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Uninforming the US: Evaluating the Effects of Public Opinion on the Possible Deployment of a National Missile Defense System

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**Introduction**

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, an empty-headed emperor was persuaded by his advisers to build a wondrous military system called the Strategic Defense initiative, which was popularly known as Star Wars. It was a huge, computer-controlled defensive screen that would detect incoming rockets and destroy them, rendering the empire theoretically immune from attack. It looked good on the simulations, although it did not work, but news of it frightened the rival empire into building more rockets. However, the rival empire, despite its impressive outward appearance, was weak, and around this time it gave up trying to compete with the Star Wars empire. The empty-headed emperor’s advisers congratulated him on his wisdom and told him he had saved the universe. The Star Wars system may not have worked, they said, but it forced the evil empire to surrender. He had single-handedly won the Cold War, they said, and this was the version of history that was believed in many parts of the universe, including some of the emperor’s distant satellites.¹

Thus began Reagan’s Star Wars, a popularized defense system designed to make nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. However, Reagan was not the first to endeavor to defend against missile attacks. Quickly after the first missile ever was fired on an advancing (or retreating) army, military strategists have been trying to come up with a way to stop it. Several different programs were developed with the United States eventually leading the charge; from Wizard to Sentinel to a bunch of really smart rocks that would target incoming Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM’s) in space and collide with them above the atmosphere. Out of those and a slew of others, nothing really seemed to work except for preemption, which was usually a little more overt use of force than the average government was willing to use. After years of defensive research and development, it seemed as though US efforts had been an effort in frivolity—it was still more effective to invest in offensive weaponry.

¹ Mr. Blair must tell Mr. Bush his missile system is folly, 2001, p. 3
When all seemed to be lost for those in the defense industry, Ronald Reagan had his epiphany at Cheyenne Mountain by realizing that the US was naked on the battlefield.\(^2\) Reagan began to shift the momentum by developing “star wars,” and for a while it seemed that the ultimate defense had finally been found. All for naught. Reagan had not in fact shifted anything; he had, according to some such as the London-based Independent, simply created a very expensive ruse to defeat the communists.\(^3\) He had created a defense system that, by the way, eventually went on to defend MX missile systems because its goal of total human protection could not be reached.\(^4\) In addition to this ability to protect offensive weapons, “a defense initiative would be valuable as a bargaining chip” when dealing with the communists.\(^5\) It seems as though this initiative was not intended to in fact save people, but rather the defense industry.

The key to the debate was selling this defense to the people in an effort to garner public support for a very idealistic, yet costly endeavor. If public opinion were behind it, then, theoretically, there would be little to stop Reagan from accomplishing his goal. Indeed, according to Robert Bernstein who wrote at the time of Reagan’s removal from office, “There is a deeply entrenched belief in democratic societies that constituencies control the behavior of their representatives.”\(^6\) It is very possible that Reagan felt the same way. Sadly for Reagan, the program failed and the great communist “Satan” was defeated—sort of—causing the death of the program in the eyes of the American citizen.

\(^2\) Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 7  
\(^3\) Mr. Blair must tell Mr. Bush his missile system is folly, 2001, p. 3  
\(^4\) Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 25  
\(^5\) Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 195  
\(^6\) Bernstein, 1989, p. xiii
So much so that, according to Francis Fitzgerald, author of the comprehensive Reagan
administration record on missile defense entitled Way Out There in the Blue,

there had been so little discussion of the ABM program for the past several years
[preceding 1999] that many consistent readers of the major newspapers did not
know that the anti-missile program was still extant, much less that the US was
nearing a deployment.7

National Missile Defense (NMD) was raised again by Bill Clinton in an effort to
make himself appear more pro-defense, though many Republicans attributed his sudden
interest as “a thinly disguised ploy to get more base cuts approved.”8 It has also been
heavily used in Bush rhetoric with regard to increased security and safety from supposed
rogue nations. NMD research has been justified in that “Washington’s official position is
that the acquisition by a certain number of countries of weapons of mass destruction
presents a sufficient threat to justify deployment.”9

NMD is a fairly safe issue. It attracts little attention due to the fact that there is no
currently working NMD system defending the United States. When NMD does attract
attention, it is usually when (though seldom) it is tested, and even then successes seem
more publicized owing to their rarity than failures. The old adage still rings true, if one
does a poor job the first time, then much more is not expected in the future. The
technology NMD uses is still very advanced, arguably the most advanced, with many
other applicable military uses, so it does not necessarily divert resources from other
programs (though there are some hotly contested trade-offs). Finally it is a home-run
issue in the sense that because there have not been many successes, and any publicized
true success would lead to Americans feeling safer about the state of the nation militarily.

