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Louis Kriesberg; Ross Klein

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# Changes in Public Support for U.S. Military Spending

LOUIS KRIESBERG  
ROSS KLEIN

*Department of Sociology  
Syracuse University*

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The proportion of Americans believing the United States is spending too little on national defense has varied considerably over the past four decades. In recent years, this proportion has increased from 12% in 1973 to 30% in 1978. Using data from the NORC General Social Surveys for 1973 through 1978, this article studies the correlates of opinions about defense spending and seeks to account for the trend toward increased support for greater arms spending.

The results of this analysis suggest that factors important in explaining variations in opinions about arms spending vary with different historical periods. Three interconnected changes over the six years under study are suggested by the data to produce the aforementioned trend: the decline of the impact of the Vietnam war, a rise in particular elements of conservative ideology, and an increase in anti-Soviet and anticommunist sentiment.

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Public opinion surveys reveal great consistency and also significant shifts in support of U.S. military expenditures. Since 1937, respondents in many national surveys have been asked whether they thought the country was spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on defense. The question wording has varied from survey to survey, but some inferences can be drawn. Russett (1974, 1975) has shown that the proportion thinking we should spend less began in

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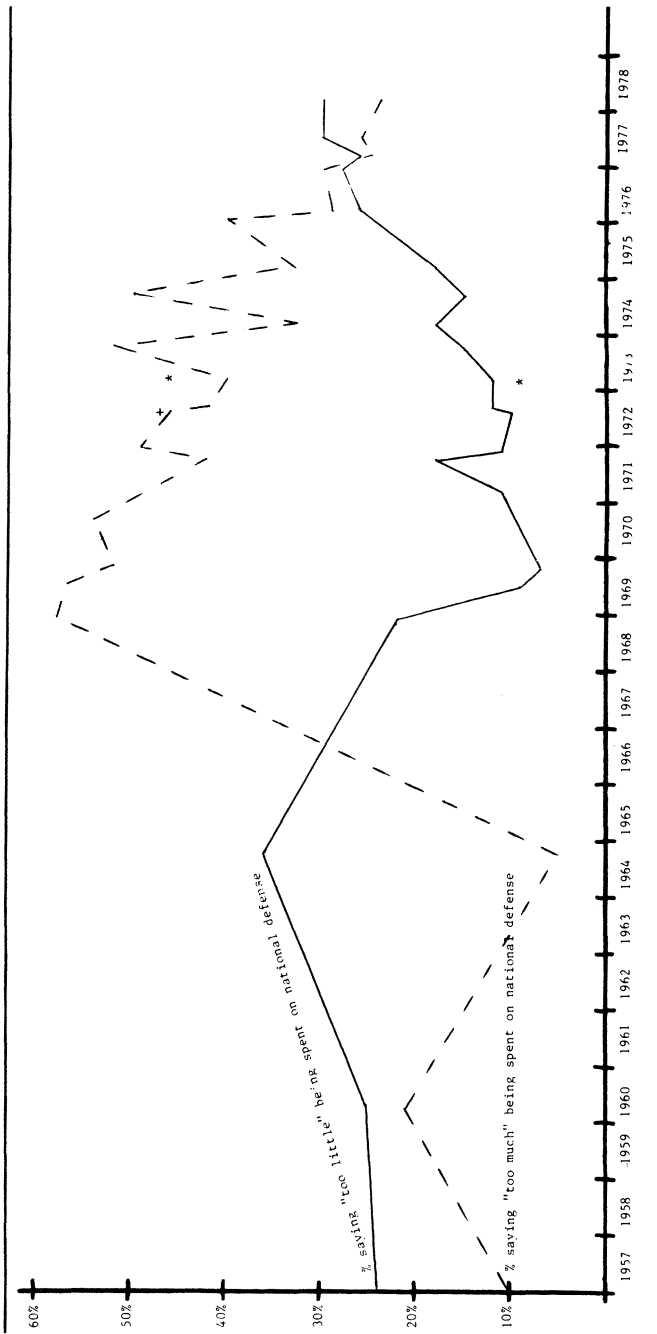
1937 at 20% and fell to 10% in 1939. After World War II, opinions fluctuated, but no more than 35% of the population favored less spending. By the 1950s, the proportion favoring less spending was relatively stable at about 20%. When the question was asked again in 1968, a sharp increase in the proportion thinking we were spending too much was registered. Between December, 1968, and March, 1971, more than half of the respondents with opinions thought we were spending too much. Even surveys in the early 1970s revealed more opposition to increased defense spending than in the 1950s. It appeared that a long-term change to popular resistance to increased defense spending had occurred (Russett and Nincic, 1976).

In this article, we report the trends in public support for arms spending since 1973 and show a return to support for increased spending. The purpose of this article is to examine the correlates of support for increased spending in order to help explain the new trend. This examination will also indicate the extent to which popular judgments about arms spending reflect needs and concerns unrelated to instrumental calculations about the value of increased defense spending for foreign policy objectives.

We will first review the evidence concerning trends in opinions about defense spending. Then we will discuss possible factors related to such opinions, past research about those relationships, and hypotheses about the likely relationships in the 1970s. In our analysis, we will test these hypotheses, assess the relative importance of different correlates of opinions about arms spending, and use the findings to explain the recent trends in opinions about arms spending.

The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) has conducted an annual General Social Survey each spring between 1972 and 1978. Respondents in these national surveys were asked about expenditures for many national programs, including "the military, armaments, and defense." They were asked to "tell whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount." In 1973, the first time the question was asked in this series, 40% of those with opinions said we were spending too much, 12% said we were spending too little, and 48% said we were spending about the right amount. Each year, the proportion saying we were spending too much has declined, and the proportion saying we were spending too little rose or remained the same. In the spring of 1978, 24% said we were spending too much, and 30% said we were spending too little.

Figure 1 presents the proportion of the nation thinking we are spending too much and the proportion thinking we are spending too



**Figure 1: Trends in Opinions About Defense Spending, 1957-1978**

\*There were two separate polls given in March 1973—one by NORC and the other (which is indicated by \*) by Gallup. These, and each of the other polls used in this figure, are listed on the following page.

+The August 1972 Gallup Poll asked the respondents whether they thought spending on national defense should be increased, kept the same, reduced, or ended. The last two categories were combined to indicate those saying "too much." The wording of this and the other polls appears on the next page.

little on defense, from 1957 to 1978. The figure includes the results of national surveys conducted by several different organizations. Although the wording of the question has varied slightly, the trends are clear and the variations do not appear to be related to differences in wording.<sup>1</sup> By 1978, the proportion thinking we were spending too little was greater than the proportion thinking we were spending too much. This was true in the later 1950s and early 1960s. But note that the proportion choosing either response was greater in 1978 than earlier; opinions seem to be more polarized now.

The very long-range shifts in public opinion about defense spending can be readily related to external military conditions. The proportion favoring *less* defense spending fell before the United States entered World War II; it rose after the war ended, but fell again with the beginning of the Cold War. It rose again in the late 1940s, but fell again with the Korean war and then remained stable until the late stages of the Vietnam war. Does the new trend represent a response to a new perceived threat from the Soviet Union? Or does it reflect factors that do not pertain to external threats to the country, but responses to personal or ideological concerns? Is there some kind of "normal" level of popular support for the military which is usually present, and the Vietnam war produced an aberration from it? In order to answer these and related questions, we need to consider the various factors which have been found to be related to support for increased arms spending.

