the COMMUNITY are inscribed by the CONTAINER schema: “within” the COMMUNITY are FRIENDS, PARTNERS, and CIVILIZED, LIKE-MINDED, LAW-ABIDING states. EVIL, AGGRESSIVE, UNCIVILIZED, UNTRUSTWORTHY ROGUES lurk “outside” the COMMUNITY—and are bent on its demise. Albright vividly illustrated the frame when she declared that ROGUE STATES “do not have a part in the international system,” and that their being “outside of it” incites them to throw “hand grenades inside it in order to destroy it.”69 Of course, as the LEADER of the CIVILIZED

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67 O’Reilly 2007, 303, fn. 6. I confirmed O’Reilly’s finding with a text search of Corpus1.
69 Qtd. in Bormann 2008, 93.
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, Washington was obliged to protect it by any means necessary, including strategic defense. This was the most obvious way in which the ROGUE STATE frame privileged NMD proponents.

Albright’s expression “hand grenades” was a striking but rare descriptor for ROGUE STATE threats. Most often, policymakers described the danger the COMMUNITY faced as BLACKMAIL, EXTORTION, or HOSTAGE-TAKING. These metaphors cohered with the image of the ROGUE or OUTLAW STATE, but they didn’t mean what they seemed to mean. Rather than denoting lawless behavior, they referred to adversaries’ attempts to deter U.S. conventional action by threatening ballistic missile attack. “Defenses against missiles will help the United States to avoid nuclear blackmail, intended to freeze us into inaction by the very threat of a missile attack,” one senator remarked.70 Another argued that “The United States is a global power with vested interests both politically and commercially all over the world. We simply cannot allow policy to be determined by those who practice missile blackmail.”71 There are scores of similar examples in the Congressional Record. BLACKMAIL and similar metaphors highlighted rivals’ ostensible criminality while hiding America’s intent to project force. In this way, the ROGUE STATE frame worked with SHIELD to hide NMD’s offensive purpose. Instead of an enabler of force projection, strategic defense became “commonsense protection.”72 Because public support for military intervention has historically proven fickle,73 framing the program in defensive terms was crucial for its public legitimation.

The offensive aim of missile defenses was also concealed with warm, COMMUNITY-minded euphemisms: “helping allies and friends in strategic parts of the world” is an example from President Bush.74 “Defense is not just defense,” elaborated Chuck Hagel. “Defense is about allowing [the US] not just to defend itself, but to prosper and reach out to help other nations and make the world safer. That is the big picture.”75 Vulnerability, on the other hand, “affects deeply the ability of the president to lead and be bold and courageous on behalf of

73 Handberg 2002, 12-3.
the just interests of the United States and freedom in the world,” said Sen. Jeff Sessions.76 Hagel and Sessions’ emphasis on just, selfless world leadership not only downplayed the offensive side of NMD, it jibed perfectly with American exceptionalism.

The ROGUE STATE frame as a whole, in fact, served to bolster America’s exceptionalist identity vis-à-vis the OUTLAW other.77 In part, this was because the frame latched onto the prototypical Western fairy tale narrative. In these stories, according to George Lakoff, “there is always a hero, a crime, a victim, and a villain.” In this case, the US was the hero, the villain was the ROGUE STATE, acquiring, using, or threatening to use WMD was the crime, and the victim was either the US or another country being targeted by the ROGUE STATE. In fairy tales, Lakoff continues, “the villain is inherently evil and irrational,” while “the victim must be innocent and beyond reproach.” The plot is simple: “there is an initial crime by the villain, and the hero balances the moral books by defeating him.”78 This narrative structure was most obvious in Bush’s Manichean rhetoric. “We are in a conflict between good and evil,” the President told West Point graduates in 2002. “And we will call evil by its name. By confronting evil and lawless regimes, we do not create a problem, we reveal a problem. And we will lead the world in opposing it.”79 Bush often spoke the language of evangelical Protestantism, but secular hero-villain tropes were invoked as well. For example, Sen. Kyl likened proliferation politics to ‘cops and robbers’:

Arms control works best where it is needed least—among honorable, morally upstanding nations. It does not work where it is needed most—against rogue nations… There is no moral equivalence between Western democracies and rogue regimes like those in place in Iran, Iraq, and North Korea… As Richard Perle, former Assistant Secretary of Defense, stated in a 1999 speech, ‘The failure to distinguish guns in the hands of cops and guns in the hands of robbers is not just a practical absurdity, it is a profound moral failure.”80

After the demise of the moralistic VISION, ROGUE STATE supplied the missing connection to the exceptionalism topos. This link was particularly crucial because the US itself had historically acted in ways inconsistent with its innocent, heroic self-image. It remains the only country to have used nuclear weapons in combat, for instance. It also supported tyrants like Saddam Hussein during the Cold War. And the unilateral policies of George W. Bush’s

77 See Bormann 2008; and Seng 2002.
78 Lakoff 2004, 71.
first term prompted some critics to accuse the US of being “the biggest rogue state of them all.”

Along with the dichotomy between morality and immorality, the weak/strong binary also constituted America’s exceptional identity. Rogue states were depraved and uncivilized, to be sure, but they were also weak, which made them pathetic. The only way these “third and fourth-rate powers” could hope to level the playing field between themselves and the US was to sneakily acquire ballistic missiles and WMD. Unconventional weapons programs had already given states like North Korea unacceptable leverage over the US, in fact. For instance, as Washington and Pyongyang haggled over the latter’s nuclear program in 1998, Sen. Frank Murkowski complained that “From the [negotiation] track record, it’s hard to tell which country is a tiny, isolated terrorist regime violating international agreements, and which country is a superpower pulling the weight of the international community. This must change.” Murkowski’s senior colleague, Republican Ted Stevens, advocated NMD to rectify the situation and “restore our national prestige in terms of being the superpower of the world and having the power to defend that position.” To maintain its self-image as the foremost power on the planet, the US couldn’t countenance vulnerability to “Third World rogue powers.”

In addition to consolidating US identity, rogue ‘Otherness’ amplified the peril from ballistic missiles. The rogue state metaphor entailed that, unlike the Soviets, rogues were too irrational to be deterred from attacking America with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. The autocrats of North Korea, Iran, and Iraq were so “brutal,” “unpredictable,” and “bizarre” that not even the almost-certain prospect of an overwhelming US retaliatory strike could be counted on to dissuade them. Strategic defenses were needed because Washington

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81 Seng 2002, 12.
couldn’t necessarily deter a missile strike. Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) summarized this view in 2000: “For years and years, decades and decades,” he noted,

we have relied upon deterrence policy. At the heart of deterrence policy is the notion that the other side is rational… What has changed now? I would say that intellectually why we are even having this debate [over missile defense] is we have abandoned this concept of rationality. We don’t think [ROGUE STATES are] rational.”

This new thinking was a direct implication of the ROGUE frame. Sen. Joe Lieberman, for example, claimed that “rogue acts” were irrational and thus undeterrable “by definition.”

Beyond legitimating NMD as a response to nuclear and ballistic missile proliferation, the alleged irrationality of ROGUES concealed these regimes’ most likely reasons for acquiring strategic arms in the first place. ROGUE leaders may have sought these weapons for prestige, to enhance their leverage in coercive bargaining, to deter the US and/or regional actors from attacking them, or some combination of all three. Two issues arise when considering this list. First, ROGUES could have been arming (or appearing to arm) for defensive reasons—reasons which received practically no attention in the NMD debate. Second, regardless of whether ROGUES’ underlying goals were offensive or defensive, if we assume ROGUE regimes are interested in survival (at least) and regional domination (at most), and if we think of rationality in the ‘thin,’ procedural sense of efficiently matching means to ends, it’s unclear how any of these three purposes are ‘irrational.’ The irrationality assumption therefore concealed a contradiction in proponents’ arguments. On one hand, ROGUES were rational enough to acquire ballistic missiles to serve their policy ends. On the other hand, they were not rational enough to refrain from using them despite US retaliation that would “reduce their nations to a sea of radioactive glass,” as one analyst put it. Sen. Robert Smith, Republican of New Hampshire, alluded to this tension. “Why,” he asked,
of the United States and reduce its influence is to exploit its vulnerabilities. I think they have surveyed the landscape and have correctly perceived that our one glaring vulnerability is our utter defenselessness against ballistic missile attack. And I think they have realized that ballistic missiles, with their return address painted right on the side in big bright letters, can be instruments of coercion without ever being launched.\textsuperscript{96}

Smith’s quote suggests that, for all the hand-wringing over “undeterrable rogue states,”\textsuperscript{97} the irrationality question was perhaps a red herring. Smith made it clear that he thought ROGUES perfectly sane, for one thing. He also implied that the major risk to the US wasn’t an ICBM attack, but the threat of one: “ballistic missiles… can be instruments of coercion \textit{without ever being launched}.” Top NMD supporters in the Bush administration made similar points. Donald Rumsfeld, for example, claimed that ICBMs “don’t need to be fired. They just need to be in the hands of people who would threaten their use.”\textsuperscript{98} It appears that for missile defense proponents, the problem was Washington’s political vulnerability more than its physical exposure to attack. As one strategic defense advocate argued, “nuclear blackmail would be as devastating politically as nuclear war would be physically.”\textsuperscript{99} In that context, whether a ROGUE regime was ‘suicidal’ enough to strike the US with an ICBM was beside the point.

In fact, If NMD advocates were as concerned about WMD attacks against the US as they were about ensuring freedom of action abroad, then logically they would have harped on threats from cruise missiles, suitcase bombs, and all the other, more likely, WMD delivery mechanisms. But non-ballistic missile threats were an afterthought in NMD advocacy, when they were mentioned at all. A 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) tells us why this was the case. According to the NIE, “missiles provide a level of prestige, coercive diplomacy, and deterrence that non-missile means do not.”\textsuperscript{100} Although the chances of an ICBM strike were remote, ballistic missiles got policymakers’ attention because they could constrain US foreign policy in ways that more realistic threats couldn’t.

So far I’ve noted four ways in which the ROGUE STATE frame privileged NMD proponents: it hid the program’s offensive purpose, bolstered Americans’ exceptionalist


\textsuperscript{97} “Vulnerable and at Risk,” editorial by The Daily Oklahoman, 8 September 1998, page unavailable.


identity, magnified the ballistic missile threat, and led to a misleading debate about ROGUE STATE rationality.

In light of these factors, opponents of strategic defense had much to gain from challenging the frame. By and large, however, they did not. The word “rogue” appeared 415 times in Corpus2; it was used by NMD supporters and skeptics alike, and only nine times was it prefaced by qualifiers like “so-called,” as in “so-called rogue states.”\(^{101}\) A mere two legislators explicitly challenged the frame on the Senate floor. John Kerry remarked that it was “perhaps questionable today,”\(^{102}\) and Paul Wellstone went further by referring to “hypothetical rogue states.”\(^{103}\) Both Kerry and Wellstone were missile defense skeptics, but their opposition was atypical. Skeptics—including Kerry himself\(^{104}\)—used the ROGUE STATE construct uncritically in the overwhelming majority of cases.

**PROLIFERATION**

The ROGUE STATE frame worked in tandem with PROLIFERATION to effect the threat perception that justified strategic defense. Broadly speaking, threats consist of capabilities and intentions. The ROGUE metaphor supplied the intentions: EVIL, “lunatic”\(^{105}\) regimes that, in the words of Bush’s *National Security Strategy*, “reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands.”\(^{106}\) The capability dimension was equally important, for without ICBMs and WMD, particularly nuclear arms, ROGUES would be impotent. PROLIFERATION implied that such weapons inevitably and autonomously SPREAD to ROGUE STATES.