7 Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 499
8 Jensen, 1999, p. 27A
9 Beltran, 2001, p. A17
There are many differences between the Clinton and Bush proposals and what Reagan was dreaming up in the 80's. The main one being the scope of these two NMD systems. Reagan envisioned a system that would protect all of the United States by a series of space-based lasers; whereas Clinton and Bush have reduced the emphasis on lasers, most of the emphasis on space, and has cut down to a limited NMD. What is more curious, however, is that Reagan was adamant about endorsing and promoting his illusion of security, while Clinton elected to be low-key. As Frances Fitzgerald states, “One of the curious things about the decisions on the national ABM system taken in 1999 was that there was no public pressure on the administration or Congress to make them.”

By keeping the issue out of the public eye, he didn’t have to face much in the way of public opinion across America while, at the same time, he appeased the more hawkish members of both parties on Capitol Hill. More importantly, he hasn’t sold the issue to the American public as the hallmark of his foreign policy as Reagan failingly attempted to do.

There are many reasons why Clinton did not bring the issue up much. However, I would speculate that he had a very good strategic plan in not bringing the issue to the forefront, not unlike some defense industry elites. It was not as if it was a Herculean task to bring this issue to the attention of the public, but it was that Clinton did not want to.

There are also several members of Congress who have become the #1 cheerleaders for NMD, so much so that they have created careers and reputations in Congress because of it. In particular, Representative Curt Weldon (R-PA) and Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) have been doggedly advocating NMD. However, with regard to the manner in which this

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10 Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 499d
11 Broader, 1999, p. A22
issue is presented to the public by the US government, both individuals, as well as their colleagues, are following Clinton’s lead with regard to keeping this sort of information from the people as best they can. This seems foolish, with over two-thirds of the country feeling as though it is at least somewhat important that we build and deploy a national missile defense.\textsuperscript{12}

Members of Congress (such as Weldon and Cochran) and industry officials use this uneducated, uninformed public opinion to their advantage as some sort of electoral mandate. Members of the defense industry further exacerbate the problem by contributing to the nationalist sentiments of certain members of congress as well as to their campaign coffers. By hiding behind the ruse of an opinionated and pro-defense public, these two groups have successfully lobbied for missile defense by failing to educate the US citizenry. Both of which have caused these congressmen (as well as others) to act without temperance when pushing the NMD issue.

Despite Weldon and Cochran’s vociferous actions in congressional chambers on Capitol Hill concerning NMD, Americans remain unaware. It’s not exactly a populist movement of which politicians should be afraid. However, as was mentioned, these individuals do not act alone. The vast industry that makes the components and researches the development for these systems has recently joined with their congressional allies in being silent on the issue. This combined lack of competitive education and industry silence creates the proverbial ignorant voter. In the polling world, ignorant voters forced into positions upon which they do not necessarily have a firm stance by questions hold as much weight in determining national opinion as do those voters who actually do pay

\textsuperscript{12} Berke, 2000, A1
attention. In other words: By not informing voters, they-members of Congress and the defense industry have kept support.

In order to fully explore the effect this lack of education has had on American thought, I will first take a look at the aforementioned Congressmen. Cochran and Weldon have both sponsored extremely similar legislation pertaining to NMD, in particular, it was a version of their two plans that became the Defend America Act. I have also selected these two because of their unique NMD policy-making involvement. In addition, I feel their opinions and biases are representative of their respective house in Congress due to their standings in various defense and appropriations committees. And, because this issue carries little weight in their constituencies with regard to their re-elections, the motivation these two men possess to be a significant force in this debate is questionable. The fact that both men have been vociferous in their support for NMD in the halls of Congress seems to be for interests other than their constituents.