### **VARIABLES RELATED TO OPINIONS ABOUT ARMS SPENDING**

We will discuss seven kinds of explanations of variations or trends in opinions about military spending: namely, personality, ideology, past generational experience, adherence to authority, economic self-interest, instrumental calculation, and the social-historical milieu. We will also draw on explanations of varying support of military

1. The early 1970s had relatively large, short-term variations in the proportion thinking the United States is spending too much on arms. Perhaps the proportion giving this response fell between the October, 1973, AIPO study and the September, 1974, NORC study because of the Yom Kippur War of October, 1973, and the associated confrontation with the Soviet Union. Perhaps the drop in the proportion giving that response afterward was due to the events associated with the resignation of President Nixon in August, 1974.

force in foreign affairs in order to broaden our consideration of possible explanatory factors.

Personality characteristics, a set of psychological orientations developed in early life experiences, may underlie specific opinions about military force and arms spending. Lasswell (1930) has discussed how political motives expressed in public opinions are projections of private motives. There is some relevant supporting evidence of this. For example, Christiansen (1959) has found that latent aggressiveness as well as everyday aggressiveness is related to foreign policy aggressiveness among Norwegian military and naval academy students and applicants who were relatively nationalist. Scott (1960) has found a positive correlation between goals which people advocated at the level of international relations and their corresponding personal values at the level of interpersonal relations. For example, a high concern for status in the personal realm correlated with a concern for a foreign policy backed up by a strong military power. Similarly, persons advocating independence in U.S. foreign policy tend to advocate the same value in their interpersonal relations. Gender may also be considered a personality characteristic, since males and females are socialized into roles with differential emphasis on aggressiveness. Research has generally shown women to be in greater opposition to the use of armed force and to military spending than men (Putney and Middleton, 1962; Hamilton, 1968). But this varies with socioeconomic rank and can be reversed when related to issues of particular significance to women (Kriesberg, 1973: 120).

We hypothesize that respondents with aggressive or mistrusting personality traits or with early experience with violence tend to favor increased arms spending. Personality changes, however, are not likely to be so extensive within the period under study to account for trends in support for greater military expenditures. Perhaps particular situations could arouse latent personality traits at one period and not another.

Ideology is the second possible explanation of differences in opinions about military spending. By ideology, we mean a way of thinking about and viewing the world, particularly its social and political structure. It embodies a set of beliefs and value preferences. Ideology is often viewed as varying along a continuum ranging from conservative to liberal. In studying opinions about foreign policy, Hero (1969) found ideology (along a conservative-liberal continuum) to be related to preferences for isolationist versus cooperative international policies.

He points out that controlling for education reduces the relationship between ideology and opinions about international cooperation. Ladd (1978) suggests that education can be regarded as an indicator of ideological orientations. Using the 1972-1977 NORC data, he found that college graduates now are less likely than high school and grade school graduates to claim U.S. superiority with regard to other countries, to be hostile to communist regimes, and to support military spending. Of course, education is a possible indicator of other than ideological qualities, as we discuss later. We hypothesize that persons with a conservative ideology will tend to support increased arms spending. The trend in public attitudes toward arms spending may be expected to parallel shifts between conservatism and liberalism in the United States.

A third set of variables is past generational experience. Mannheim (1952) has drawn attention to people's experiences in a given historical situation that shape later political orientations. Thus, the political situation when persons reach political maturity has lasting effects; consequently, distinct political generations can be formed. Cutler (1970) found that the political environment of different generations is a source of variations in foreign policy attitudes. His data suggest that persons socialized during World War I or World War II are more likely to advocate war than generations socialized in the 1920s or 1930s. Similarly, Jeffries (1974) found that the opinions about nuclear war varied among three generational groupings; the greatest rejection of nuclear war was among persons reaching political maturity (age 18) during the 1960s, and the greatest acceptance of nuclear warfare among persons reaching political maturity before or during World War II. The generations chronologically between these two have opinions about nuclear war which are in between. In looking at the relationship, Jeffries did not control for chronological age.

We expect that attitudes toward arms spending will vary depending on whether one reaches political maturity during a war or during peace, and whether, if during wartime, the war is successful. We hypothesize that persons attaining political maturity during "successful wars" will support arms spending more than those attaining political maturity during peacetime, and that support for arms spending will be least among those reaching political maturity during an "unsuccessful war." The 1973-1978 trend in attitudes toward arms spending, however, is not likely to be explained by changes in the generational composition of the country.

The past experience of participation in war or in military service may have similarly lasting effect on opinions about arms spending. Research has shown a positive relationship between previous military service and support for the military (Putney and Middleton, 1962) and a belligerent stance on foreign policy issues (Phillips, 1973). Kirkpatrick and Regens (1978) and Brady and Rappoport (1973) also found differences in attitudes among those who experienced heavy combat and those who experienced light or no combat. Similarly, persons with careers in the military were more oriented to the use of military force than persons fulfilling a short-term military commitment. These findings suggest that experience with combat and with the military generally influences opinions about the use of the military in the foreign policy arena. We hypothesize that veterans will tend to support increased arms spending. Even if this hypothesis is supported, however, it would not help explain the trend toward greater support for increased arms expenditures during the period under study.

A fourth explanation of variations in opinions about arms spending emphasizes authority, following leaders, and social conventions. This idea is illustrated in the "mainstream model" proposed by Gamson and Modigliani (1966). The model suggests that with increased education, persons become attached to the "mainstream" of society and in turn are exposed to the mass media to a greater extent. As a result, the opinions of persons in the mainstream fall within the boundaries of open official discussion. Their opinions are shaped by the ideas dominant in the mass media and by the particular leaders whose opinions they accord legitimacy. Their opinions, then, closely follow official government policies. Research by Hamilton (1968) appears to support this model. In a study using 1952 and 1964 election survey data, Hamilton found a positive correlation between attitudes toward the use of bombing and military force and newspaper readership and party affiliation. In both years, there was official government and political party support for the use of force; in turn, those with high newspaper readership also were more likely to accept and support the use of force. Rosi (1965) points out a similar opinion-policy relationships with regard to opinions about nuclear weapons testing, and Hofstetter and Moore (1979) found greater support for defense spending among those who frequently watch TV news than among those who are infrequent viewers.

The mainstream model receives additional support from Lipset and Ladd's (1971) study comparing opinions of persons when they are



in college to opinions of persons after graduation and integration into the larger society. While in the university environment, persons are free from parental and community influences and are able to gain support for critical opinions. After graduation, they reenter the larger society and take part in middle-class life. "The intellectual legacies of the college years are by no means all lost, but the intense pressures of the encapsulated community which make for the distinctive and widely fluctuating character of student political opinion are for most removed as abruptly as they had been introduced" (Lipset and Ladd, 1971: 111). Opinions become more moderate and begin to fall within conventional bounds. Among college students, too, greater integration and involvement in society is associated with more acceptance of the use of military force and war (Putney and Middleton, 1962).