To see how this inference worked, it helps to consider the structure and history of the frame. Along with ROGUE STATE, PROLIFERATION arose to fill the “threat blank” left after the Cold War.\(^{107}\) The PROLIFERATION frame has both hydraulic and CONTAINER-based source

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107 See the content analysis of leading U.S. foreign policy journals in Mutimer 1994, 13.
domains: weapons FLOW or SPREAD along CHANNELS from a source CONTAINER—usually another state [see Fig. 3]. The frame thus coheres with the image schema CONTAINER, just like SHIELD. But PROLIFERATION also consists of biological metaphors involving growth, reproduction, and evolution. The etymology of the term “proliferation” is crucial. It originally referred to the reproduction of plants and animals—a self-governing process which, if not checked by external forces such as predation, leads to excessive population growth. In the early twentieth century, PROLIFERATION took on an additional meaning: the uncontrolled growth of cancer cells.108 When U.S. defense intellectuals began using the word to describe the spread of WMD and delivery systems in the 1960s, these biological connotations informed their representations of weapons technology, which GREW, EVOLVED, and SPREAD of its own accord. Previously, defense thinkers had spoken of “dissemination,” which implied an agential role in weapons dispersal.109 But by the Cold War’s end, it was common to hear claims like “missile know-how today spreads like a social disease,” as Richard Lowry, editor of the National Review, put it.110 Security analyst David Santoro recently took the disease metaphor even further, publishing a book on the connections between weapons PROLIFERATION and cancer. The book is entitled, Treating Weapons Proliferation: An Oncological Approach to the Spread of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Technology.111

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the inevitable, self-begetting nature of PROLIFERATION evoked the topos of technological determinism. The corpora contain ample evidence of this topos. For instance, policymakers often spoke as if weapons themselves “proliferated:”

The proliferation of missile technology had created a world in which we can no longer afford to leave ourselves vulnerable to an entire class of weapons.112

It is true that missile technology is proliferating more rapidly than we could have predicted.113

We must not create a world where weapons of mass destruction proliferate because arms control agreements are no longer credible.114

109 Ibid., 301.
111 Santoro 2010.
114 Ibid, emphasis added.
Weapons and technologies once available to only a few nations are proliferating and becoming pervasive.\textsuperscript{115}

Proliferation is already a growing threat.\textsuperscript{116}

The growing missile capabilities [of rogue states] would enable them to increase the cost of U.S. victory and potentially deter Washington from pursuing certain objectives.\textsuperscript{117}

The proliferation frame justified strategic defense in other ways, too. First, by framing technological progress as beyond control, NMD proponents could more easily argue that even ‘backward’, “Third World rogue powers” would acquire WMD and ICBMs.\textsuperscript{118} This reconciled the prospect of technologically-savvy rogue states with America’s self-image as global technological leader. Second, because proliferation was self-driven and unidirectional, the metaphor concealed the possibility that states might change course and relinquish ballistic missiles and/or WMD, as when Libya renounced its nascent unconventional programs in 2003. Third, by stripping rogue regimes of agency, the frame obscured their reasons for seeking unconventional arms and ballistic missiles. As we’ve seen, NMD supporters themselves\textsuperscript{119} claimed rogues wanted long-range missiles mainly to keep America out of their regions. This leads back to the offensive applications of missile defense. But by casting armament as an effectively involuntary process, proliferation hid the possibility that rogues were arming to defend against American force projection—in other words, that US foreign policy might have been a cause of proliferation in the first place. Fourth, by highlighting the acquisition of weapons technology, the metaphor downplayed the question of whether adversaries would actually use it against the US, knowing that retaliation would be swift and severe. Benoît Pelopidas calls the claim that possession implies use “capacity determinism.”\textsuperscript{120} Capacity determinism informed the findings of the Rumsfeld Commission, which, after strong pressure from Congress, were adopted by the intelligence community in its 1999 and 2001 NIEs. In 2000, John Kerry complained that

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\textsuperscript{115} Remarks delivered by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld at the Munich Conference on European Security Policy, 3 February 2001, emphasis added. Transcript available at
\textsuperscript{117} 1999 US NIE, qtd. in Eland and Lee 2001, 5.
\textsuperscript{120} Pelopidas 2011.
\end{flushleft}
both the Rumsfeld Commission and the 1999 NIE abandoned the old standard of assessing the likelihood that a nation would use its missile capacity in favor of a new standard of whether a nation simply has the relevant capacity for a missile attack, with no analysis whatsoever of the other factors that go into a decision to actually put that capability to use.

This is tremendously important because, as we know from the Cold War, threat is more than simply a function of capability; it is a function of attention and other political and military considerations. Through diplomacy and deterrence, the United States can alter the intentions of nations that pursue ballistic missile programs and so alter the threat they pose to us.  

Kerry’s critique of capacity determinism grew even more pressing early in Bush’s first term. It was then that Rumsfeld’s Office of the Secretary of Defense formally shifted from traditional “threat-based” planning to what became known as “capabilities-based” planning. Rather than interpret adversaries’ intentions, the Pentagon proposed a “return to quantitatively based assessments of men and materiel.” The fifth way that PROLIFERATION favored strategic defense was to downplay the efficacy of policy alternatives. If PROLIFERATION was a ‘natural,’ inevitable process, then trying to stop it would be about as effective as trying to prevent animals or people from procreating. Prudence dictated that one prepare to meet the PROLIFERATION threat with defenses.

Once again, as with the SHIELD and ROGUE STATE metaphors, NMD skeptics embraced the PROLIFERATION frame despite the fact that it made their position difficult to argue. A quick text search of Corpus2 showed that the word “proliferation” appeared 313 times, inclusive of stemmed words. Skeptics and supporters alike used the term, and never prefaced it with dismissive qualifiers like ‘so-called.’

Not only did policymakers use the frame itself, it appears they also accepted its policy implications. Senators from both parties and both sides of the NMD debate repeatedly stated that PROLIFERATION was the top security threat the US faced in the post-Cold War era. Several argued that PROLIFERATION made the chance of a nuclear strike against US territory or allies higher than it had been during the Cold War.

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122 Seng 2002, 16.
concurred. Concern about PROLIFERATION also extended to the White House, even during the Clinton years. Starting in 1994, Clinton declared an annual “national emergency” to deal with the SPREAD of WMD and their means of delivery, which he claimed constituted “an unusual and extraordinary” danger. Although these declarations were largely symbolic, by all accounts the Clinton administration took PROLIFERATION very seriously. The frame had become commonsense in the defense policy community by the mid-1990s.

JOURNEY

JOURNEY was another commonsense frame. As was the case in the 1980s, skeptics and supporters alike framed propositions about NMD’s goals, outcomes, progress, and political support with JOURNEY vocabulary.

As they did during the “Star Wars” debate, senators disputed the program’s appropriate SPEED and likely DESTINATION. Opponents called NMD a “headlong rush,” deriding supporters’ attitude as “costs be damned, full speed ahead.” They pleaded with advocates to “back off just a little bit on the accelerator” because the Pentagon was already “developing a system as fast as prudent.” The ROGUE STATE threat, they said, didn’t “justify the pace at which we are travelling.” Better to “slow down a little bit, look at the map, and consider just where this path is taking us.” Moreover, skeptics predicted that Washington was “embark[ing] on a folly,” that the PATH led to cost overruns, program delays, and, worst of all, an arms race that would diminish security. As the program’s momentum gathered, critics also worried about weak oversight. “As this missile defense hot rod charges down the road with its throttle wide open and the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty in the rear-view mirror, is the scrutiny of Congress and the American people being left in the

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dust?,” Robert Byrd asked. The slogan “rush to failure” summarized skeptics’ concerns. Retired Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Larry Welch had coined the phrase in his 1998 review of the THAAD program. Following Welch’s report, skeptics seized on the expression and broadened its application to strategic defense generally. They repeated it so often that Joe Biden observed that “The term ‘rush to failure’ has become part of our everyday vocabulary.” Supporters countered that, given the urgency of the threat, the program wasn’t moving fast enough. “The ones who have always said, ‘go slow,’” chided one senator, “are the same critics who will say that the slowness of the program’s progress is evidence that missile defense is not yet mature.” But NMD “is needed today, right now,” so the Clinton administration needed to “get off its slow track development program,” another proclaimed. Importantly, defensive technology was “on the right track;” politics was responsible for holding the program back. “Progress towards a national missile defense has not been impeded primarily by technical limitations, but rather by political obstruction, foot-dragging and by restraints of an imprudent treaty signed with a power that no longer exists,” Sen. Robert Smith argued. What “[stood] in the way” of effective missile defense was infatuation with outmoded arms control agreements, especially the ABM Treaty. NMD proponents painted themselves as forward-looking progressives determined “to leave the Cold War behind” and “break free of the constraints of the outdated ABM Treaty,” which did “not recognize the present, or point us toward the future.” In sum, the arguments over NMD’s speed and destination were like that of the SDI, only with a post-Cold War twist.

The overall functions of the journey frame were similar as well. It simplified an

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extremely complicated debate using naturalized Event Structure metaphors. And, as before, it privileged NMD proponents in three ways.

First, the frame continued to evoke manifest destiny and exceptionalism *topoi*. “Moving beyond” the ABM Treaty would permit America to “fully explore” and “establish control of the high ground” of space. President Bush declared this would “free this great freedom-loving people to provide protections for freedom-loving people from all around the world.” He magnanimously invited America’s old Cold War adversary, Russia, along for the JOURNEY: “And I told Mr. Putin, ‘Come along with us,’ recounted Bush.145

Second, advocates used JOURNEY to downplay the immense challenges the program faced. Proponents acknowledged that the US would encounter OBSTACLES on the missile defense PATH. But setbacks are expected on all JOURNEYS—indeed, they’re essential to the prototypical Western narrative of the hero’s quest—so NMD’s champions saw no cause for alarm. After all, developing missile defense was particularly difficult, with one DOD official likening it to navigating in “uncharted waters.” So there was nothing amiss, advocates argued, if initial tests were unrealistic, or if they failed. “I think we can all agree that it’s appropriate to walk before we run,” Thad Cochran quipped after one test failure. Jon Kyl also referenced the process of learning to walk, arguing that “You don’t quit just because you fell down the first time. And we don’t stop just because we had a couple tests that were not totally successful.” Even advances were not to be over-played, lest they be reversed. After a successful test of the ground-based missile defense system in 2001, Missile Defense Agency Director Ron Kadish cautioned that “We have a long road to go. So this test is just one on a journey, one stop on a journey.” Hidden in proponents’ rhetoric was the fact that the JOURNEY wasn’t just beginning. It had in fact begun much earlier. Advocates repeatedly

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149 Qtd. in Graham 2003, 374.
framed legislation in the late 1990s as “first steps” on the “path” to strategic defense. But, as we saw in Chapter 2, the Pentagon had actively sought strategic defenses since the late 1950s, at great expense, and with little to show for it. Journey metaphors lent themselves to a technological optimism unwarranted by experience.

Third, Journey allowed proponents to frame NMD politics as a choice between constraint and freedom. In an important sense, this was a false choice. Supporters, we’ve seen, were preoccupied with “removing” the “barriers” that arms control and multilateral consultations supposedly placed in the path toward missile defense. (Even high-ranking skeptics like President Clinton described the ABM Treaty as a confining container from which the US might have to “withdraw.”) By “getting out from under” the ABM Treaty, advocates claimed, the US would be “free” to explore the most promising technologies and basing modes. The problem was that the Treaty wasn’t impeding US progress in any substantial way—largely because there wasn’t much progress to begin with. The Chiefs, who favored keeping the accord, said as much. So did civilians in Clinton’s DOD. Rumsfeld’s Pentagon did at times risk “bumping up against” Treaty constraints. But in that case, the imperative to do noncompliant testing was political and not technological. The false choice between constraint and freedom was also significant because freedom has a double meaning: it denotes lack of physical restraint, but also political liberty. An America ‘free’ to pursue missile defense was also able to leverage its hegemonic position to promote liberty abroad. As Bush put it, “The ABM Treaty prevents our nation and other freedom-loving nations from exploring opportunities to be able to say to those who would hold freedom-loving peoples hostage that we’re not going to let you do so.” And of course, ‘freedom of action’ resonated with the unilateralist impulses of the Republican right—the same people who cheered loudest for strategic defense. These senators were repulsed by the thought of giving Russia a “veto” over American defense plans. Jon Kyl, for instance, warned that “To

151 Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colorado), in ibid., S4761.
tie our hands behind our back mutually with the Russians doesn’t account for today’s reality in which there are other nations that could attack us.”