Secondarily, it is necessary to look at what industries are swaying these men as well as their colleagues. I offer the term the “Big Four” to describe the largest corporations involved with NMD: Boeing, Lockheed-Martin, TRW, Inc., and Raytheon who have formed a “symbiosis” that would reap $240 billion from the system over the next 10 to 15 years. There are hundreds other companies that stand to benefit from research and development pork, but over half of it goes to the Big Four. These four companies have a very similar if not identical strategy as Cochran and Weldon: that of

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13 Ginsberg, 1986, p. 84
14 Cheong, 2001, p. 16
15 Schneider, 2000a, p. H01
silence. It is usually an industry taboo to do any sort of direct lobbying to the public regarding NMD. Boeing attempted it and was shamed by its competitors/allies.\textsuperscript{16}

Finally, I will look at how public opinion is shaping these issues if at all. By keeping the public unaware of the consequences surrounding NMD and allowing what little information actually disseminated to be biased by hawks who owe favors to narrow constituent groups, (such as Boeing's very limited campaign for NMD) the picture created is a very sketchy and glorified view of NMD.\textsuperscript{17} But does this matter to government officials? Probably not. Congress is well aware of what James Lindsay calls "apathetic internationalism;" that people in the United States have opinions on international issues that they really don't care much about.\textsuperscript{18} Since the inception of the latest, most widely recognized NMD system in 1998, poll data has always put public opinion in favor, if only slightly, of deploying an NMD\textsuperscript{19}—regardless of the dearth of information made available to the public on such a weighty and important issue. Yet R&D dollars haven't dramatically increased and poll-dependent president Clinton was somewhat temperate on the issue. It seems as though our democracy, in which we supposedly have access to our government's policymaking process, has been circumvented on the issue of NMD.

\textsuperscript{16} Schneider, 2000b, p. E01
\textsuperscript{17} Schneider, 2000b, p. E01
\textsuperscript{18} Lindsay, 2000, p. 5
\textsuperscript{19} CBS News and NYT, 2000, and Washington Post, 2000
Player one: Curt Weldon

Representative Curt Weldon (R-PA) is hailed as one of the champions of missile defense in the modern era, or at least since Reagan left office. After getting elected in 1986, Weldon vaulted atop this issue of NMD quite quickly with his fervent pro-US defense attitude and stayed there by sponsoring the amendment responsible for the creation of the Rusmfield Commission.\(^{20}\) Weldon didn’t simply jump on the NMD bandwagon; he quickly became its driver by turning himself into the GOP “pit bull” on NMD.\(^ {21}\) Coming from a working class, blue-collar family in urban Pennsylvania has helped Weldon not only get elected by being able to “connect” with the people for whom he is a representative, but it has also led to his propensity for a more nationalist attitude regarding the security of the United States. Usually, according to Wittkopf, members of the blue-collar socioeconomic class have more of a hardline militant internationalist tilt to their belief system.\(^ {22}\) This identification with his constituency (though he is a college graduate while the average blue-collar worker typically has not been) has been the main factor in his lack of congressional opposition for the last 12 years. Curt Weldon is well appreciated in his district, which is evident by the fact that he has garnered 60% of the popular vote in his district since 1990 according to opensecrets.org.\(^ {23}\) In addition to this, the opposition candidates in the current and past two elections have all raised a paltry

\(^{20}\) Cheong, 2001, p. 16
\(^{21}\) Pianin, 2000, p. A08
\(^{22}\) Wittkopf, 1990, p. 39
\(^{23}\) CRP, 2000b, http://www.opensecrets.org/politicians/index/N00001535.htm
sum of money, with the majority of opposition funds coming from individual contributors.\textsuperscript{24}

Weldon has somehow managed to do the impossible as a Republican in a mid-Atlantic state; he has managed to gain huge political action committee (PAC) donations from labor groups as well as a sizeable cache from defense PACs. In addition to this, although Weldon has essentially been unopposed for the past 10 years or so, he still receives large donations from the defense industry. In 1996, which was a banner year for Mr. Weldon, he took in $98,700 from the defense community; in 1998, he received $54,900; so far in the year 2000 he has received $59,475 despite his opponent only raising $30,675 \textit{in total}.\textsuperscript{25} His opponents in previous years had raised similarly unsubstantial sums and yet Weldon still was able to raise a substantial amount of money from his traditional sources. Usually, labor is on the other side of the political spectrum, even if the other side doesn’t seem to stand a chance. However, there seems to be some sort of ideological crossover support for Mr. Weldon, with labor chipping in a healthy $26,750 in an effort to reelect the incumbent this election cycle.\textsuperscript{26}