We hypothesize that in periods when government leaders are clearly supportive of increased arms spending, persons who are not alienated and who are attentive to the media and political leadership will also support greater arms spending. If this hypothesis is correct, the trend in attitudes about defense spending should reflect official support of increased arms spending for an important segment of the population.

Variations in defense spending attitudes may also be attributable to differences in economic self-interest. For example, people whose jobs are dependent on defense spending or who live in areas where the local economy depends on military spending would be expected to support more defense spending. This is supported by Phillips's (1973) survey of defense and nondefense workers in New London, Connecticut, which showed that persons working within defense-related industries showed greater support for a U.S. foreign policy based on a strong and "belligerent" military. Greater support for military spending was also found among career military personnel than among short termers (Kirkpatrick and Regens, 1978; Phillips, 1973). Phillips concluded that with regard to the effect of both military service and employment in defense-related industry, the "tendency toward militarism increases with the number of military-oriented milieux to which one has been exposed" (Phillips, 1973: 648).

More indirect measures of economic self-interest have not been found to be so clearly related to opinions about defense spending. Dreier and Szymanski (forthcoming) have found no relationship between employment in industries relatively highly involved in military production and opinions supporting military expenditures. Level

of income or class identification are even more indirect indicators, and the possible relationship might be argued to be either positive or negative in terms of self-interest. Thus, low income or working-class persons may believe that arms spending will drain resources that would otherwise go to improve domestic social and economic conditions; on the other hand, arms spending may be seen a source of expanded employment opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

We hypothesize that direct personal work or career benefits apparently dependent on military expenditures will tend to be related to opinions supporting arms spending. Indirect measures of economic self-interest will not be related to such opinions. Consequently, we hypothesize that changes in perceived economic self-interest would not play an important role in accounting for the new trend in support of increased arms spending.

The sixth explanation of opinions about military spending is that people rationally consider alternatives in light of the existing international situation. In this explanation, military force is an instrument to be applied as the foreign environment appears to require it. Support for greater defense spending derives, then, from a perceived threat that can only be met with a strong military force. Assuming people generally think war will be forestalled by military strength, the perceived threat of war should be related to support for increased arms spending. Laulicht and Paul (1963) found that people believing that nuclear war was likely tended to favor a strong military deterrent compared to those not perceiving the threat of nuclear war. Similarly, persons living in a probable target area in the case of a nuclear war were in greater support of the military than persons living elsewhere (Putney and Middleton, 1962). Beliefs about the hostility of adversaries should also be related to opinions about arms spending. There is evidence that persons who believe Russia is a threat also tend to believe the United States should build up its military strength (Gamson and Modigliani, 1966; Reilly, 1979).

We hypothesize that persons who expect war or believe the United States faces a military threat will tend to support increased arms spend-

2. Class differences are sometimes also interpreted to reflect differences in personality character or in subcultures. Working-class members are thought to have preferences for being tough, authoritarian, aggressive, and accepting of the use of violence. But the evidence about this is weak, and class differences in the readiness to advocate or use violence is probably more related to the issues in contention and the alternatives available than to any general personality or cultural differences (Kriesberg, 1973: 118-120).

ing. Changes in these expectations and beliefs could account for changes in the proportion of the public supporting increased defense expenditures.

The research discussed thus far consists almost entirely of studies looking at one or another variable in relationship to attitudes about national defense spending and/or U.S. foreign policy at one time period. Another body of research is devoted to the analysis of trends in public opinion and the sociohistorical factors that affect them. This literature provides the basis for the seventh explanation for changes in attitudes about national defense spending. Some of these studies also look at the differences in the relationship between particular factors within different time periods. Russett (1974, 1975), for example, indicates that a change took place between the early 1950s and late 1960s in the population tending to be antimilitarist.

Underlying these changes in public opinion is the influence of the current social-historical milieu on attitudes about national defense. Klingberg (1952) suggested that there is an historical alternation of moods in American foreign policy between isolationism and interventionism, each giving rise to its opposite. These shifts in U.S. policy were found to occur at twenty-year intervals (thus seeming generational) and indicate a cyclical pattern in public opinion about military strength and foreign policy. Within this same framework, Roskin (1974) suggests that the experience of World War II (specifically the attack on Pearl Harbor) gave rise to an interventionist foreign policy which culminated in U.S. intervention in Vietnam. The experience of Vietnam spawned a move toward isolationism which began in the late 1960s and continued at least through the early 1970s (Russett, 1975).

This approach emphasizes that opinions are a reaction to a particular social-historical situation. Thus, during the Cold War, fear of the spread of communism and of world dominance by the USSR produced attitudes favoring a strong military force in order to neutralize the perceived threat. With the end of the Cold War and the subsequent rise in East-West detente between the United States and USSR and with the American failure in Vietnam, there has been a change in public support from competition for superiority to a tendency toward isolationism. Russett and Nincic (1976) found less U.S. support for the use of American troops to defend allies in 1969-1975 than prior to World War II (1938-1940).

Since the emphasis on the current social-historical milieu is relevant to general trends rather than to differential support for arms spending,

we will postpone discussion of it until after we analyze the correlates of variations in such support and again discuss the trends in support. A wide variety of variables have been found to be associated with opinions about national defense. However, past research consists almost entirely of studies looking at one or another factor in isolation from others and generally finding a statistically significant relationship between that factor and the attitude being considered. Some research has included several control variables, and a few have even suggested opposing models. Although some studies have looked at trends in public opinion about defense spending, previous research has not systematically considered a series of alternative factors in different time periods in order to study both their individual and combined effects over time on opinions about arms spending.

## ANALYSIS

The NORC General Social Surveys provide the data for our analysis. First, we examine the cross-tabulation of responses about military spending with several possibly associated variables, without controls for 1973, 1975, and 1978. Then we discuss the effect of introducing controls for variables found to be associated with defense spending opinions in order to assess how well the variables account for the variations in opinions. Finally, we will examine trends in the variables found to be related to defense spending opinions. In the light of all these findings, we will discuss possible explanations for the observed trends in public judgments about expenditures for armaments.

*Associated Variables.* As the preceding discussion demonstrates, many factors can be expected to be related to support for military expenditures. We will systematically review pertinent items from recent national surveys relevant to the factors previously discussed: personality characteristics, ideology, past generational experience, adherence to authority, self-interest, and instrumental calculation.

The surveys contain only a few questions which might be used at best as indirect indicators of personality traits possibly related to opinions about military expenditures. One question can be interpreted as an indicator of suspiciousness: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" In 1978, 27% of the sample who said people

could be trusted also said we were spending too much for arms, compared to 21% among respondents who thought people could not be trusted. As can be seen in Table 1, the chi square is significant at the .02 level and the gamma is small, -.12. The relationship was stronger in 1973 and 1975.