Unilateral development of NMD, moreover, was tied to America’s unprecedented unipolar position, which advocates like Thad Cochran were keen to exploit. “A superpower must do,” he declared,

what no one else in this world has the capability to do. We are the only country that has the capability to put the resources behind a ballistic missile defense capability. We are the only country that can do that. Why would we hesitate for one moment? ... We are the leadership of the greatest superpower in the world.

By tying unilateral missile defenses to America’s superpower identity, advocates were able to cast opponents’ arguments for multilateralism and restraint as weakness. Journey vocabulary made this possible.

Questions 2-5: Summary

This sub-section presented my analysis of U.S. strategic defense discourse from 1997-2002. I’ve addressed questions 2-5 from Fig. 1, showing several ways that metaphorical framing might explain NMD’s success during this period. Before considering rhetorical coercion, I’ll review the evidence adduced so far. First, although the analysis was less exhaustive than in the previous chapter, I’ve argued for the existence of four metaphorical frames in NMD discourse: Missile defense is a shield, Missile defense is a journey, rogue state, and proliferation. As before, I used excerpts from the secondary corpus to show how the frames together formed a tidy ontology of the overall debate: proliferation to rogue states required the US to embark on journey toward a nationwide shield. I also considered the frames individually. Semantic network diagrams showed how the frames cohered internally, and how they may have formed the conceptual foundation of metaphorical cognition. The discussion then turned to those aspects of NMD that each frame highlighted and those that it hid; it also noted whether and how frames cohered with commonplaces in U.S. foreign policy discourse. Both of these factors shaped the policy prescriptions of the frames. Rogue state, proliferation, and shield strongly favored SDI. In more subtle

ways, JOURNEY did too. In passing, I mentioned alternatives to each frame to show that they were in fact contingent constructs. As in the SDI chapter, by mapping semantic networks and analyzying metaphors’ highlighting and hiding functions, I’ve traced plausible pathways linking metaphor to individual policymakers’ decisionmaking.

However, it remains to be seen how metaphor shaped senators’ behavior at the social level. Rhetorical coercion covers that aspect of metaphorical framing.

**Rhetorical Coercion**

This part of the study argues that NMD advocates rhetorically coerced skeptical senators by structuring missile defense discourse with the frames discussed above. SHIELD, JOURNEY, ROGUE STATE, and PROLIFERATION metaphors transformed missile defense votes into referenda on American exceptionalism, patriotism, and the survival of the republic, thus making opposition to NMD socially untenable. Expecting public punishment for acting on their preferences, skeptical senators acquiesced in the program’s acceleration. This helps explain NMD’s success in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

As in the SDI case study, I develop this argument with a process tracing narrative addressing questions 6-9 from Fig. 1. To reiterate, if rhetorical coercion was at work, we would expect to see four things. First, given the high stakes involved, Senators will contest the different frames and/or their implications. Second, if skeptics were coerced by dominant frames, then proponents will use the frames to ‘trap’ critics into positions that violated one or more *topoi*. Third, from a rhetorical coercion perspective, advocates’ power lay in their ability to marshal public opinion in favor of NMD. Therefore, if skeptics were coerced, then we’ll see evidence that they expected public punishment for opposing the program. Finally, if rhetorical coercion was at work, then rather than violate *topoi* by cutting back the program, NMD critics will reluctantly accept its growth. I find support for all four hypotheses below.

**Rhetorical Entrapment and Contestation**

As we saw in the previous sub-section, SHIELD downplayed the offensive applications of
NMD, while PROLIFERATION to ROGUE STATES made the ballistic missile threat appear pressing. This allowed the program’s supporters to lay a series of ‘traps’ for their opponents.

First, supporters tarred skeptics as ‘soft’ on defense. This was always done indirectly in the decorous Senate. Republican leaders titled a 1997 bill the Defend the United States of America Act of 1997, for example—the implication being that the legislation’s opponents opposed the defense of the country. The floor speeches of pro-NMD senators also obliquely accused skeptics of weakness. Here are a handful of examples:

I cannot fathom anyone being opposed to deploying the defenses that are necessary to protect this Nation.  

We have an opportunity to defend America. After all, Mr. President, isn’t that what we are supposed to be doing? 

[The American Missile Protection Act] would establish a US policy of deploying a national missile defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against a limited ballistic missile attack as soon as is technologically possible. How could anyone be opposed to that? It is irresponsible to be opposed to it.

There is no responsibility any greater for the U.S. Senate than the security of our country. That we would not pass the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 immediately and go forward with a technology that would protect our country is unthinkable; it is unthinkable.

Homeland defense is tied to patriotism in all nationalist discourses, of course. In this case, the link allowed advocates to equate opposition to NMD with treason. Concessions on NMD were tantamount to appeasing ROGUE STATES.

If history teaches anything, it teaches simple-minded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly—it means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our future, and the squandering of our freedom.

I wish that I could say that Congress and the President of the United States are doing everything possible to protect the American people and preserve the values that we hold dear. But that is not the case.

Our ambivalence and complacency in providing an effective missile defense for American citizens and for American interests is an unconscionable act of negligence. We should not shrink from or shirk the burden of eternal vigilance in the defense of freedom because the cost of missile defense is high or the technology is complicated or there will be difficulties to

overcome in the development of a system.\textsuperscript{165}

Moreover, since proponents had fastened NMD so tightly to America’s superpower identity, attacks on the former were effectively attacks on the latter:

When the day arrives that America is handcuffed by our vulnerability to ballistic missile attack, when our \textit{world leadership} is \textit{in question} because of that vulnerability, or when—heaven help us—an attack actually occurs, what will we tell the American people? That we had hoped this would not happen? That we believed the threat was not so serious?\textsuperscript{166}

Which of these actions would be the act of a strong and powerful nation led by men and women of vision and foresight: a nation that constantly reassesses its security threats and tailors its defense to meet those threats, or a nation that sits back and says let’s see what the threat is, then we will assess it and then we will address it?\textsuperscript{167}

The greatest security threat we have is incoming ballistic missiles. If we put our mind to the technology, we can prioritize our defense spending to say to the American people that we will protect you from incoming ballistic missiles to our shores, or to any theater where our Armed Forces are present. We can do no less if we are men and women of vision and foresight for the greatest Nation on Earth.\textsuperscript{168}

Because defense was widely acknowledged as a moral imperative, there was another corollary to the ‘soft-on-defense’ trap: opposition to NMD was plain \textit{wrong}.

We have a constitutional responsibility to defend America. Homeland defense from missile attack is the moral thing to do.\textsuperscript{169}

It would be immoral for leaders of the United States today… not to do everything we can to facilitate the deployment of these defenses.\textsuperscript{170}

For any President of the United States or Congress to deliberately leave the United States vulnerable to attack when we understand that there is a growing threat of that attack, and to leave in place any kind of legal regimes that would inhibit us from developing the means of protecting ourselves, is intolerable; it is morally indefensible, especially… when the technology is there to provide a defense.\textsuperscript{171}

There was another side to the morality of missile defense. Not only were critics leaving the
homeland vulnerable, advocates alleged, but they also proposed to rely on assured retaliation as a basis for American security. As we saw in the SDI debate, this violated America’s exceptionalist identity. Thad Cochran quoted Henry Kissinger as follows: “a U.S. President cannot allow a situation in which “extinction of civilized life is one’s only strategy.” Others expressed similar reservations about traditional deterrence:

> It has always been of concern to me that we would rely on deterrence against a largely innocent population of a country headed by a tyrant. The best deterrence is the ability to defeat an attack.\(^{173}\)

> The ABM Treaty prohibits our government from defending the American people, while allowing it to defend missiles to destroy other peoples.\(^{174}\)

As one would expect, opponents protested these oblique accusations of weakness, betrayal, and moral callousness. An indignant Robert Byrd declared that he was “the last man out of Vietnam—the last one… I am not a Johnny-come-lately when it comes to our national defense.”\(^{175}\) Other Senators offered more thoughtful rebuttals. Several tried to evade the ‘soft-on-defense trap’ by reframing the issue, turning the simplistic question of who was ‘for’ or ‘against’ defense into a far more nuanced debate over how security was best attained. Carl Levin, for example, argued that “this isn’t a question of whether you are for the security of the United States or not. We are all for the security of the United States. This is a question of how best to achieve the security of the United States.”\(^{176}\) Levin and other critics’ argument was that arms control was superior to strategic defense. Not only was NMD costly and unproven, but it was provocative, and would therefore spark arms races that would yield a net security loss. Here’s Joe Biden in 1998 trying to forge a link between NMD and offense:

> Look, what is viewed as good for somebody is viewed as poison for other people on occasion. And let me point out to you, we are sitting here thinking—and we mean it—that what we want to do is we are going to defend the American people. And we do. But you sit there on the other side of the ocean, the other side of the world, and say, ‘These guys, these Americans, the only people, by the way, who ever did drop an atomic weapon, these guys are building a system that is going to render them impervious to being hit by nuclear weapons. We think they are building that system for a second-strike capability. They can affirmatively

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strike us knowing they can’t be struck back.”

But Biden and his fellow skeptics had trouble linking NMD and offense. This was for three possible reasons. The first reason may have been that they didn’t try very often. Only six times from 1997-2002 did any senator directly suggest in floor debates that missile defense was offensive, and Biden was the only one who did so. Second, on the occasions when he did speak up, Biden ignored the main goal of missile defense advocates, which was conventional and not strategic superiority. Thus, he missed a chance to fundamentally reframe the debate. As Biden’s quote above shows, skeptics’ concerns were couched in the Cold War context of a disarming first-strike against Russia. Although limited defenses would be useless against Russia’s deterrent, critics worried, with cause, that Moscow would see them as a gambit for strategic dominance. But this concern wasn’t sufficient to re-cast NMD as offensive. Not only was the Cold War over (which NMD advocates never ceased to point out), but, as we’ve seen, strategic defense was fundamentally about ensuring U.S. conventional superiority. Critics acknowledged this only once on the Senate floor from 1997-2002. Once again, it was Joe Biden who mentioned NMD’s offensive purpose:

Missile defense supporters cite the need to avoid being blackmailed by North Korea or Iraq. But I find it hard to see how a national missile defense will give us freedom of action in Korea or the Middle East, if there is still one chance in three, or even one chance in five, that a modest attack will wipe out a whole American city.

Biden mentioned force projection in passing and only to point out a flaw in advocates’ logic. He and other skeptics neglected to shift the debate to protecting American interests and away from protecting Americans themselves. As long as rhetoric focused on the latter, on “our people and our national territory, our shores and harbors, our cities, factories, and farmlands,” opposition to missile defenses was socially unacceptable. That said, re-framing NMD as offensive and destabilizing would have been extremely difficult. This was

due a third, more fundamental challenge: proponents had already successfully equated missile defense with defense and protection. The linkage was firmly encoded in the discourse—and arguably the minds of its speakers. It was commonsense. Consequently, skeptics were fighting an uphill battle to break this association and show that NMD was provocative and would make the US less secure. That proposition was counter-intuitive to the point of being nonsensical, as advocates suggested:

Defenses are not provocative, no nation has a right to threaten the United States, and the United States has no obligation to guarantee any country’s right to do so.  

Missile defenses are purely defensive items and can only be used to intercept incoming missiles.

I will reemphasize that this is a defense structure, not offensive; it is a defense system. Frankly, I don’t understand the opposition from many of our allies to a system that is defensive in nature.

Journalist Bill Keller realized the quandary skeptics were in. “In principle,” he sympathized, “it’s hard to argue that a system that could shoot down a rogue missile or two would be a bad thing to have.” Indeed, he noted in 2001, “even the liberals are buying into it.” The SHIELD, ROGUE STATE, and PROLIFERATION frames had made opposition difficult to sustain.