The correlation between defense contractors and unions is fairly obvious: those who build the machines of war need skilled labor to bend that tin. It should be noted that Weldon gets money from other sorts of PACs as well, but these two in conjunction with one another clearly make up a substantial lobbying effort on behalf of the defense industry as a whole. To fully understand the reason why these two interests have such an interest in Mr. Weldon, it is necessary to look no further than what exactly Weldon has to represent in Pennsylvania’s 7\textsuperscript{th} district.

\textsuperscript{24} CRP, 2000c, \url{http://www.opensecrets.org/2000elect/dist_total/PA07.htm}
\textsuperscript{25} CRP, 2000c, \url{http://www.opensecrets.org/candidates/pac/H4PA07027.htm}
The 7th district encompasses southeastern Pennsylvania containing both rural and very suburban counties. In particular, this district contains suburban counties of Philadelphia, and it is here where the bulk of his constituency works and lives. Many commute to Philadelphia, so the interests of industry in districts one, two, and three also affect the manner in which he campaigns and governs.

The business interests in the 7th district are not unlike many other districts across the country. There are many lawyers, health organizations, and communication centers, but the real distinction lies in the less common industries. There are three very large employers in the 7th district: a BP oil refinery, the former Philadelphia Naval Shipyard (now in the hands of Metro Machine Inc.), and Boeing’s Ridley Park plant. It should be noted that all of these are worked by union labor and are heavily influenced/helped by union politics. Each of these industries have called upon Weldon to save them from economic blight; but in particular, he has been needed by the Naval Shipyard as well as the Boeing plant due to both of them being highly dependent upon government contracts for their continued survival.

There have been numerous instances, for example, where the Shipyard has been in major financial trouble. It seems to be constantly on the verge of insolvency as their services become limited due to the end of the cold war. In 1994, the closing of the Shipyard seemed to be an imminent possibility; however there was some talk of procuring contracts to scrap old Russian ships in order to keep the operation afloat.

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30 Jesdanun, 1999a, p. NA  
31 Holcomb, 1994, p. A1
Weldon sold the idea as a panacea to the problems that were continuing to plague the shipyard’s employment, which numbered over 5,000 workers. Despite the facts that it was deemed infeasible and quite unnecessary to be placed in Philadelphia, that it would lose $16 million, and that it would only save 134 jobs, according to an independent consultant for the City of Philadelphia, Weldon and Rep. Thomas Foglietta (D-PA) managed to persuade the city to adopt the plan claiming that it would bring in 1,000 workers.\textsuperscript{32}

More recently, in 1999, Weldon again came to the defense of the Old Philadelphia Naval Shipyard when another problem arose. Faced with the same level of insolvency as was present in 1994, Metro Machine was awarded a $150 million contract from the Navy for the overhaul and maintenance of four ships.\textsuperscript{33} However, this was placed in great jeopardy by a law which stated that it was necessary to maintain and upkeep ships at yards closest to their home port. This port was not Philadelphia, much to the 7\textsuperscript{th} district’s dismay. Weldon, along with congressmen from New Jersey, were able to see that this injustice was reversed, and that the 400 voters who would have lost their jobs were able to retain their previous occupation.\textsuperscript{34}

On the defense aerospace side of the equation, Weldon has the almighty Boeing Company to deal with. Boeing has managed to branch out into many different states, effectively influencing (if only marginally) the political decisions made by representatives and senators in those regions of the country. The plant in question with regard to Weldon is the aforementioned Ridley Park Plant, so named because it resides in

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{32} Rendell, 1994, p. 8
\item\textsuperscript{33} Holcomb, 1999, p. NA
\item\textsuperscript{34} Holcomb, 1999, p. NA
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Ridley Township. Weldon is quite proud of this plant. Its preeminence in the field of helicopter manufacturing seems to be one of his greatest domestic accomplishments as a Representative. It also has brought many jobs to district 7. Despite union fears of a complete closure in March of 1998, Weldon remained confident by saying that, "We will be the helicopter manufacturing center for Boeing."³⁵