Another item which might indicate a personality characteristic related to opinions regarding military spending is childhood experience with physical violence and guns. Consistent with the discussion of aggressive personality, we expect that persons who were beaten as children or threatened with a gun would believe in the prevalence of violence or be more inured to it, and hence be more supportive of expanding arms expenditures. But on the other hand, they might react to such childhood experiences by rejecting reliance on force and tend to think we spend too much on arms. In the NORC General Social Survey, respondents were asked: "Have you ever been punched or beaten by another person?" Respondents were also asked: "Have you ever been threatened with a gun, or shot at?" In each case, if they answered yes, they were asked if this happened to them as children or as adults. It appears that respondents who were punched or beaten as children are slightly more likely than other respondents to say that the United States is spending too much on defense. For example, in the 1978 survey, 31% of the respondents who reported being beaten as children said they thought we were spending too much for the military, armaments, and defense; this compared to 21% who so replied among respondents who were never beaten.

As can be seen in Table 1, the association was small and barely statistically significant in 1978. It was stronger in 1973. In 1975, the chi square was even greater, but the relationship was not linear: Respondents who were beaten as children were more likely to think we were spending too much, but they also tended to think we were spending too little compared to respondents who did not report being beaten (they tended to think we were spending about the right amount).

We are also regarding sex as a personality variable. Socialization into male and female roles is hypothesized to make males more aggressive and accepting of physical violence and hence more supportive of arms expenditures than women. As can be seen in Table 1, sex and opinions about defense spending are associated with each other at a statistically significant level, but the magnitude of the relationship is slight, and its direction is not even consistent for the three surveys being compared. Whatever difference socialization makes in male and

TABLE 1  
Variables Associated with Opinions About Military Spending

<i>Variables<sup>a</sup></i> <i>(number of categories)</i>	<i>Year of</i> <i>Survey</i>	<i>Chi</i> <i>Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Gamma</i>
<i>1. Personality</i>				
a. Cannot trust people (2)	1973	13.77	.0010	-.16
	1975	15.97	.0003	-.17
	1978	7.75	.0207	-.12
b. Hit as child (3)	1973	15.95	.0031	.14
	1975	20.18	.0005	.01
	1978	11.29	.0235	.10
c. Sex (2)	1973	8.28	.0159	-.06
	1975	18.27	.0001	.07
	1978	9.28	.0096	.08
<i>2. Ideology</i>				
a. Conservative political views (3)	1974	55.15	.0000	-.23
	1975	46.60	.0000	-.29
	1978	23.29	.0001	-.22
b. Oppose capital punishment (2)	1973	23.66	.0000	.22
	1975	22.44	.0000	.23
	1978	37.68	.0000	.30
c. Years of education (3)	1973	77.30	.0000	.30
	1975	55.51	.0000	.25
	1978	38.63	.0000	.17
<i>3. Historical experience</i>				
a. Veteran (among males) (2)	1975	2.44	.2958	-.10
	1978	7.22	.0270	-.12
b. War generation (4)	1973	10.33	.1114	-.10
	1975	30.69	.0000	-.20
	1978	24.31	.0005	-.18
<i>4. Authority and convention</i>				
a. Not read newspapers (5)	1975	5.84	.6648	.06
	1978	16.40	.0370	.11
b. Republican party identification (7)	1973	47.52	.0000	-.07
	1975	38.73	.0001	-.04
	1978	21.55	.0429	-.06
c. Lack confidence in executive branch (3)	1973	84.06	.0000	.32
	1975	38.73	.0000	.22
	1978	21.55	.0005	-.06
d. Lack confidence in military (3)	1973	204.00	.0000	.51
	1975	171.74	.0000	.42
	1978	150.87	.0000	.34
e. Age (6)	1973	13.21	.2118	-.10
	1975	36.23	.0001	-.16
	1978	61.19	.0000	-.20

TABLE 1 (Continued)

<i>Variables<sup>a</sup></i> <i>(number of categories)</i>	<i>Year of</i> <i>Survey</i>	<i>Chi</i> <i>Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Gamma</i>
5. <i>Economic self interest</i>				
a. Middle class identification (2)	1973	.72	.6992	.03
	1975	3.75	.1536	.08
	1978	1.48	.4763	.02
b. Work status (7)	1973	33.93	.0007	-.09
	1975	46.44	.0000	-.04
	1978	18.69	.0963	-.04
c. Income (3)	1973	8.53	.0725	.08
	1975	5.21	.2662	.07
	1978	4.05	.3985	-.02
6. <i>Instrumental and calculative</i>				
a. Not expect war (2)	1973	6.70	.0351	-.04
	1975	.65	.7233	.04
	1978	17.60	.0002	.15
b. Dislike Russia (3)	1974	10.60	.0314	-.05
	1975	24.64	.0001	-.13
	1977	49.38	.0000	-.25
c. Communism not worst government (4)	1973	47.76	.0000	.24
	1976	63.07	.0000	.27
	1977	75.82	.0000	.32

a. Variables named to indicate direction of higher scored categories; the opinion that the United States is spending too much is scored "3"; consequently, a negative gamma indicates a negative relationship between the stated category and thinking we are spending too much.

female aggressiveness does not seem relevant to the issues of defense spending.

The second explanatory idea is ideology. Conservatism and liberalism, left and right orientations, have their primary meaning in the realm of social and economic equality. But conservatism also tends to include an emphasis on coercion as a means of controlling people. There may also be historical ties among particular sets of beliefs: for example, supporting authority, law and order, and reliance on force. Consistent with our hypothesis, respondents who identify themselves as conservatives are more likely than liberals to say that we are spending too little on arms. As can be seen in Table 1, in 1978 the gamma was -.22 and the chi square was 23.29; the association was somewhat greater in previous years.

Support for severe punishment of criminals is another indicator of this conception of conservative ideology. We hypothesize that

respondents favoring the death penalty for persons convicted of murder would also favor greater arms spending. As can be seen in Table 1, opinions about the death penalty, are moderately related to opinions about military expenditures, and between 1973 and 1978, the degree of association has grown.

The third indicator of an ideological orientation toward violence is more problematical. We consider years of schooling as an indicator of a complex set of beliefs: reliance on a variety of means of conducting international affairs, consideration of alternative government expenditures, humanism, lessened ethnocentrism, and reluctance to rely on violence as a means of controlling others' conduct (Weiner and Eckland, 1979). Obviously, years of schooling is an indicator of many other concepts (e.g., attentiveness to leaders and information) and is associated with many other variables (e.g., income and age). Later in the article, we will examine how education is related to opinions about defense spending, taking into account some of these other variables. At this point, we only note that, as hypothesized, amount of schooling in 1973 is strongly and positively related to thinking we are spending too much on defense. As can also be seen in Table 1, this relationship has declined between 1973 and 1978. The decline is due to a greater fall in the proportion saying we are spending too much among the higher educated compared to the lower educated respondents.

The third set of variables we are examining is past generational experience: involvement in major collective events. We are using indicators of two such experiences: having served in the armed forces and reaching political maturity in different war and nonwar periods.

We will consider veteran status only among males. As can be seen in Table 1, there is only a small relationship, not consistently statistically significant, between having been in the armed forces and thinking we are spending too much or too little. Insofar as there is a relationship, it is that veterans tend to think we are spending too little. One matter which reduces the effect of having been in the armed services is that the implications of that experience vary with the period of military experience.