So too did JOURNEY metaphors. They allowed proponents to trap critics into advocating unilateral RESTRAINT in the face of grave danger. The Cold War was over, NMD supporters said, but skeptics were “stuck in the way things used to be.” Continued arms control “would handcuff us, crippling our defenses.” Skeptics counseled weakness when the US was the greatest power on the history of the earth, the only one with the riches and “sheer genius” to develop defenses. Rather than maintain Russia’s “veto” over America’s security policy, Washington “should break free of the constraints of the outdated ABM Treaty and begin to fashion a security regime based, as Reagan said, on our ability ‘to

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save lives rather to avenge them.”” After all, “This is the legacy America deserves, consistent with Reagan’s vision of courage, morality and security.”190 These propositions put skeptics on the defensive. They were stuck with the counter-intuitive claim that Treaty CONSTRAINTS were in America’s interests, and that they weren’t giving Russia a “veto” on US defense policy, despite the Treaty’s explicit ban on homeland defenses.191

Opponents did advance counter-frames to avoid supporters’ rhetorical traps. I already mentioned how they tried unsuccesssfully to shift the debate from ‘security or not?’ to ‘security how?’, and how Joe Biden made a few failed attempts to paint NMD as offensive.

Another tactic critics used was borrowed from the SDI debate: opponents portrayed NMD as a normal policy priority, subject to tradeoffs like all budget items. In so doing, they tried to trap budget hawks in the Republican Party in their own rhetoric. Here’s Biden once again:

My conservative friends, who are all budget-conscious guys... have no notion what the cost will be. They are ready to sign on and say, ‘Deploy. As soon as we find it, deploy it. If it breaks the budget deal, if it causes a deficit, if it breaks the bank, deploy.'192

Biden’s attack, though, was easily neutralized. The ballistic missile threat had long been “securitized,”193 thanks in large part to metaphorical framing. This put the program beyond the purview of normal policy tradeoffs. Indeed, supporters rejected the insinuation that homeland defense had a price tag. “The President wants to tell U.S. citizens we cannot protect them from weapons of mass destruction until we figure out how much it might cost,” Sen. Robert Smith protested. “I say it is the opposite. We have to defend our citizens, and worry later about the cost.” “Whatever resources are necessary,” he added, “the American people deserve to be defended.”194

Critics also challenged a key implication of the ROGUE STATE and PROLIFERATION frames—namely, that adversaries’ attempted acquisition of WMD and long-range ballistic missiles meant they would use them against the US. John Kerry, for instance, argued that

deterrence still applied to ROGUE STATES. Their rulers “would have to be beyond insane” to attack the US “because they would not last on the face of this planet more than 30 minutes because of our response.”195 Kerry, Levin, and other leading skeptics spent a great deal of time elaborating this argument. They reasoned that ROGUES were perfectly rational and interested in survival. Therefore, the assurance of U.S. retaliation should deter them from attacking the US with ballistic missiles. The weakness of this logic was that, by definition, ROGUE leaders were “beyond insane.” Could the US count on deterrence to work against such “rash and reckless aggressors,” as Donald Rumsfeld described them?196 Better to bet on American technology than the reasonableness of Kim Jong-il and Saddam Hussein.

On the other hand, whether an adversary actually would use ballistic missiles was almost beside the point, as Sen. Robert Smith argued:

> How many times have we heard opponents of missile defense drag out the tired cliché “Missiles have a return address!” as though that somehow devalues them. The opposite is true: missiles derive their value from the knowledge of their existence and the belief that they might be used. Of course they have a return address; their owners want to make sure we know it. The point is not, as it is with terrorist weapons, to hide the existence of ballistic missiles, but to broadcast it. The ability to coerce the United States with ballistic missiles depends on our belief that a potential adversary has nuclear missile and would be willing to use them against us. We called this principle deterrence when the Soviet Union was in existence. However, in the hands of a dictator, deterrence can quickly become coercion and blackmail.197

At this point, skeptics might have reasonably asked how a crude, unreliable missile defense would make the US undeterrable. By and large, however, critics didn’t engage with proponents’ real agenda.

Skeptics also tried to re-frame the ballistic missile threat in the context of more likely threats to the American homeland, but this just mired them in circular debates. A typical argument between NMD advocates and skeptics went something like this: Critics would say that ballistic missiles are the least likely delivery mechanisms for WMD and that more likely threats should get the attention they deserve. Supporters would reply that just because other threats are important, that doesn’t mean that Congress should neglect missile defense. Skeptics countered that there are budget tradeoffs, and the more resources you devote to one

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threat, the less you can give to others. Supporters would retort that you can’t put a price on protection of American cities and lives. Skeptics conceded that, but would point out that Americans face more pressing threats, and if Congress failed to prioritize the threats, it would bust the budget. And on and on it went. The debate went in circles because opponents misunderstood why supporters were fixated on ballistic missiles in the first place. As Sen. Smith said,

Those who argue that missile defense is not necessary as long as a potential adversary could use a suitcase bomb erroneously assume that the goal of a rogue state in having a ballistic missile is to use it somewhere. This is not necessarily correct. These rogue states recognize that ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads provide an effective way to coerce the United States.¹⁹⁸

As we know, supporters weren’t primarily concerned with ballistic missiles because their use was likely, they worried that the missiles would deter the US from armed intervention abroad. Skeptics could have broken out of the circular argument by pointing this out, but they didn’t. Instead, they seemed to take the SHIELD metaphor literally. Consequently, they let NMD supporters like Sam Brownback drape force projection in the mantle of defense. To Brownback, missile defense supporters were not just addressing concerns about protecting America’s interests around the globe, but about protecting the American homeland itself. We are not talking about foreign lands and obscure interests… We are talking about preventing ballistic missiles from shattering the communities in which we all live—we are talking about protecting our families, our cities, and our nation from potential destruction at the hands of a rogue regime anywhere around the world.¹⁹⁹

Despite the pathos of this imagery, opponents never pointed out its deceptiveness.

Why didn’t skeptics expose supporters’ metaphors as code words for conventional offensive dominance? After all, doing so could have greatly enhanced critics’ arguments that NMD was really offensive and thereby deflected charges that they opposed protection for innocent Americans. It could be because they were unaware of the conventional dominance motivation, but that is improbable given the expertise of leading skeptics like Kerry, Biden, and Levin, and given the fact that proponents themselves repeated it over and over in their speeches. Perhaps opponents took the defense metaphors literally. This is a more likely scenario; I’ll return to it in the conclusion to this chapter. A third possibility is that skeptics saw

¹⁹⁸ Qtd. in _ibid_.
through the metaphors but saw no value in questioning U.S. offensive dominance because that was a goal shared across the political spectrum—and, more fundamentally, because preserving “America’s leadership role in the world”\footnote{Sen. Sam Brownback, in Cong. Rec., “National Missle Defense Act of 1999,” S2810, 17 March 1999.} resonated with American exceptionalism. (Indeed, as seen above, officials in the Clinton administration shared this motive as well). If that’s true, then skeptical senators may have fallen silent because their adversaries had framed missile defenses in terms that they could not sustainably oppose. In other words, the critics were rhetorically coerced.

\textit{Skeptics Expect Public Punishment}

Skeptical senators were reluctant to rein in NMD, which, by the late 1990s, was moving far faster than they thought wise. Why didn’t they try harder to slow down the program? There’s no \textit{direct} proof that critics expected public punishment for frontally attacking missile defense. However, it’s readily inferable from other evidence.

For one thing, most of the mainstream media thought that the domestic politics of NMD favored the program.\footnote{See, for example, John Cherian, “Missiles and Politics,” Frontline, July-August 2000, available at <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl1715/17150160.htm>. Accessed 23 March 2012. See also John Isaacs, “A Political Decision,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 2000, 22.} Skeptical politicians no doubt shared this calculus—after all, they were under intense and unrelenting pressure from Republicans. There was more than a whiff of “triangulation”\footnote{This term refers to a strategy of co-opting conservative issues by staking out a middle ground between left and right-wing positions.} in Bill Clinton’s public ambivalence about NMD, for example. As one commentator quipped, “NMD has more to do with defending Al Gore from George Bush than it does with defending the United States from ballistic missiles.”\footnote{Qtd. in Hartung and Ciarrocca 2000.} This may have been a bit of an overstatement. On the other hand, the politics of missile defense no doubt shaped the decisionmaking of the famously poll-obsessed Clinton administration.

Political pressure surely affected the Senate as well. Senators read the polls as much as anyone, after all. Day in and day out, skeptics sat at their desks listening to proponents like John Ashcroft tell them how much public opinion favored deployment:
A recent poll shows that more than 85 percent of Americans favor the deployment of a missile defense system and that three out of every four Americans were surprised to learn that the United States cannot destroy an incoming ballistic missile. The American people would be even more surprised to learn that they remain defenseless today, not so much due to the cost or technological hurdles of missile defense as to a lack of political leadership here in Washington.204

Sen. Ashcroft didn’t say where he got his numbers. They may have come from Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Studies, which, as we saw in Chapter 3, often produced misleading data. But it didn’t really matter to Republicans, because they clearly thought they had a winning wedge issue. Their conviction went at least as far back as the “Contract with America” in 1994—and of course, SDI before that.

Publicly at least, NMD skeptics claimed immunity from NMD fallout. When filibustering the Defend America Act of 1998, for instance, Sen. John Glenn opined that

the American people are not dummies. I am convinced that when they listen carefully to both sides on this issue, they will recognize that nobody has yet come up with an improvement on existing U.S. policy for missile defense.205

Later, Biden pointed out the public’s disengagement with the whole issue:

For six solid years, Republicans have used national missile defense as a “big stick”—a stick employed not against America’s enemies, but against those who thought we did not need a national missile defense... Although it is always difficult to get into the minds of the American people, it does appear that, for the most part, the public has ignored this debate. The missile defense issue has commanded the attention of only a tiny minority of the American people. In a recent survey by the Pew Charitable Trust of priorities for the new administration, Americans rated missile defense in eighteenth place among twenty issues.206

Even Republicans acknowledged that missile defense wasn’t high on the public’s agenda. From their perspective, Americans weren’t appropriately alarmed at their vulnerability to ballistic missile attack. Because they hadn’t “quite been able to impress upon the people of America how dangerous of a situation we are in,”207 Republicans had “to help educate America as to why this issue is so important to our future.”208 Once suitably “educated,” they claimed, Americans would be outraged at U.S. vulnerability.

Nonetheless, when Glenn and Biden expressed skepticism that NMD would work as a wedge issue against them, they may have just been trying to shore up the wavering skeptics in their ranks. Other Democrats didn’t seem so sure. In 2000, for instance, Dick Durbin offered an amendment mandating that any NMD system undergo realistic testing against countermeasures before deployment. Despite the measure’s modesty, Majority Leader Tom Daschle praised Durbin for proposing the amendment “despite political sensitivity, and, frankly, political risk.” Daschle’s remark was a tacit recognition that the politics of missile defense was running against Democrats. Sen. Paul Wellstone expressed a similar view while voicing his qualms about voting against the National Missile Defense Act of 1999. Before the vote, Wellstone, one of only three Senators to oppose the measure, lamented that “I may be standing alone on this vote. I hope not… You cannot imagine how much I want to vote for a resolution like this, which is going to have such overwhelming support.” For their part, Wellstone’s skeptical colleagues made it clear that they were not voting on the merits of the legislation. Chuck Robb (D-Virginia), for example, qualified his “yea” vote by complaining that the Act really accomplishes nothing that will have a meaningful, positive impact on the pace and quality of our missile defense development efforts. While it is appealing to declare a policy [to deploy strategic defenses], such a declaration doesn’t move us closer to the goal, and may in fact cause the American people to gain a false sense of security. We should acknowledge the risk that we could be giving the American people the false impression that by passing this legislation we are somehow approving deployment of a protective shield to safeguard them from nuclear missile attack. At best we’ll get a very limited defensive capability. At worst, we will have spent tens of billions on top of the $40 to $80 billion already spent on missile defense since 1983, our troops will continue to struggle with a [heavy deployment schedule] and inadequate equipment due to inadequate funding, the Russians will not honor START II limits—even after ratification of the treaty, and we will have a system that is not operationally effective.