This supposed dream came true when in 1999 the production of the V-22 Osprey was put into full swing. In all actuality, it was put into overdrive. The Clinton administration’s FY2000 budget increased the number of Osprey’s to be built in 2003 from 24 to 27 while at the same time appropriating $1.2 billion in an effort to produce 10 in the year 2000.³⁶ Weldon expressed some level of pleasure with the President’s plan, but he still wanted more. In the end, in a dramatic ceremony on the lawn of the Pentagon, the first MV-22 Osprey touched down with none other than Curt Weldon riding shotgun. He must have been in a mood to party after all, the Clinton Administration had appropriated enough in the budget to build 11 MV-22’s for the next fiscal year, one more than was in the initial appropriation.³⁷

The reason for the detail of Curt Weldon’s life as well as his constituency base goes back to why he is championing the issue of National Missile Defense. He is personally very responsible to his constituency, judging by his track record with regard to local industries. This is not to say that Weldon is the only person in Congress to try and funnel pork his way, but he certainly is not inept. On top of this, interests in his district (to whom he has given congressional aid) could stand to benefit from increased defense

³⁵ Weldon, 1998, [Radio Interview]
³⁶ Jesdanun, 1999a, p. NA
³⁷ Jesdanun, 1999a, p. NA
spending, especially Boeing. Curt Weldon feels as though it is time for the United States to deploy an NMD or at least some form of theater missile defense (TMD) due to the perceived threat that comes from abroad. Ideally, Weldon would have both. In his own column printed in the Philadelphia Inquirer, he says that the threat does not necessarily have to be urgent or compelling, but only that the possibility must exist for the United States to justify researching and constructing an NMD. In addition to this, Weldon has testified before Congress of his contempt for the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty by saying, “so my opinion is, the ABM treaty has outlived its usefulness.” As a result of this disagreement with the ABM treaty, Weldon agrees with any plan, regardless its location, of missile defense be it space, land, or, interestingly enough, sea-based.

Curiously, Weldon has fought hard to defend his district’s naval shipyard despite its obsolescence, and yet the plan that he is pressing the most has to do with sea-based interceptors placed on AEGIS cruisers. Convenient coincidence? Perhaps, but Weldon could stand to benefit from its development. When looking at the other interests Weldon represents, we can see that they are all influenced quite heavily by the government’s actions, be they matters for the defense department or matters for the energy department. Weldon gets handsome contributions from general contractors, unions, and Boeing; but he also receives contributions from Raytheon, Lockheed-Martin, and other defense contractors who have no business in the 7th district of Pennsylvania. It can be assumed that this money pours into his campaign coffers as a result of his presence on the House National Security Committee.

41 CRP, 2000c, http://www.opensecrets.org/candidates/pac/H4PA07027.htm
Weldon has shown much allegiance to all of these entities when making congressional decisions, so much so that there are countless examples of his assistance above and beyond the call of a representative. It should be noted that a combination of factors are at work here. First of all, is the obvious need for Weldon to electorally survive in his district by protecting his constituency’s job base. By appealing to the federal government to retain contracts, he is also able to satiate those labor groups most important to him. Second we can look at his upbringing. I do not know whether or not growing up in a steel worker’s town much contributes to his view on NMD, but I will say that his B.A. in Russian Studies would contribute to his knowledge base on the issue as well as his necessity to internalize defense issues rather than to send American troops abroad.\footnote{Witkopff, 1990, p. 37} Weldon is particularly scared of the rogue nation scenario, almost to the point of being beyond rational thought, while at the same time opposing the use of ground forces in other conflicts such as Kosovo.\footnote{Weldon, 2000, http://www.house.gov/curtweldon/oped_060700.htm and Jesdanun, 1999c, p. NA} This sort of isolationist attitude plays directly into the hands of the pro-NMD camp by domesticating defense rather than risking American lives.