We categorized respondents, in each survey, according to the U.S. war participation when the respondents were reaching political awareness. For example, respondents who were 18 during the Vietnam war are the Vietnam war generation: Respondents were similarly categorized for the Korean war, World War II, and nonwar periods. The periods were ranked as follows: Vietnam war, nonwar, Korean war,



and World War II generations. The ranking is based on the reasoning that Vietnam war experience tended to reduce support for coercion and violence in foreign affairs, and World War II experience strengthened it. The other two generations were in the middle, having no clear effects. There is evidence supporting this interpretation, as can be seen in Table 1. When we examine the cross-tabulations in detail, in the 1973 and 1975 surveys, what stands out is the Vietnam war generation's belief that we are spending too much. By 1978, this is no longer so disproportionate. In 1978, the striking finding is that the World War II generation appears to be especially likely to say that we are spending too little.

The fourth set of factors pertains to following national leaders or social conventions. As noted earlier, there is considerable evidence that people, particularly the attentive public, support political leaders' international foreign policies. Between 1973 and 1978, however, the political leadership was not sending a clear uniform message that arms expenditures should be increased or decreased. During that period, therefore, we would not expect high correlations between indicators of being attentive or supportive of leaders and attitudes about defense spending. As a matter of fact, as can be seen in Table 1, there is hardly any relationship between reading newspapers daily and thinking we are spending too little for 1975 and 1978 (when the questions were asked). Party identification, as shown in Table 1, is only weakly associated with opinions about defense spending, Republicans tending to say we are spending too little.

The NORC social surveys also asked a series of questions about the amount of confidence respondents had in people in various institutions, including the executive branch of the federal government, the military and the Congress. In 1973, lack of confidence in the executive branch is strongly related to thinking we are spending too much for defense. This relationship, however, declined considerably in 1975 and actually reversed in 1978. This may reflect the change in the party and to some extent the policy of the President. The pattern is the same for confidence in Congress, but all the relationships are smaller. The particularly striking finding concerns confidence in the military. As seen in Table 1, in 1973 there is a very strong positive relationship between having confidence in the army and thinking we are spending too little on arms. This relationship declined in 1975 and further declined in 1978, but it is still moderately strong.

In addition to attitudes toward national leaders affecting support of arms spending, the general level of integration with and support

of societal conventions may be related to opinions about defense expenditures. Support for the military may be viewed by many people as an expression of loyalty, patriotism, and solidarity with the nation as a whole. The symbolic identification of the flag, soldiers, and love of country is pervasive in nation states all over the world. We have no direct measure of identification with the country and belief in the convention that support for the country is expressed by supporting arms expenditures. As an indirect measure, we might consider age as a measure of integration in conventional social norms. There is mixed evidence of a curvilinear relationship between age and social alienation with persons in the late 30s and early 40s the least alienated (Cutler and Bengtson, 1974; Martin et al., 1974). We find that with increasing age there is greater support for increased arms spending (except among those over 65). As can be seen in Table 1, this association is most marked in 1978 and not significant in 1973.

The fifth set of factors being considered here is economic self-interest. This pertains to the idea that people will support increased arms spending insofar as they think they will benefit by it. We lack information about the respondents' employment in or dependence on defense expenditures and will consider more general and indirect measures. We analyzed income, class identification, and work status. As discussed earlier, the nature of the expected relationship is ambiguous. It may be that working-class, low income, and unemployed respondents would tend to support arms expenditures as a stimulus to the economy and the creation of jobs; but they may also oppose it because they think it will divert government expenditures from programs benefiting them and will drain money which would otherwise be used to produce jobs and goods for them. As can be seen in Table 1, there is no relationship between class or income and opinions about defense spending. The results for work status are more complex. There is no linear relationship, since there is no meaningful ordering for the purposes of this study. But respondents who were unemployed were disproportionately likely to say that we were spending too much for arms. These indicators are not substantially related to defense spending opinions, and we will not discuss their possible joint effects with other factors in later portions of this article.

The final set of factors we will consider pertains to calculative or instrumental considerations about the use of military force to achieve foreign policy objectives. We assume that most people in this country think that a large military force is a means to deter hostile action by an enemy. As noted earlier, people differ in the degree of reliance they

place on military force as an effective means of inducing an adversary to yield what they seek. Liberals and highly educated persons may tend also to accord importance to less coercive inducements. Let us assume for now, however, that military force is considered by the respondents to be an effective means to pursue conflicting international relations. By that reasoning, we expect that people who anticipate war or who dislike the Soviet Union would tend to favor increased arms expenditures. But as can be seen in Table 1, in 1973, respondents who expected the United States to be in a war within the next ten years were slightly *less* likely than others to say we were spending too little. In 1975, the relationship was at least in the predicted direction, but it was still very weak. Only in 1978 was there a tendency for respondents who expected the United States to be in a war to say that we were spending too little. Similarly, disliking Russia was associated with thinking we were spending too little on arms. This was hardly true in 1974; but the relationship increased, and by 1978 there was a moderately strong relationship. Finally, respondents were asked how they evaluated communism as a form of government. Those who thought it was the worst form of government tended to think we were spending too little on arms. Again, the degree of association has increased from 1973 to 1978.

*Controls.* Having examined the possible relationships between opinions about defense spending and many variables separately, we will consider how certain of these variables combine to affect opinions about military spending. This will serve several purposes. It will help us interpret the meaning of some of the relationships, test for possible spuriousness, and reveal possible interaction effects.<sup>3</sup> Given the large number of variables being considered here, we cannot discuss how each interacts with every other one in affecting opinions about defense expenditures. We will discuss those combinations of variables which are most significant and relevant to explaining opinions about defense spending and trends in those opinions. We will consider how certain variables within each set of factors combine to affect these opinions and then consider combinations of variables in different sets of factors.

Among the personality variables examined earlier, only trust in people was clearly and consistently related to opinions about defense spending. Examining how trust in people interacted with sex or with re-

3. We conducted multiple regressions for each year for each set of independent variables in order to test for possible spuriousness. Where relevant, the results are discussed in the text.

ports of being hit as a child did not reveal any consistent and marked patterns which merit comment, beyond the previous discussion of each variable.

The findings among the ideological variables are more significant. First, we must examine how education interacts with the other variables and consider again the several possible concepts which years of schooling may be measuring. Education is not significantly related to ideological self-identification nor to opposing capital punishment. Furthermore, controlling for those variables does not reduce the relationship between education and opinions about defense spending when using multiple classification analyses.<sup>4</sup> Cross-tabulations reveal, however, a strong interaction effect: Education is highly related to arms spending opinions among liberals, and ideological self-identification is highly related to these opinions among the highly educated. Similarly, education is highly related to these opinions among respondents who oppose the death penalty, and views about capital punishment are highly related to opinions about defense spending among the highly educated. Schooling tends to make people more consistent in their views on diverse issues. It is as if they think in relatively general and abstract terms. Education also, however, independently affects opinions about defense spending; but this analysis cannot clarify its meaning beyond what we have already noted. Multiple regression analyses demonstrate that education, ideological self-identification, and views about capital punishment are each highly related to arms spending opinions in each study year. Which one explains most of the variance varies from year to year.

Since war generation was the only indicator of historical experience we had which appeared to be related to opinions about arms spending, we will examine the effects of other variables on that relationship later, when we consider controls among different factors.