Robb and other skeptics were clearly casting ‘clothespin votes’ for missile defense. It’s highly likely that they felt compelled to support the National Missile Defense Act and other pro-NMD legislation for fear of being framed as anti-defense.

Indeed, one opponent explicitly acknowledged the power of proponents’ frames. Senator Dick Durbin, one of the most strident NMD skeptics, recounted his reaction from the Reagan years:

I can recall [missile defense] when it was first suggested by President Reagan. It was a concept that was alluring. The notion that we could somehow put a protective umbrella of defense over the United States against nuclear missiles would certainly be an effort that would allay the fears of many that a missile might be launched from some nation like Russia. This idea of a strategic defense initiative, Star Wars, or whatever you might characterize it as, has always had a certain appeal to me and I am sure to anyone who hears it.\(^{212}\)

It’s reasonable to assume that skeptical Senators were hesitant to oppose NMD too openly because of its symbolic appeal.

We can also infer the expectation of public punishment from the defensiveness of NMD opponents on the Senate floor. Just like their counterparts in the SDI debate, critics repeatedly claimed that they didn’t oppose missile defense per se. Here are a few examples:

I take a back seat to no one in my support for development of effective missile defense technology… The choice the Senate will make today is not about whether we should make a herculean effort to develop anti-missile technology. We are doing that and spending multi-billions of dollars to do it as rapidly and well as our best minds can do so. The vote today will not alter that mission or our commitment to it.\(^{213}\)

I happen to support this. I want to be very clear about this. I support the notion of developing a limited, capable, mutually deployed system for national defense that could, indeed, strike down a potential rogue missile or accidental firing. No leader of the United States could responsibly suggest we are going to write off an entire city or State, or half our country.\(^{214}\)

Let me be clear, I do understand the need to defend our country against missile attack. I believe that all of us here in this chamber would do everything in our power to ensure that U.S. citizens are protected against vicious attacks from those who would do us harm, including those who would launch those attacks with missiles.\(^{215}\)

First, let me be clear: I support the development of an effective defense against ballistic missiles… In the end, it boils down to commonsense: If there is a real potential of a rogue nation firing a few missiles at any city in the US, responsible leadership requires that we make our best, most thoughtful efforts to defend against that threat… If it ever happened, no leader could ever explain not having chosen to defend against the disaster when doing so made sense.\(^{216}\)

Finally, whereas Republicans were trumpeting the cause of NMD in the press, most Democrats were mute on the issue; only a small handful like Joe Biden spoke out against it in

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the media.\textsuperscript{217} It’s likely that the program’s critics saw little electoral benefit from open opposition.

\textit{Political Acquiescence}

So far, I’ve argued that proponents’ rhetorical entrapment caused skeptics to expect public censure for opposing NMD. This is the key to understanding critics’ failure to act more forcefully against the program. The task here is to describe the extent and nature of skeptics’ acquiescence.

To do that, a bit of background is in order. In the early and mid-1990s, there was a consensus in favor of relatively low-level R&D for missile defense. There was a sudden push for deployment after Republicans took over Congress in 1995. Pressure continued to build afterwards, reaching a fever pitch in 1998 with the Rumsfeld Report and the North Korean ICBM test. The pro-deployment campaign, led largely by Republicans, culminated in the\textit{National Missile Defense Act of 1999}, which passed both houses by large margins. This legislation helped lay the groundwork for the pro-NMD Bush administration when it took office in early 2001. In late 2001, Bush had effectively decided the deployment question, and critics gave up on trying to cut funding, shifting their efforts to oversight instead.

This isn’t to say that skeptical senators were complacent. Just as they did during the SDI years, opponents worked hard to forestall deployment, and to keep funding increases to a minimum. They tried, for example, to block a huge budget rise in the space-based laser program in 1997, but failed 43-59. The following year, opponents filibustered a resolution that would have committed the US to deploy defenses “as soon as technologically feasible.” And they almost succeeded in filibustering an identical bill in 1999, the\textit{National Missile Defense Act}. Were it not for the defection of one wavering Senator to the proponents’ camp, Democrats could’ve held the line.\textsuperscript{218} Instead, they let the measure come up for a vote, and it passed with only three Democrats in opposition. Finally, in 2000, skeptics pushed through a bill mandating that any proposed NMD be tested against realistic countermeasures.

But what skeptical Senators didn’t do speaks louder than what they did. Despite reservations about spending “scores of billions of dollars” to field a “nonexistent system

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against nonexistent threats,” they never tried cutting the program; they merely proposed more modest increases than supporters. As a result, by the late 1990s, funding for missile defense had risen by about a third from its nadir during the first part of Clinton’s term.220 Much of that increase went to strategic and not tactical defense. The most dramatic increase occurred after the W. Bush administration took office in 2001. Bush’s first NMD request was for 8.3 billion—a 57 rise over the previous year’s level. On a party-line vote, Democrats on the Armed Services Committee cut the increase by a mere third—to 40% over the previous year’s level. And after 9/11, they retreated on even that cut and restored Bush’s full request. Opponents also allowed supporters a crucial symbolic victory by approving the National Missile Defense Act of 1999. And after Bush withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2001, frontal Democratic opposition effectively collapsed, with critics resigning themselves to oversight.221 Democrats knew they would lose votes on funding reductions, so they concentrated on more indirect challenges to the program.222

A final measure of political acquiescence is not what senators did or didn’t do, but rather the terms of their debate. Here we see a lot of overlap between the two sides. Critics and advocates alike stated repeatedly that the entire Senate agreed on the necessity of NMD. Both sides agreed on the existence of a rogue state threat,223 the need for an aggressive R&D program, and even that deployment would be necessary and desirable at some point in the future.224 The growing consensus during the Clinton administration laid the groundwork for Bush to push through a much more aggressive NMD program when he came to office.

221 Pratt 2011, 32.
222 See Graham 2003, 392-3; and Pratt 2011, 13.
Conclusion

This chapter has shown how prevailing frames pre-disposed policymakers towards missile defense, and how metaphorical framing allowed NMD advocates to seize the rhetorical high ground from 1997-2002. Skeptics couldn’t attack missile defense directly because proponents had successfully framed it as defensive, using commonsense metaphors to link NMD to *topoi* of American exceptionalism, destiny, and security. Because these commonplaces were essentially incontestable, critics were compelled to question the program at the margins, on pragmatic grounds. “Nobody doubts the sincerity or morality of a belief in a national missile defense, only its practicality,” Biden acknowledged. This meant skeptics spent most of their time articulating and defending dry, technical propositions on the rationality of US adversaries, the mechanisms of nuclear deterrence, the probability of different threat scenarios, budget tradeoffs, and whether NMD would yield a net gain or reduction in the nuclear threat. Proponents addressed these arguments too, but unlike skeptics, they had an emotionally resonant story replete with heroes, ROGUE STATE villains, and epic JOURNEYS—a narrative that skeptics helped construct by using the SHIELD, JOURNEY, ROGUE STATE, and PROLIFERATION frames.

Three questions remain. Which aspect of metaphorical framing best explains the case, metaphorical cognition or rhetorical coercion? Were the two mechanisms competing or complementary? Finally, to what extent did factors other than metaphorical framing explain the success of strategic defense during this period?

Once again, I conclude that both metaphorical cognition and rhetorical coercion were at work in the case. I’ll consider each explanation in turn.

I’ve presented ample evidence consistent with metaphorical cognition. As we’ve seen, senators used the four frames identified in the primary corpus extensively, systematically, and usually, un-self-consciously. NMD skeptics and supporters alike agreed that PROLIFERATION to ROGUE STATES was the country’s top security concern. And policymakers used these frames to buttress inferences about US adversaries, deterrence, threat scenarios, and the value of NMD. This might explain why so many skeptics expressed

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support for limited, Treaty-compliant missile defenses. This finding jibes with previous studies on the policy effects of the ROGUE STATE and PROLIFERATION metaphors. Indeed, the metaphorical cognition explanation is perhaps stronger for the NMD case than SDI. There are two reasons for this. First, Reagan’s VISION was bombastic and senators surely knew it. Yet they couldn’t reject the frame without paying an intolerable political price. For SDI, then, there was an obvious gap between what legislators said and what they privately believed. This gap augurs against a metaphorical cognition account. By contrast, NMD discourse featured no frames as outlandish as the VISION. To be sure, critics weren’t completely convinced of the ROGUE STATE menace. They also doubted a reliable SHIELD could be deployed in the foreseeable future. But intercepting a single ICBM attack by an OUTLAW state was orders of magnitude more realistic than overturning deterrence with an ASTRODOME defense against 10,000 Soviet warheads. Second, during the NMD debate, skeptical senators showed far less awareness of proponents’ rhetorical manipulation. Legislators were quick to point out that the VISION of the SHIELD was a smokescreen for ulterior motives. And yet no NMD opponent from 1997-2002 ever pointed out that the defensive SHIELD was really meant to ensure force projection. One possible explanation is that skeptics had internalized the SHIELD frame to such an extent that NMD’s offensive purpose was difficult to see. In sum, it’s reasonable to assume that senators accepted the frames to a large degree, and that this in turn shaped their votes. Also, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, even if legislators didn’t ‘believe’ the frames in the representationalist sense, they still may have functioned as schemata, unconsciously motivating the inferences and lexical choices they made.

On the other hand, this chapter has also offered evidence for rhetorical coercion. I’ve drawn largely on the Congressional Record to show how metaphors enabled entrapment, how they were contested, and how they created a situation where skeptical senators expected a public backlash for opposing NMD. From Krebs and Jackson’s perspective, this is sufficient to show the influence of the frames—their internalization is irrelevant. Since this is a far more parsimonious explanation than metaphorical framing, I wouldn’t blame readers for preferring it. A caveat is in order, however: as I stressed in Chapters 4 and 6, rhetorical coercion actually depends on metaphorical cognition. Contra Jackson and Krebs, I have

226 See Bormann 2008; Mutimer 2000; O’Rielly 2007; and Pelopidas 2011.
argued that the social and individual levels are difficult to separate.

A final qualifier is needed at this point. Although there is no *a priori* reason to assume any major differences between the two chambers, further study is required to determine whether my findings from the Senate are applicable to the House of Representatives.

With that caveat in mind, let’s move on to consider counter-explanations. SDI was a particularly potent demonstration of metaphorical framing because two competing factors (compelling security rationales and vested interests) were largely absent. The 1997-2002 period is a harder case for the metaphorical framing account, because all three alternative causal drivers were present. In the NMD case, strategic motivations, vested interests, and partisan politics were all in play. However, none of these drivers alone—or even in combination—were sufficient to account for senators’ acquiescence.

In fact, at least one factor, vested interests, seems to have had no impact on senators’ votes at all. Evidence for the effect of vested interests on senators’ votes is surprisingly thin. I expected the ‘military industrial complex’ to play a powerful role in this case, because the missile defense bureaucracy in the Pentagon was firmly institutionalized, unlike the early 1980s. Also, the major defense firms—all of whom bankrolled NMD lobby groups and legislators—were hurting financially and keen to get missile defense contracts, and to land follow-on contracts. A near-term deployment decision would bring the companies needed funds. But the two other corners of the ‘iron triangle,’ the Pentagon and legislators themselves, wouldn’t fully cooperate. The Chiefs, the head of the Ballistic Missile Defense Office, other senior officers, and the Defense Secretary all opposed the National Missile Defense Act of 1999. These actors all supported limited NMD to varying degrees, but they resisted the hyperbole coming from Capitol Hill and Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy in Georgetown. What about the legislature? A 2001 study by Matthew Jarvis shows that congresspersons’ floor votes on NMD from 1990-2000 were not significantly associated with missile defense contracts in their states/districts. Neither were roll call votes associated with defense contractors’ campaign contributions. In short, vested interests were certainly present, and to a greater degree than during the SDI years, because the program was more

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227 See Hartung and Ciarrocca 2000; and Pratt 2011, 35.
228 Jarvis 2001.
mature and had cultivated constituencies in Congress, DOD, and the contractors. However, as was the case in the 1980s, these pressures didn’t seem to shape senators’ roll call votes.