Finally, we can look at how his ferocity was able to place him in a position of high esteem (at least among fellow congresspersons) as well as general power. As a junior representative, the Republican Party picked him over many other senior members of Congress as the head of the subcommittee on research and development for national security, mainly due to his affinity for the NMD issue even when it was considered not as important as most legislative issues during the late eighties and early nineties. All of this
leads up to a man driven, almost placed in a specific position, to be a champion US national missile defense.
Player two: Thad Cochran

US Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) joins Representative Weldon as the NMD hawk counterpart in the Senate. He and one of his colleagues, Sen. Inouye (D-HI), were co-sponsors for Senate Bill 257 in 1999. This bill was essentially designed to accelerate the NMD process by committing the United States government to deployment as soon as was “technologically possible.”\(^4\)\(^4\) Obviously, there was some level of resistance initially to this concept due to a couple of factors, the first one being the idea of cost. Mainly this resistance came from those who thought that the first system ready for deployment might not be the most cost-effective system; therefore SB257 would lock the government into deploying the first available system, regardless the cost.\(^4\)\(^5\)

The most concerted objection, however, lies at the root of the previous mentioned—that of a reduced capacity of future generations to control the deployment of a very politically dicey issue which could not only be expensive, but could also jeopardize the security of the United States.\(^4\)\(^6\) In the administration’s opposition to the bill, Samuel Berger expressed grave concern over the narrowness of the term as soon as is “technologically possible.”\(^4\)\(^7\) Essentially, the debate comes down to what level of stability in which the world will be during the next five to thirty years. It would be impossible to predict that there would be a significant security threat answerable by an NMD at the exact moment that a missile defense system would become “technologically possible.” More likely, its abrupt (relatively speaking) deployment could cause more instability than security, thereby causing many individuals to possibly stray away from

\(^{(4)}\) Qtd in United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1999
\(^{(5)}\) United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1999
\(^{(6)}\) United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1999
\(^{(7)}\) Qtd in United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1999
research and development knowing that as soon as a viable system were created it would have to be put in use.

Taking a look at Cochran from a more biographical point of view, we can see that he is not unlike those individuals who have ascended to power in the South in the past. As the South does conform to a more traditionalistic political ideal, individuals residing in states such as Mississippi have more of a tendency to support politicians who come from the southern aristocracy.\(^{48}\) In other words those people who lead are born to do so. Though his family was not monetarily advanced, they were a part of the southern establishment, managing to both acquire masters degrees as a teacher and a principal. Cochran was a star in virtually every way at his high school, which helped him go on to attend Ole Miss through the Navy ROTC program.\(^{49}\) He served 18 months aboard a cruiser, the USS Macon, and the rest of his tour was completed on land as staff to a naval commandant in New Orleans.\(^{50}\) Cochran later went on to receive his law degree from the University of Mississippi and taught at the US Naval Academy for three summers. He studied international law in Ireland where he, presumably, developed a taste for matters of trans-boundary importance.\(^{51}\) Cochran ran for the US House in 1976 and the U.S. Senate in 1978 where he became the first Republican in Mississippi to be elected to a statewide office in over 100 years.\(^{52}\)

\(^{48}\) Gray and Jacob, 1996, p. 43  
\(^{49}\) Senator Thad Cochran, 2000, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/  
\(^{50}\) Senator Thad Cochran, 2000, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/  
\(^{51}\) Senator Thad Cochran, 2000, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/  
\(^{52}\) Senator Thad Cochran, 2000, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/
The interests in Cochran’s state seem to be right up his alley, from shipbuilding to military bases. The association with his fellow Mississippian Senate majority leader has no doubt contributed to his efficacy in getting pro-Mississippi legislation passed. The largest interests in Cochran’s district mainly have to do with agricultural industries, owing to the agrarian nature of his state. However, those interests that have to do with the national missile defense issue are also quite powerful and numerous. The first being the Ingalls shipyard located in Pascagoula which is mainly involved in government contracts, in particular, government defense contracts. Secondarily, there exist a number of military bases: Columbus AFB and Keesler AFB; as well as Naval bases in Pascagoula, Meridian, and Gulfport. Third, the largest private contractor for propellers, Bird-Johnson which is a subsidiary of Rolls Royce, has its base in Pascagoula as well. As is the case with Rep. Weldon, Sen. Cochran endeavors to avoid reaping electoral defeat by being influential in the procurement of funds necessary to ensure that these industries do not fail.