4. Multiple classification analysis (MCA) is an analysis of variance design which also allows for the analysis of covariance. In its consideration of a dependent variable and a series of independent variables, MCA merely presents the statistics from an analysis of variance, though it also allows for consideration of the pattern of changes of effects on the dependent variable as covariates or control variables are introduced. It allows for examination of interrelationships between several predictor variables and a dependent variable within the context of an additive model. The MCA program used in this article is part of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A discussion of MCA may be found in the SPSS manual or in *Multiple Classification Analysis*, Frank Andrews et. al., (1973).

We have used several indicators of the fourth factor, following national leaders and social conventions. We combined several variables in order to discern any interaction patterns. For example, we examined the joint relationship of party identification and reading the newspaper with opinions about arms spending; we found no particular patterns. Multiple regressions demonstrate that confidence in the military and age each continue to help account for the variance in arms spending opinions, but confidence in the executive branch, reading the news, and party identification contribute little to explaining arms spending opinions when controlling for the other variables.

Confidence in the military was, as we saw, very highly related to opinions regarding defense expenditures; age was also moderately related in the later 1970s. When we considered their joint effect, we found that in 1978 both variables combined in an additive fashion to affect defense spending opinions. In 1973 and 1975, age was related to opinions about arms expenditures only among those who had hardly any confidence in the military, but in 1978, there was also a relationship among those with confidence in the military.

The final set of variables we examine pertains to the instrumental or calculative use of military force in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. We saw that in 1977 and 1978 evaluations of Russia and of communism and expectations of war were each related to opinions about arms expenditures. We now consider their joint effects when surveys permit. Interestingly, there is a marked interaction effect between evaluations of Russia and war expectations: Evaluations of Russia are related to opinions about defense spending among those who expect war, and not among those who do not. Expectations of war are associated with defense spending among those who dislike Russia, not among other respondents. Evaluations of Russia and of communism each continue to be related with opinions about defense spending when the other is held constant.

We next analyze the interrelations among the several sets of factors. Evaluations of Russia and beliefs about trusting people are each related to opinions about defense spending, when the other is held constant. There is more of an interaction effect in the way evaluations about Russia and general political views jointly affect opinions about arms spending. In 1975, evaluations of Russia are moderately related to opinions about arms expenditures among liberals, weakly related among middle-of-the-roaders, and not related among conservatives. Political views are related to opinions about military spending most

markedly among respondents who liked Russia. It seems that being conservative or disliking Russia, each independently of the other, is conducive to thinking we are spending too little for arms. But for liberals, additional ideas are relevant to so thinking, and for those who liked Russia, ideological views are relevant to determining their opinions about arms spending.

Considering possible interactions between ideological and instrumental calculative factors, we find a marked interaction effect when covarying evaluations of Russia together with general political views. For example, in 1975, evaluations of Russia are moderately related to opinions about arms spending among the self-identified liberal respondents, weakly related among the middle-of-the-road respondents, and not related at all among conservatives. Liberalism has the same interaction effect as higher education. Interestingly, too, general political views have a much more marked relationship among respondents who report they like Russia than among those who do not. Using a multiple classification analysis, we found that the relationship between evaluations of Russia and opinions about arms spending was reduced when controlling for education, general political views, and war generation.

Instrumental calculative variables also interact with those pertaining to following authority. For example, although confidence in the military has a strong effect regardless of evaluation of Russia, evaluation of Russia has the greatest effect among respondents who lack confidence in the army.<sup>5</sup> In 1977, these two variables together have a strong relationship with opinions about military spending. For example, among respondents who had confidence in the army *and* who disliked Russia, 43% thought we were spending too little for arms; whereas among those who lacked confidence in the army *and* liked Russia, only 4% thought we were spending too little.

To examine the relationship between ideological and personality factors, we examined the possible interaction effects of views about capital punishment and years of schooling with opinions about arms spending. Education has a larger effect among respondents who oppose

5. In 1974, only among respondents who lack confidence in the army is there a relationship between evaluations of Russia and opinions about arms expenditures. In 1977, evaluations of Russia are related to such opinions at each level of confidence in the army; but the degree of association varies from a gamma of  $-.60$  among those with hardly any confidence to  $-.14$  among those with some confidence and  $-.39$  among those with a great deal of confidence in the army.

the death penalty than among those who favor it. Education continues to be related to opinions about defense spending regardless of views about capital punishment, but the relationship is somewhat greater among those who oppose it. Using a multiple classification analysis, the relationship between education and opinions about defense spending is not reduced, controlling for views about capital punishment and general political views.

We also examined the possible interaction effects between adherence to authority and ideological variables. Confidence in the army is related to opinions about military spending regardless of political views, but the relationship is strongest among liberals. Political views remain related to opinions about arms spending, holding constant confidence in the military. We also considered age as an indicator of societal integration and support of social conventions. Using a multiple classification analysis, we found that education hardly reduces the relationship between age and opinions about arms spending. Similarly, we found that general political views hardly reduce the relationship between age and opinions about arms expenditures.

Finally, we note how age and war generation may interact in relationship to opinions about arms spending. Age and war generation, as we have defined them, are highly related to each other: Only relatively young people can be in the Vietnam generation, and only people in the 46 to 55 year old category in 1973 and the 46 to 65 year old categories in the 1975 and 1978 surveys can be in the World War II generation. Examining cross-tabulations of these two variables in relationship to opinions about arms spending, nevertheless, permits making some inferences. In 1973, among respondents 18 to 25 years old, being a member of the Vietnam generation is associated with thinking we are spending too much on arms, compared to others in that age category. Among 26 to 65 year olds, there is a tendency for younger respondents to say that we are spending too much. The patterns are similar in 1975. By 1978, the Vietnam war generation is no longer distinctive, and even the World War II generation does not have a consistent effect, taking age into account. On the whole, then, chronological age has a more enduring and consistent relationship to opinions about defense spending than does war generation.

*Multivariate analysis.* We will now examine the way the several most important variables combine to account for the variation in opinions about defense spending. We conducted regression analyses

and multiple classification analyses, combining various sets of variables for each year. We present regression analyses for the same set of variables for 1974 and 1977 (when the largest set of relevant variables are available for comparative analysis) and draw on other multivariate analyses to interpret the findings.<sup>6</sup>

In Table 2, we can see the results of a regression analysis with opinions about defense spending in 1974 and 1977 regressed on seven variables: confidence in the army, age, education, preference about capital punishment, general political views, opinion about communism as a form of government, and evaluation of Russia. These variables together yield a  $R^2$  of .155 in 1974 and .167 in 1977. Although these are not high, it should be kept in mind that opinion about defense spending is a trichotomous variable, and there is not a great deal of variation to be explained.

In 1974, as the previous analyses have shown, confidence in the military is by far the most important explanatory variable. Education and age are also each significantly related, holding all other variables constant. In 1974 (but not in 1977), war generation is even more significant than is age. If we replace age with war generation in a regression analysis, the beta for war generation is  $-.10$  and the  $R^2$  rises to .159. The importance of age in 1974 compared to 1977 is partly due to the significance of war generation in 1974, which of course is highly related to age.