On the other hand, voting may well have been influenced by legislators’ assessment of the country’s security needs, as realists might expect. Proponents had more valid strategic reasons to support NMD after the Cold War than they did when Reagan first proposed SDI, because defending against ROGUE launches was far more feasible than trying to thwart a massive Soviet attack. And whereas “Star Wars” risked a counterproductive arms race with Moscow (a peer competitor), the US had the resources to stay ahead of ROGUE STATES should they choose to arm their warheads with countermeasures. Most importantly, assuming a workable system could be devised, America could project power unhindered by unconventional ROGUE STATE threats. Proponents returned to this point again and again in their rhetoric, as we’ve seen. It would be absurd to rule out what Chapter 2 called “hegemonic realism” as a policy motivation. However, even if realpolitik influenced NMD supporters, two caveats are in order. First, the strategic threat itself was metaphorically constituted. It was inseparable from ROGUE STATE, PROLIFERATION, and SHIELD metaphors. The three frames not only made the threat tangible for domestic audiences, they also formed the core vocabulary of elite discourse. Second, security considerations can’t fully explain critics’ acquiescence, because their strategic views precluded a large role for missile defense. Skeptics never mentioned force projection as a legitimate goal for NMD. Instead, they voiced qualified support for the program as “insurance” against a ROGUE or accidental launch—while noting that the risk of either was very low. Opponents also argued that withdrawing from the ABM Treaty would increase nuclear proliferation. Finally, they thought the program was already over-funded, and they concurred with DOD that it was moving as fast as it could, and that the compressed schedule was already quite risky. Once again, there is a gap between skeptics’ words and their behavior. Based on their strategic arguments alone, we would expect them to have cut program funding, but instead they acquiesced in large increases. Something other than security concerns drove critics’ concessions on strategic defense.

Could that “something” have been simple partisan politics rather than metaphorical

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229 President Bill Clinton, “Remarks at Georgetown University,” 1746, 1 September 2000. Transcript available in WCPD, page unavailable.
framing? There is some merit to this view. First, skeptics’ acquiescence was understandable in light of the Clinton administration’s public support for a limited NMD. Clinton had worked hard to co-opt the issue since the Republican takeover in 1995, so Democratic senators may have been “reluctant to go out on a limb against national missile defense” lest the president “saw it off.” The problem with this, though, is that skeptics’ acquiescence continued after George W. Bush took office. Part of this, to be sure, was due to the surge in nationalist feeling after 11 September 2001. This atmosphere made opposition to any national security program hard to sustain. For instance, after the terrorist attacks, Armed Services Committee Chair Carl Levin decided to drop his effort to cut Bush’s requested NMD budget increase. Chairman Levin declared that in proposing the cut, he had taken an appropriate step on an issue of national importance… In my view, however, this is the wrong time for divisive debate on issues of national defense. We cannot let issues like this pull us apart and undermine our common sense of national purpose in fighting terrorism.

Skeptics made many similar remarks indicating that they were suspending their opposition for the sake of national unity, and that a fair hearing for their views was “not possible under the current circumstances.” Although 9/11 probably contributed to skeptics’ acquiescence, it’s important to keep in mind that skeptics were giving ground on NMD long before 9/11. Opposing the program was already difficult; the attacks merely raised the political cost of doing so. More fundamentally, NMD frames may have shaped the impact of 9/11 itself. One possible lesson from the attacks was that low-tech threats were paramount. Obviously, this would have augured against a large emphasis on strategic defense. This was not the conclusion the public seems to have drawn, however. Instead, the lesson most Americans drew was that “some of the country’s adversaries are prepared to do the unthinkable against the United States, actually using missiles.” This was the argument that

235 Lindsay and O’Hanlon 2002, 168.
the Bush administration used, and it was enabled by ROGUE STATE metaphors. This is evident in the following quotes from two leading NMD advocates:

> Obviously one of the most important developments of the past year... was this horrible attack on the United States on September 11. What that also brought home, as the President explained in his State of the Union message where he spoke about the axis of evil, is the danger of countries, outlaw states, developing weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them, who also have close connections to the network of global terrorist organizations.  

> What our threat was—and we learned on September 11 just how real this was—was from rogue nations. And we ought to be able to begin to prepare as to how to defend ourselves from that.

ROGUE demonology allowed supporters to forge a rhetorical link between 9/11 and missile defense. There is one final argument against the partisan politics account. That is, the four frames discussed in this chapter enabled supporters to use NMD for partisan gain in the first place. Political contestation is fundamentally rhetorical contestation, and the metaphors I’ve analyzed gave proponents the advantage in that struggle.

It seems, then, that alternative explanations for NMD’s success from 1997-2002 all have serious shortcomings. Vested interests were present but didn’t directly shape senators’ votes. National security concerns and partisanship both mattered, but their effects depended in part on metaphorical framing. Of all these explanations, therefore, I believe metaphorical framing fits the case best.

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CONCLUSION

Introduction

After recapping the findings in part one, part two outlines the contributions the study has made to the academic literature on U.S. missile defense, while the third part discusses policy advocacy. Part four covers the implications of my analysis for their broader field of International Relations (IR). The chapter concludes by noting the limitations of the study and highlighting avenues for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

This study asked how it was possible for NMD to have been revived in the early 1980s and approved for deployment in 2002, despite chronic concerns about its feasibility, cost, and rationale. Finding extant literature wanting, I proposed a generalizable theoretical framework to explain NMD’s success. I called the approach “metaphorical framing.” It joined the insights of cognitive linguistics with IR constructivism and proposed two analytically distinct ways that metaphor shapes policymakers’ decisionmaking: metaphorical cognition and rhetorical coercion.

The evidence presented here supports the conclusion that NMD’s revival and eventual deployment were made possible in part by metaphorical framing. I arrived at this conclusion through detailed case studies of two strategic defense programs: the Strategic Defense Initiative (1983-1988) and National Missile Defense (1997-2002). Borrowing metaphor analysis procedures from cognitive linguistics, I found that four key metaphorical
frames structured missile defense discourse in each case. SDI was constituted as a JOURNEY guided by a VISION (or ILLUSION, depending on which side one was on) of a nationwide SHIELD. Policymakers justified missile defense from 1997-2002 as follows: PROLIFERATION to ROGUE STATES required that the US complete its JOURNEY toward a nationwide SHIELD. For each case, the discourse analysis offered evidence consistent with metaphorical cognition. Policymakers used metaphorical frames extensively, systematically, and often unreflexively. This is consistent with the proposition that metaphors constituted the concepts with which decisionmakers reasoned about missile defense. It’s also possible that metaphorical frames predisposed policymakers to act in ways consistent with the metaphors they used: for example, senators who supported SDI largely avoided the ILLUSION frame. I also noted weaknesses in the metaphorical cognition account, however. For one thing, the evidence for it was merely correlational. More important, metaphorical cognition couldn’t explain why the same senators who tarred SDI as an ILLUSION and a ‘JOURNEY to nowhere’ also championed a ‘robust’ SDI and acquiesced in such large increases for the program. The SDI case exposed a gap between skeptics’ metaphors and their behavior that only rhetorical coercion explained. In fact, process tracing for both cases uncovered substantial evidence supporting rhetorical coercion. Analysis of the Congressional Record and other sources showed that dominant metaphors enabled rhetorical entrapment and created a situation where skeptical senators expected a public backlash for opposing NMD. The fear of public punishment, I concluded, went a long way towards explaining critics’ acquiescence, and hence the political revival of strategic defense.

Threats, vested interests, and domestic politics sometimes played important roles as well. In some cases, they were necessary for NMD’s success, but they were never sufficient, because the effects of these factors often hinged on metaphorical framing. Ultimately, it’s difficult to imagine the resurrection of strategic defense without the frames identified in this study. They were essential to the program’s political and strategic legitimation. I don’t claim that metaphor was the only or even the most important driver of NMD, but the study contains strong evidence that it was a necessary factor.
Contributions to the Study of U.S. Strategic Defense

The purpose of the thesis was not to prescribe whether or how NMD should be deployed. Rather, my intention was to enhance scholarly understanding of the origins of today’s system. The findings have important implications for rationalist and post-positivist analyses of U.S. missile defense policy.

On the rationalist side, the study has shown the limitations of analyses based solely on security rationales, electoral politics, and vested interests. Even combined, as in several prior studies, it was the interaction between material interests and discourse that paved the way for the revival and ultimate deployment of strategic defenses.

The dissertation has also made major contributions to the discursive literature on NMD. Researchers have often mentioned metaphor’s role in making missile defense possible—one scholar even devoted an article to the topic. (I surveyed this literature in Chapter 3.) My study has condensed the insights of these scholars, translated some of their claims into falsifiable propositions, and tested the resulting hypotheses with two detailed case studies. By confirming the importance of metaphor to U.S. missile defense, the thesis has strengthened confidence in the claims of prior scholars, many of which were asserted in passing, as parts of larger projects.

I was also able to build upon the literature’s insight that American identity was crucial to the politics of strategic defense. The case studies showed in great detail how the SHIELD, ROGUE STATE, and JOURNEY metaphors shaped and were shaped by U.S. identity and interests.

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1 See Choy 2003; Handberg 2002; and Pratt 1990 and 2011.
2 Masters 2005.
This study also confirms what other studies of missile defense rhetoric have found;\(^3\) namely, that NMD advocacy has often been misleading—at times deliberately so—and that this deception was vital to the program’s success. The thesis puts rhetorical subterfuge in a new light, however, by showing how even cynical, instrumental use of metaphor hinged on a socio-cognitive substrate shared by opponents and advocates alike. Chapter 6, for example, found that while SDI supporters sometimes described the program as a “peace shield” for rhetorical effect, this representation was intelligible only because of other metaphors in SHIELD’s semantic network: NATION-STATES ARE CONTAINERS, VULNERABILITY IS OPENNESS, DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION, and others. These less obvious metaphors, used by SDI critics and supporters alike, enabled proponents to frame “Star Wars” as a SHIELD in the first place, and discouraged the use of alternatives like “weapon” or the more neutral term “system.” Metaphors like VULNERABILITY IS OPENNESS unconsciously motivated the inferences and lexical choices speakers made—even as they justified self-serving policies. In sum, many of the metaphors identified in this dissertation shaped senators’ cognition regardless of whether they were ‘believed.’ The socio-cognitive basis of metaphors paints a more nuanced picture of rhetorical deception in NMD advocacy.

Moreover, because I had the luxury of writing an entire dissertation on this topic, I was able to overcome some of the limitations of the discursive literature on NMD. Most scholars focus disproportionately on texts of strategic defense proponents.\(^4\) But without systematically comparing pro and anti-missile defense rhetoric, as this study has done, it’s difficult to explain why the former had better resonance. Only by contrasting Reagan’s VISION with opponents’ ILLUSION counter-frame, for instance, can we see why pro-SDI rhetoric was so much more seductive. Also, several previous studies\(^5\) offer only static snapshots of NMD discourse, ignoring the contingency of discursive (re)articulation in a changing historical and political context (what Jennifer Milliken calls “the play of practice”\(^6\)). By contrast, I’ve analyzed missile defense rhetoric at two crucial junctures: before and after the Cold War. The study documented both continuity and change in this discourse, and showed how the discursive and material environment co-evolved. For

\(^3\) See FitzGerald 2000; and Mitchell 2000.
\(^4\) Linenthal 1989 and Peoples 2010 are exceptions.
\(^6\) Milliken 1999.
instance, ROGUE STATES emerged to fill the “threat blank” left by the USSR’s demise, but it was the ROGUE STATE frame that later turned Pyongyang’s fizzled rocket launch into a major security crisis warranting NMD. Finally, unlike previous studies of strategic defense discourse, the dissertation paid close attention to rationalist counter-explanations like threat perceptions, domestic politics, and vested interests. Doing so not only increases confidence in the importance of metaphor for U.S. NMD, it also shows how the material and the metaphorical were intimately connected (a point I’ll return to below).