In 1974, evaluation of Russia is not significantly related to opinion about military spending, and attitude toward communism as a form of government is barely statistically related, taking into account the other variables in the regression. Clearly, in 1977, ideological variables and hostility toward communism and Russia have taken on a great deal more importance in accounting for the variation in opinions

6. We calculated regressions for each year between 1973 and 1978, using all the variables that we discussed in the article and that were available in the survey for that year. In 1973, the multiple regression included eleven variables,  $R^2 = .150$ ; in 1974, we used fourteen variables,  $R^2 = .178$ ; in 1975, we used nineteen variables,  $R^2 = .150$ ; in 1976, we used fourteen variables,  $R^2 = .154$ ; in 1977, we used sixteen variables and  $R^2 = .179$ ; and in 1978, we used seventeen variables and found  $R^2 = .133$ .

In deciding which years to present and which variables to select, we decided to select two years which maximized the time span and which included the most significant variables. In 1977 and in 1974, other variables could have been included that would have had more powerful relationships than one or another of those included, but we wanted to illustrate the change in importance of variables from one time period to another. We selected the variables most significantly related to arms spending opinions, within those constraints.



TABLE 2  
Opinions About Arms Spending Regressed with Selected  
Variables, 1974 and 1977

Variables <sup>a</sup>	1974		F <sup>b</sup>	1977		F <sup>b</sup>
	Simple R	Beta/b		Simple R	Beta/b	
Lack confidence in military	.35	.28/.29	100.94	.26	.21/.23	60.12
Age	-.17	-.08/-.04	8.99	-.16	-.06/-.02	4.00
Education	.20	.09/.05	9.54	.16	.06/.04	5.40
Capital punishment	.15	.07/.10	6.38	.20	.15/.24	32.26
Political views	-.16	-.06/-.03	5.04	-.20	-.12/-.06	18.61
Communism as form of government	.15	.04/.04	2.30	.24	.13/.11	20.07
Russia	-.05	.01/.00	.18	-.16	-.06/-.02	4.64
		R <sup>2</sup> = .155			R <sup>2</sup> = .167	
		N = 1225			N = 1239	

a. The variables were used without collapsing categories except for Education (5 categories) and Age (6 categories).

b. F above 2.02 is significant at the .05 level.

about military expenditures. Omitting evaluations of Russia and of communism as a form of government from a multiple regression reduces the R<sup>2</sup> in 1974 only trivially.

We also conducted regression analyses using a 1978 survey which included a question about expectations of war but did not include questions about Russia or communism. Using war expectation in place of those two variables yielded a slightly lower R<sup>2</sup>, .123.

Multiple classification analyses could be made with only five independent variables. We conducted several MCAs, for different years and with different combinations of variables. The results are very similar to the results of the regression analyses. For example, with the 1974 survey, the five variables—confidence in the military, capital punishment, political views, age, and Russia—yield a R<sup>2</sup> of .163 in a regression analysis and .159 in the MCA. In other instances, the R<sup>2</sup> is slightly greater than the multiple R<sup>2</sup> for the regression analysis.

*Trends in covariates.* Having assessed the variables which are related to opinions about defense spending between 1973 and 1978, we

can consider whether or not changes in those variables help explain the trend in opinions about military spending. Although confidence in the military is very highly related to opinions about arms spending, there are no consistent changes in the public's confidence in the army. There is no trend, either, in the expectation of U.S. involvement in a war. Nor are there any changes in the distribution of past historical generations during the period studied. Changes in these variables clearly, therefore, do not help explain the trend toward increased support for arms spending.

The sets of variables show changes consistent with the trend of opinions about arms spending: ideology and instrumental calculation. Thus, the proportion of the respondents approving the death penalty rose from 66% in 1974 to 71% in 1978. Self-identifying conservatives increased only slightly, from 30% to 34% between 1974 and 1978. Regarding communism as the worst form of government increased from 44% in 1973 to 54% in 1978. There was also an increase in the proportion of the respondents who said they disliked Russia. Interestingly, although changes in evaluation of Russia are consistent with increased support for more arms spending between 1973 and 1978, the beginning of the shift in opinions about arms spending *preceded* the changes in evaluation of Russia. We will postpone discussion of possible interpretations of this sequence until later.

Although the distribution of some variables changed in ways consistent with the trend in arms spending, this was not true of all. There was a slight change in age and in educational distribution, with increases in the categories favoring less spending on arms. This is inconsistent with the trends in opinions about military spending.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Three interconnected changes between 1973 and 1978 appear to have produced the trend toward increased popular support for greater arms spending: (1) the decline in the impact of the Vietnam war, (2) a rise in particular elements of conservative ideology, and (3) an increase in anti-Soviet and anticommunist sentiment. We will review the evidence for each and discuss how they may combine to account for the observed trend.

The trend lines in Figure 1 indicate how unusual was the extent of popular opposition to U.S. arms spending in the late 1960s. This

was undoubtedly related to the feelings about the Vietnam war. Thus, in the 1972 Survey Research Center presidential election survey, a national sample was asked, "Do you think we did the right thing getting into Vietnam?" Respondents were also asked whether they thought the U.S. government should cut spending for defense or continue at least at the current level. Among those who thought we did the right thing in getting involved in Vietnam, 24% said cut spending, and among those who thought we did *not* do the right thing, 46% said cut spending (the gamma is  $-.39$ ).

We have presented other evidence that between 1973 and 1978, the impact of the Vietnam war on opinions about military spending declined. The very high correlation between confidence in the military and favoring greater defense spending declined. The distinctiveness of the Vietnam war generation, strong in 1973, had disappeared by 1978.

This change might explain a fall in the proportion of people saying we are spending too much. But it does not in itself explain the rise in the percentage saying we are spending too little rather than the right amount. The other changes we have noted may help to explain that finding.

We have seen an increase in the proportion of the people who favor capital punishment and a slight increase in the proportion who identify themselves as conservatives. This change in the ideological climate is supportive of favoring increasing reliance on military force in international affairs and support for increased arms spending, regardless of current levels. Favoring increased arms spending is a way of expressing this ideological stance.<sup>7</sup>

We have also noted an increase in the proportion of people who think communism is the worst form of government and who dislike Russia. Such a shift would also help explain the increase in the proportion of the people who favor increased military spending if it is combined with the belief that military force is an effective way of com-

7. The relationship between issues of morality and military preparedness is sometimes made explicit. For example, General Westmoreland (1978) has spoken of recent changes in America, citing the lost respect for authority, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, and a multitude of other signs of moral decay. He links this to our military capability and the will to use it. "As we reflect on the trends in this country and the situation around the world, we can deduce that a strategy of our major adversary is: to encourage the moral decay that seems to plague our society; to alienate our friends and acquire bases that could jeopardize the flow of raw materials to our industrial machine; to develop overwhelming military power that could be used to intimidate our friends or paralyze us by blackmail. In sum, to submerge us without firing a shot."

batting adversaries. There is, however, still a puzzling element in these findings. It is difficult to point to any particular external events which would account for the shift in evaluation of Russia. As noted earlier, furthermore, the change in evaluation of Russia occurred after the trend toward support for increased arms spending had begun.