This leads to the final contribution the study has made to the discursive literature on missile defense; that is, the identification of two distinct causal pathways by which discourse enabled NMD. Post-structuralist studies7 have established that metaphor helped make missile defense possible. This dissertation compliments post-structuralist work by highlighting causal linkages between metaphors and policy outcomes. I was able to do this by borrowing from cognitive linguistics (for metaphorical cognition) and Krebs and Jackson’s ‘coercive constructivism’ approach (for rhetorical coercion). These alternative theoretical tools yielded novel insights.

Implications for Policy Advocacy

Although the goal of this thesis was to enhance scholarly understanding of NMD policy, the findings are relevant to those who wish to change that policy. Since missile defense supporters have done an excellent job on the rhetorical front, I’ll discuss the lessons that opponents should draw from this study. Unfortunately for skeptics, the prospects for stopping NMD in the foreseeable future are not good.

As long as advocates link NMD to topoi of American exceptionalism, absolute security, etc., critics will have a very difficult time curbing the program. Changing metaphors could help break these associations. For instance, opponents could try re-framing strategic defense as a SWORD rather than a SHIELD. This frame switch might resonate particularly well today, as the military retrenches while it winds down unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

7 See Bormann 2008; and Masters 2005.
There are serious problems with this strategy, however, because policymakers of all stripes, as well as the media, have been linking NMD to SHIELDS for well over a generation now. If my conclusions are correct, then the metaphor is firmly embedded in policymakers’ thinking—and perhaps the public’s as well. This poses high barriers to entry for novel metaphors. In principle, meanings are always changing, but in the short to medium term they appear to actors as fixed, particularly when they are undergirded by political power. This is certainly the case with metaphors: “Because they have apparent naturalness and are integrated in complex networks of association,” explains Paul Chilton, “existing metaphors will tend to be preferred and to persist.” This is especially likely with frames, like SHIELD, that resonate strongly with embodied experience. The SDI and NMD case studies bear this out—the SHIELD frame proved remarkably resilient. And this wasn’t due just to the metaphor itself. It was because SHIELD fit with the broader embodied discourse of nuclear strategy, according to which STATES ARE CONTAINERS, NMD IS A COVER, and DEFENSE FAILURE IS PENETRATION. So, for today’s opponents of NMD, the problem isn’t just the individual metaphors; the problem is with the semantic network with which the metaphors cohere. Since replacing the network wholesale is unrealistic, critics’ choice of new metaphors is constrained by the existing discourse. Unfortunately for critics, that discourse strongly favors the SHIELD frame.

Regardless of which metaphors skeptics use, this study suggests that any successful framing strategy must be emotionally and narratively engaging, not just intellectually coherent. In Chapter 7, I concluded that critics were disadvantaged by their dry, technocratic arguments against missile defense. Advocates retorted with a compelling narrative featuring heroes, ROGUE STATE villains, and epic JOURNEYS. The program’s critics may have had ‘the facts on their side,’ but ‘the facts’ were clearly insufficient in a political environment saturated with competing claims. As consumer psychologists have long known, and as political scientists are only starting to appreciate, engaging audiences is an emotional process as much or more than a ‘rational’ one. Sadly for NMD skeptics, for the past

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9 Krebs and Jackson 2007, 45-6.
12 Although I haven’t updated my analysis to include contemporary NMD discourse, a quick glance at the major newspaper headlines suggests that the metaphor remains as active as ever.
13 For example, Zaltman and Zaltman 2008.
14 For example, Westen 2007.
generation or so, the Republicans have proven much better than Democrats at emotionally resonant framing.\textsuperscript{15}

Instead of re-framing, another strategy NMD opponents could use would be to formulate and disseminate new \textit{topoi} to attach their arguments to. For example, instead of the \textit{absolute} security promised by strategic defense, actors could advocate for the \textit{sufficient} or \textit{reasonable} security of diplomacy, arms control, and deterrence. But cultural commonplaces are slow to change, so the creation of novel \textit{topoi} is a long-term project—an uncertain one at that.\textsuperscript{16} The policy world runs on far shorter timelines. Latching onto existing commonplaces is probably a better bet.

Be that as it may, all these rhetorical strategies may be beside the point, because the NMD case showed that after Bush withdrew from the ABM Treaty in late 2001, leading opponents of missile defense all but abandoned frontal opposition to the program. Their acquiescence seems to have bled into W. Bush’s second term and the current administration as well. In 2008, for instance, the Democratic Congress passed the highest ever appropriation for NMD: over $10 billion. The Senate Armed Services Committee topped up President Bush’s request by $75 million. Not to be outdone, the House voted 397-27 to add $200 million to the administration’s request. Critics did push for more realistic testing and aggressive oversight, but “lawmakers just made minor cuts to the overall program.” Significant reductions were politically impossible.\textsuperscript{17} The election of Barack Obama didn’t change the situation. An ICBM threat hasn’t materialized, the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system hasn’t had a successful test flight for over three years, and Democrats retain a precarious hold on the Senate, but missile defense funding remains at near-historic highs. To be sure, Obama has shown less dedication to missile defense than his predecessor. In 2009, he scaled back some key Missile Defense Agency programs. Most notably, he scratched Bush’s plan to station BMD interceptors in Poland and the Czech Republic. But putting the interceptors in Eastern Europe made little strategic sense anyway, and the Pentagon supported cancellation.\textsuperscript{18} The Euro-site cancellation and Obama’s other cuts were

\textsuperscript{15} Lakoff 2002 and 2004.
\textsuperscript{16} Krebs and Jackson 2007, 45-6.
\textsuperscript{17} Pratt 2011, 18.
pragmatic moves and not fundamental breaks with Bush’s policies. Ultimately, the President has little flexibility because any perceived ‘weakness’ on missile defense invites fierce Republican attacks. Witness the March 2012 flap over Obama’s unguarded comments to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he would have “more flexibility” to discuss missile defense after the November elections. All of this is to say that if skeptical policymakers choose to revive their campaign now, regardless of their rhetorical strategy, it will likely be a lonely crusade—and perhaps a futile one too, given the incrementalism that increasingly characterizes NMD policy. It will likely take a “cognitive punch” like another major terrorist attack, or regime change in Iran or North Korea, to upset Washington’s pro-NMD consensus and gives skeptics’ framings a chance to take hold.

**Contributions to International Relations Theory**

Although this dissertation addressed a discrete empirical question, it nonetheless enriches the IR literature on metaphor, discourse analysis, and cognitive foreign policy analysis. I’ll address each topic below.

This study adds to the growing empirical literature on metaphor in IR. However, it takes an unorthodox approach by engaging fully with the issue of embodiment. With a few exceptions, metaphor analysis in IR is dominated by scholars who rule out conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) *a priori*. Most researchers cite Lakoff and Johnson and borrow their examples while summarily dismissing (or, more often, ignoring) the embodiment thesis on which CMT is premised. This may be because discourse analysts associate CMT with psychological reductionism. Discourse analysis (DA) critiques psychology for assuming a pre-discursive subject and taking for granted the possibility that certain representations are

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21 On incrementalism and NMD, see Handberg 2002, 31.
22 Adler 2005, 75.
24 See Blanchard forthcoming; Chilton 1996b; and Slingerland, Blanchard, and Boyd-Judson 2007.
meaningful (even thinkable) in the first place.\textsuperscript{26} For this reason, DA almost always aims not to uncover the thinking behind discourse, but to show “the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another.”\textsuperscript{27} But the main problem for DA seems to be CMT’s purported bio-physical foundationalism. In their canonical text, \textit{Metaphors We Live By}, Lakoff and Johnson assume that the abstract and the unfamiliar are made meaningful by, or “grounded in,” metaphors from embodied experience.\textsuperscript{28} One can easily take this to mean, as David Mutimer does, that the somatic and the discursive can be disentangled, with the former serving as an inviolable ‘foundation’ for the latter.\textsuperscript{29} Discourse analysts, including scholars of metaphor, are rightfully skeptical of such a materialist foundationalism. It ignores the discursive construction of the body itself, as post-structuralist feminists would point out.\textsuperscript{30} I’ve tried to address these concerns in the theory chapter of this dissertation. Chapter 4 showed that Lakoff and Johnson don’t presuppose a bio-physical foundationalism; in fact, the multi-directional interplay between bodies, brains, and the social world is central to their approach. As a non-reductionist, non-eliminative theory, CMT is therefore compatible with metaphor analysis, and perhaps other forms of discourse analysis (DA) as well.

This compatibility matters because conceptual metaphor theory can greatly enhance DA.\textsuperscript{31} For example, it explains how and why articulations of social identity\textsuperscript{32} and statecraft\textsuperscript{33} are constituted by metaphors of physical experience. Paul Chilton notes that “although discourses are historically contingent, their conceptual basis is not entirely arbitrary.”\textsuperscript{34} The universality of embodied experience might also account for the surprising commensurability

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Doty93} Doty 1993.
\bibitem{Campbell92} Campbell 1992, 4.
\bibitem{LakoffJohnson2003} Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980].
\bibitem{Mutimer2008} Mutimer 2008, 116.
\bibitem{Blanchard2008} Blanchard 2008, 28.
\bibitem{IR} Even within IR, discourse analysis encompasses a broad range of theoretical approaches and methods. Although there are family resemblances (Milliken 1999), not every approach to discourse in IR is totally congruent. Scholars are influenced by post-structuralism (e.g., Campbell 1992; Doty 1993), post-Marxism (Weldes 1999), and post-analytic philosophy (Fierke 1998), among newer approaches like cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). DA methods are just as diverse. They include argument analysis (e.g., Crawford 2002); metaphor analysis (Chilton 1996a; Drulák 2006), predicate analysis (Doty 1993), and narrative analysis (Suganami 1997), to name a few.
\end{thebibliography}
in metaphors of inter-cultural discourse.\textsuperscript{35} More generally, as this study has shown, embodiment can help DA theorize the discursive construction of reality in cognitively (and neurally) plausible terms. Theorizing these mechanisms could posit causal relationships between discourse and political practice, an inference seldom attempted in DA.\textsuperscript{36} For example, as I have argued here, discourse might promote political mobilization by activating somatic markers related to survival.\textsuperscript{37} Finally, CMT can show how human experience of the material world might make some discursive representations (like SHIELD, for example) more ‘commonsensical’ than others. Representations that tap into shared embodied experiences are likely to resonate with audiences more than representations that don’t. This suggests a solution to a perennial puzzle in DA: why some discourses prevail and become commonsense while competing discourses fall by the wayside.\textsuperscript{38}

The dissertation shows that materiality matters to DA in another way. Specifically, I’ve shown the value of taking rationalist counter-explanations seriously,\textsuperscript{39} and exploring the relationship between material and discursive power with the concept of rhetorical coercion. Discourse analysts themselves remind us that materiality matters. Even Carol Cohn, whose work looms large in feminist critiques of “techno-strategic discourse,” argues that the discourse functions mainly to legitimate policies chosen for other reasons:

> We are assuming that the language [of techno-strategic discourse] itself actually articulates the criteria and reasoning strategies upon which nuclear weapons development and deployment decisions are made. I believe that this is largely an illusion. Instead... techno-strategic discourse functions more as a gloss, as an ideological curtain behind which the actual reasons for these decisions hide... Rather than informing and shaping decisions, it far more often functions as a legitimation for political outcomes that have occurred for utterly different reasons.\textsuperscript{40}

Paul Chilton makes a related claim. “Metaphors determine nothing in an absolute sense,” he writes; they are “are selected, specified, and formulated in discourse, according to interests.”\textsuperscript{41} Cohn and Chilton aren’t implying that discourse is unimportant, of course. Discursive legitimation is necessary for all public policies regardless of their origin. But their

\textsuperscript{35} Slingerland, Blanchard, and Boyd-Judson 2007.
\textsuperscript{36} See Doty 1993, 298; and Hopf 2004, 33.
\textsuperscript{37} See also Hart 2005.
\textsuperscript{38} Blanchard forthcoming, 14.
\textsuperscript{39} This is seldom attempted in IR discourse analysis. A notable exception is Crawford 2002.
\textsuperscript{40} Cohn 1987, 716.
\textsuperscript{41} Chilton 1996b, 74, 94.
comments suggest that DA should pay closer attention than it has to the nexus between the metaphorical discourse and material interests. Metaphor legitimates interests, but interests motivate the articulation and dissemination of metaphor. The case studies illustrated this dynamic by illuminating the mechanisms of rhetorical coercion and by paying close attention to materialist counter-explanations. For example, it’s hard to conceive of SDI’s revival without the vision of the SHIELD, and it’s equally difficult to imagine the Reagan administration bothering with that rhetoric without a political motive. This is why I concluded that it’s useful to think of metaphor and material interests as jointly necessary.