Perhaps people had raised expectations about cooperation with the Soviet Union as a result of the attention to detente and were disappointed, and therefore dislike of the Soviet Union increased. More likely, there has been an increased perception of the United States losing its international dominance. Perhaps, if people think the United States is less predominant, they tend to believe the change is attributable to hostile action by our major adversary, the Soviet Union, and that increased military strength can remedy that change. The extension of Soviet-supported military activities in Africa may also have played a role in the changing evaluation of Russia. Perhaps of more relevance have been the reports of growing Soviet military strength. A national survey conducted in 1978 found that 56% of the public believe the United States is falling behind the Soviet Union in military strength, and people who believe this is so are also likely to favor greater military spending; 69% of them do (Reilly, 1979: 80). Gallup has regularly asked respondents in December if they thought Russia (and the United States) would increase in power in the world in the coming year or if the power would decline. In 1960, 53% thought Soviet power would increase; this fell to 38% in 1965 and then climbed relatively steadily to 63% in 1977 and 61% in 1978.

These three changes combine to explain the decrease in the proportion of people who say we are spending too much and the increase in the proportion who say we are spending too little for arms. There is probably a general conventional belief in this country, as in others, that military force is necessary and effective in gaining national objectives and that support for the military is an expression of patriotism and loyalty to one's country. If so, then the high proportion of people in the late 1960s saying we are spending too much was unusual, and a fall from that was likely. We have seen, indeed, that age became more highly associated with arms spending opinions over the time period studied, and this suggests the increased role of conventionality and following prevailing thought as a reason for the greater support for increased arms spending in the later 1970s. This also helps explain the decline in the significance of education in accounting for opinions about defense spending. That decline is due largely to the relatively

greater shift among the highly educated respondents toward favoring increased arms spending. This would come about for two reasons. First, more highly educated people tend to be more "consistent" in their opinions, and the increase in conservative views and in disliking Russia would affect them most. Second, persons with more schooling generally are more attentive to the newest ideas and social conventions.

This discussion helps explain the processes by which prevailing climates of opinion emerge and constitute a new social historical milieu. This country contains people with diverse personalities, ideological tendencies, interests, experiences, and circumstances. Shifting external realities make some of those qualities more or less salient. People who are attentive to legitimate authority will be influenced in the direction of the leaders insofar as they are unified. As a consensus emerges, people who are socially integrated will lead in conforming to the prevailing ideas, and hence the ideas will become more prevailing. Obviously, at some point this movement levels off as it comes up against contrary and more resistant interests and values.

We have not sought to examine public opinion about U.S. foreign policy generally or public support for a more militarily interventionist policy direction. Arms spending may be viewed as essentially defensive by the public. A variety of combinations of foreign policy views can probably be constructed by people as they face a unique historical period with a particular past history. But our findings do reveal a latent readiness to support defense spending which can be evoked and sustained by established authority figures.

A few comments should be made about the meaning of the responses to questions asking whether the United States is spending too little, too much, or about the right amount on military defense. Clearly, people are not well informed about actual expenditures or the current military strength of this country or of other countries. Nevertheless, the responses indicate a stance of judgment toward military expenditures. Such judgments have political relevance even if they do not predict votes for candidates or support for particular budget requests. This is the case whether the responses reflect assessments of military threats from adversary governments, support for American leaders, or personal needs to express toughness. The analyses reported in this article should help interpret the meaning of responses to questions about defense spending.

American military expenditures are ostensibly intended to defend American national security. They should be large enough to deter

adversaries and yet not so large as to strain the domestic order unnecessarily or to threaten other countries so that they expand their military strength in order to deter us. Expenditures must be carefully considered in terms of our goals and those of our adversaries; they should neither be "too small" nor "too large." But it is certainly difficult to determine what is "just right." The difficulty is compounded if judgments about arms spending reflect needs and concerns unrelated to their instrumental purposes. This analysis indicates that opinions about arms spending are greatly influenced by such unrelated concerns.

This analysis has demonstrated that different sets of variables help account for variations in opinions about arms spending in different historical situations. Instrumental calculative variables are sometimes important, but they are not always so and never solely determine opinions. Ideology also contributes significantly to explaining variations in attitudes about defense spending, and its role also varies in different historical periods.

One factor was very important during the entire period of study, although it did decrease somewhat in relative importance between 1973 and 1978. Variables pertaining to following authority or adhering to social conventions were generally highly related to opinions about military expenditures. Apparently, support for arms spending has many meanings, including solidarity and integration with the community.

Other factors, although statistically significant at one time or another, do not help to explain the variations we have been examining. This is true of personality factors and economic self-interest. Better measures of these variables might have yielded strong effects. Past historical experience as exemplified in war generations has an effect, but its effects are overwhelmed in certain periods of time.

The findings presented here raise many additional questions. These questions cannot be answered without gathering new data. We need to know much more about the basic structure of beliefs people have about the way the international system functions and about the role of violence and the threat of violence in it. We need to know more about the social meaning of supporting or opposing arms spending. The analysis reported here indicates that it is important to examine such popular ideas in different historical periods. Cross-sectional analysis is limited, but the limits could be extended by conducting cross-sectional analysis comparatively in countries in different international situations.

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## APPENDIX

### NATIONAL SURVEYS ON DEFENSE SPENDING,

1957-1978

February 1957—AIPO (Gallup)

"The biggest part of government spending goes for defense. Do you think this sum should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same as it was last year?"

April 1960—AIPO

"There is much discussion as to the amount this country should spend for national defense. How do you feel about this—do you think we are spending too little, too much, or about the right amount?"

October 1964—AIPO (Reported in Free and Cantril, 1967: 90)

"Is it your impression that the strength of the United States defense is about right at present, or do you feel that it should be either increased or decreased?"

December 1968—AIPO



"More than half of the money spent by the U.S. government goes for military defense. Looking ahead the next two or three years, would you like to see this amount increased or decreased?" (Kept Same was not offered, but coded.)

July 1969—AIPO

"There is much discussion as to the amount of money the government in Washington should spend for national defense and military purposes. How do you feel about this: Do you think we are spending too little, too much, or about the right amount?"

November 1969—AIPO

As in July, 1969.

March 1971—AIPO

As in July, 1969.

October 1971—Roper

"We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. The military, armaments, and defense: Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount?"

December 1971—Harris

"In general do you favor increasing or decreasing the defense budget of the United States, or keeping it the same as it is now?"

August 1972—AIPO

"Considering the situation today at home and abroad, do you think the amount of money the federal government in Washington spends for national defense and military purposes should be increased, kept at the present level, reduced, or ended altogether?"

September 1972—Harris

"Would you like to see the federal government spend more money on defense in general, less, or about the same amount of money?"

March 1973—NORC

As in October, 1971.

March 1973—AIPO

As in July, 1969.

March 1974—NORC

As in October, 1971.

September 1974—AIPO

As in July, 1969.

March 1975—NORC

As in October, 1971.

January 1976—AIPO

As in July, 1969.

March 1976—NORC

As in October, 1971.

December 1976—Harris

As in September, 1972.

March 1977—NORC

As in October, 1971.

July 1977—AIPO

As in July, 1969.

March 1978—NORC

As in October, 1971.

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