Of course, many if not most discourse analysts would shy away from positivistic language suggesting that discourse and interests are discrete variables—instead, for post-structuralists in particular, they are co-constitutive, as in Foucault’s concept of power/knowledge. This is correct in the broadest sense. When applying DA to explain discrete policy outcomes, however, it’s unhelpful to make this claim as a blanket statement. The case studies suggest that whether metaphors and interests are separable depends on which interests we’re considering, and the degree to which actors internalize those interests’ framings. For example, it’s fallacious to disjoin interests and metaphor when we’re talking about commonsense rogue state and proliferation threats. One can’t sever these perceived threats from the frames that make them up—the threats are the metaphors. On the other hand, Reagan’s re-election motivated the vision of the SHIELD. Electoral concerns had nothing whatsoever to do with metaphor. One can argue that Reagan’s interest in political power itself was constituted by other discourses, but this leads to a position that only discourse matters—a position that many critical discourse analysts themselves reject. The upshot is that whether interests and metaphor should be treated as co-constitutive depends on the empirical context, as well as how deeply the analyst seeks to problematize a foreign policy question.

Finally, the dissertation suggests how conceptual metaphor theory can enhance cognitive foreign policy analysis (CFPA). Many conceptual metaphors—like state are containers—are conventionalized. These taken for granted metaphors are less recognizable

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42 Foucault 1980.
44 In addition to the Cohn and Chilton quotes above, see Larsen 1997, 21; and Van Dijk 2001, 113.
45 CFPA includes new perspectives informed by the neurosciences (e.g., Mercer 2010), as well as traditional cognitive approaches like schema theory, analogical reasoning, and operational code analysis.
(and recognizably important) than other frames, such as historical analogies. Perhaps because of this, analogical reasoning has been widely researched in CFPA, whereas metaphorical reasoning garners far less attention. The thesis offers three reasons why cognitive researchers should pay more attention to metaphor. First, Chapter 4 showed that metaphorical framing jibes with the increasing recognition in political psychology (and cognitive science generally) that affect and cognition are inextricable. Second, as the case studies suggested, metaphor is ubiquitous in foreign policy deliberation. Finally, Chapter 4 argued that conceptual metaphor is socially as well as individually constituted. Metaphor inheres in individual cognition and action, but it cannot exist outside its intersubjective context. This means that CMT enables analysts to avoid the reductionism that characterizes cognitive approaches.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

The present study has several limitations regarding the theoretical framework and research design. Many of these limitations, however, highlight fruitful avenues for future research.

The metaphorical framing approach excludes two factors important to missile defense policy outcomes—arguably, to any public policy: gender and the policy process.

Regarding the former, many of the metaphors discussed here, particularly those centering on CONTAINER and PENETRATION, are deeply gendered. Such gendering legitimated NMD by securing “a representation of the US that is animated through masculine

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46 See, for example, Brunk 2008; Khong 1992; and Houghton 2001.
47 I surveyed the whole of political psychology and found one theory article (Shimko 1994) and three experimental studies. The experiments found evidence of metaphorical reasoning among elites (Schlesinger and Lau 2000) and the public (Hartman 2007; Lau and Schlesinger 2005; Schlesinger and Lau 2000).
48 CPFA traditionally treats affect as distinct from—and detrimental to—rational decisionmaking. However, drawing from recent advances in neuroscience (for example, Damasio 1994), many political psychologists have begun treating emotion as neither good nor bad per se. Rather, affect is thought to be an integral part of cognitive processes, including “information gathering; information processing; calculation of cost, risk, and benefit; use of analogy; and receptivity to argument” (Crawford 2000:137; for elaboration, see McDermott 2004; Neuman et al. 2007; and Westen 2007). Mercer (2010) adds that emotion constitutes politically consequential beliefs like trust and credibility.
49 Chilton 1996b, 29-32, 124.
50 Flanik 2011a.
significations of power.” I only hinted at this in the case studies, however. The problem is that CMT doesn’t lend itself readily to gendered analyses of embodied cognition, because gendered differentiation is in tension with Lakoff and Johnson’s emphasis on universal aspects of corporeal experience. Nonetheless, future studies might try to reconcile feminist approaches with CMT. Feminist DA has always paid close attention to metaphor, for one thing. And even post-structuralist feminism and CMT agree on some fundamental points. I would argue that convergence is possible in principle as long as CMT researchers remember that Lakoff and Johnson ultimately reject bio-physical foundationalism. Incorporating feminist ethics could give CMT emancipatory as well as explanatory leverage on masculinized security policies like missile defense.

A more obvious limit to the dissertation’s theoretical approach is its sole focus on metaphor. This was acceptable given my modest goal of identifying conditions of possibility for NMD’s revival. But other drivers shaped this outcome as well, and the preoccupation with metaphor led to somewhat ad-hoc treatment of key factors like institutional structures, policy entrepreneurship, and policy networks. Researchers must take these and other factors into account to build more comprehensive explanations for policy outcomes. One way to do this is to yoke the metaphorical framing approach to causal theories of the policy process that systematically incorporate a wide range of non-discursive factors. Attending to complex interactions between metaphor and extra-discursive factors would yield richer policy explanations. It could also tell us something new about how metaphor works. For instance, we could identify political conditions under which new metaphors are likely to emerge, and unpack the policymaking process to see how a metaphor reaches a tipping point to become the dominant policy frame. Finally, as I’ll explain shortly, attention to extra-discursive drivers can help identify the scope conditions of metaphorical cognition and rhetorical coercion.

This study is limited by the research design as well as the theoretical approach. The issues here are reliability and case selection. I’ll discuss each in turn.

52 Prominent examples include Cohn 1987; and Weber 1995.
54 John Kingdon’s multiple-streams framework is one such approach (Kingdon 1995). For an effort to synthesize the multiple-streams framework with metaphorical framing, see Flanik 2008.
For practical reasons, I performed all coding myself. Because of the subjectivity inherent in conceptual metaphor analysis, confidence in the findings is lower than it would’ve been had I used multiple coders and given formal measures of inter-coder reliability. Future applications of the metaphorical framing approach should therefore use several coders if possible. Fortunately, we know from previous applications of CMT in political science that high rates of inter-coder reliability are achievable.55

The second limitation of the research design is case selection. Recall from Chapter 5 that the 1983-2002 period is divisible into three cases. To show the plausibility of the metaphorical framing account, I chose two cases where NMD advocates succeeded: SDI under Reagan, and NMD under Clinton and Bush. The study omitted the years from 1989-1996. This exclusion is important because strategic defense was downgraded drastically in Clinton’s first term, as Chapter 2 described. Although justified in the initial stages of a research program,56 ‘selecting on the dependent variable’ has some serious downsides for the current study.

First, without contrasting successes with failures, I can only speculate about the conditions under which metaphorical framing works—even within the narrow context of NMD policy in the US. In terms of other policy areas, the theoretical approach is potentially applicable wherever policymakers’ discourse is metaphorically framed, and wherever alternative metaphorical framings are available. But the IR literature on metaphor suggests that these conditions characterize nearly all policy areas. We need a better sense of the theory’s scope conditions to aid case selection for future research. Unfortunately, determining scope conditions is complicated by the two distinct mechanisms posited by the theory: metaphorical cognition and rhetorical coercion. Conditions necessary for one process may be irrelevant to the other. For example, Krebs and Jackson note that rhetorical coercion requires that publics be able to receive claimants’ messaging (the idea being that if publics cannot hear claimants for whatever reason, then claimants cannot enlist them in rhetorical contests with opponents). But this is immaterial to metaphorical cognition, which is focused

solely on elite cognition.\textsuperscript{57} That said, the present study does suggest one factor which, while not a necessary condition, would at least favor both metaphorical cognition and rhetorical coercion. That is, metaphorical framing is especially likely to lead to policy change when “policy windows” open. Policy windows are short-lived “opportunit[ies] for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems.”\textsuperscript{58} They are the moments where policy change is most likely.\textsuperscript{59} Policy windows open at moments of conceptual crisis,\textsuperscript{60} as when the end of the Cold War catalyzed the highly influential PROLIFERATION and ROGUE STATE frames. They can also open when political shifts, policy ideas, and perceived problems intersect and interact.\textsuperscript{61} For instance, in early 1983, NMD—having been politically interred with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty a decade earlier—was largely absent from the U.S. foreign policy agenda. However, policymakers were growing worried about the ‘window of vulnerability,’ a period in which the Soviets could conceivably attain “a theoretical [nuclear] war-winning capability”\textsuperscript{62} that would cripple the U.S. deterrent. Meanwhile, missile defense funding had declined, and a few scientists thought novel, exotic weapons like particle beams and lasers could revive NMD funding. In terms of politics, Americans had recently elected Reagan, who was repulsed by the logic of Mutually Assured Destruction, and Reagan’s advisers wanted to end-run the Nuclear Freeze movement. Together, politics, policy ideas, and perceived problems opened a space for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a sweeping proposal that would have perished had it been introduced earlier. In sum, policy windows and conceptual crises create favorable conditions for novel metaphors to take hold. This is another reason why future research should pay closer attention to the policy process and how it intersects with metaphor.

In addition to making the scope conditions of metaphorical framing hard to identify, selecting on the dependent variable also weakens my argument that metaphorical framing was \textit{necessary} for NMD’s policy success. That claim is hard to justify without comparing successful and unsuccessful cases. Future work, then, should focus on both successful and

\textsuperscript{57} Krebs and Jackson 2007, 47. They also argue that rhetorical coercion is more likely the fewer \textit{topoi} are available for opponents to draw upon to rebut claimants’ arguments (\textit{ibid.}, 48). This too does not pertain to metaphorical cognition.
\textsuperscript{58} Kingdon 1995, 165.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Chilton 1996b.
\textsuperscript{61} Kingdon 1995.
\textsuperscript{62} Nitze 1976, 207.
failed instances of metaphorical framing. If properly matched cases are difficult to find, then researchers should at least undertake detailed counter-factual analyses to support necessity claims. The same applies to discourse analysts who arguably imply causal necessity in their assertion that a given metaphor was a “condition of possibility” for a certain policy outcome.\textsuperscript{63}

The final limitation of this research is the lack of non-verbal evidence for metaphorical cognition. This is also an artifact of the research design. By focusing on texts exclusively, the only evidence we have of metaphorical cognition is patterns of lexical cohesion (i.e., metaphorical frames) on one hand, and congruence between those patterns and political behavior (e.g., senators’ votes) on the other. Although these findings are valuable, the leap from language to cognition is problematic, as I mentioned in Chapter 4. Future studies on conceptual metaphor should therefore triangulate this study’s findings by looking for non-linguistic traces of cross-domain mapping in the brain. Political psychologist Todd Hartman, for example, has found that subjects primed with political metaphors recognize word pairs that are congruent with the metaphors more quickly than word pairs that aren’t. According to Hartmann, this is non-verbal evidence that “political metaphors generate automatic associations between distinct concepts.”\textsuperscript{64} The growing field of metaphor analysis in IR has produced ample linguistic evidence for conceptual metaphor. Coupled with this qualitative work, experiments like Hartmann’s could generate robust converging evidence for the micro-foundations of conceptual metaphor.

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\textsuperscript{63} Herrera and Braumoeller 2004, 16.  
\textsuperscript{64} Hartmann 2007, 13.
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