So, from where exactly does Sen. Cochran get the majority of his money? First of all, because he is the chair of the appropriations subcommittee on agriculture, he gets a fair amount from food and cotton producers across the country. However, among his highest group (third highest to be precise) is defense, with PAC donations totaling $67,175 for 1996, the last election cycle. Over half ($37,675) of this amount comes from the defense aerospace industry, which is slightly interesting because the navy has a

55 Nicholl, 2000, p. 8
far greater presence in Mississippi than does the air force. This could lead to his support for both a sea-based and a land-based NMD. However, this doesn’t tell the whole tale. Adding to this are a number of other contributors who are associated directly and indirectly with the defense industry. Sea transportation PACs contributed $3,250, construction PACs minus homebuilders gave $20,150, even the Marine Engineers International Union (MEIU) and the Seafarer’s Union contributed $10,000, with 90% of that coming from the MEIU. All totaled, $100,575 (22.2% of his total PAC donations) came from PACs directly representing the defense industry or those industries for whom the defense industry is the proverbial cash cow.

In order to be a man of his word, Cochran has tried to make good on the contributions given to him by these numerous industries. There have been instances, such as will be described below, where Cochran has come up big for those industries who also come up big for him around the second Tuesday in November, every six years. Luckily for Rolls-Royce, Lockhead-Martin, the MEIU, and others, Sen. Cochran is an important elected asset fighting hard to ensure that their interests are the interests of the State of Mississippi.

In June of 1997, Cochran fought hard to ensure that one additional DDG-51 was produced at Ingalls Shipbuilding during the FY1998. Adding to this, the State of Mississippi was awarded a contract to overhaul the entire naval cruiser fleet (at Ingalls, of course) which created 400-500 jobs in the Pascagoula region. Cochran went further to

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say that, “Additional ship construction will follow as funding is secured in the Congress,” indicating that Ingalls and its union employees would have nothing to worry about.61

The history of Ingalls Shipbuilding is long and filled with federal dollars. In 1999, the navy commissioned the USS Porter to be built at Ingalls, though this was not a new occurrence. Ingalls had built 12 such ships in its history, though these were to be better than the other 16 of that class that had been produced in the country because, according to Cochran, they had the reputation of Ingalls behind them.62

Finally, on 3 March 1999, Cochran announced a joint operation with Hawaii on the construction of cruise ships.63 Two new cruise ships were to be completed in the following five years with the first coming off the production line in 2002. The deal was signed between American Classic Voyages Company and none other than Ingalls Shipbuilding.64 Interesting that an Atlantic port production facility would get a lucrative cruise line contract for a Pacific coast company. Curiously, the press conference where Sen. Cochran announced this wonderful news was attended and co-sponsored by Sen. Inouye, a Democrat from Hawaii. Sen. Inouye is the ranking Democrat on the appropriations subcommittee on defense as well as the aforementioned co-sponsor of SB 257 with Sen. Cochran, which, incidentally, was brought to the floor of the Senate 47 days prior to this announcement. No, this is not a assuming there is a cruise ship for NMD under the table trade going on here. Nor does this sort of behavior come to the surprise of an already cynical American public. But this does show that Cochran and Inouye have developed a relationship.

64 Cochran, 1999a, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/
In addition to the support of general contractors dependent upon government intervention and funds, Cochran has been quite loyal to those who wear military uniforms in Mississippi. In May of 1997, Cochran argued vehemently against the possibility of air force base closures in Mississippi, although his fear was mainly unfounded. Because of delivery stagnation to Columbus AFB, there was a fear that this base would not be modern enough to withstand the next round of base closures, but again, Cochran reacted cautiously.\(^6^5\) Secondarily, Cochran was disturbed that the United States was spending so much on peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and not enough on modernizing Keesler AFB.\(^6^6\) However, what is interesting to note is that he was specifically targeting the modernization of the air traffic control towers at Keesler AFB.\(^6^7\) Incidentally, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association PAC gave Cochran $1,000 in the previous election cycle.\(^6^8\) This not only shows that Cochran is willing to help this very specific constituency group, but also goes to support the claim that he is pro-defense. Finally, in April of 1999, Cochran also made sure to include the members of the Mississippi National Guard under his protective wing by arguing for more funding and support of National Guard facilities in Mississippi.\(^6^9\) He reassured members of the military that he and his committee were doing all that was in their power to ensure that the US military and the National Guard had all the fiscal resources in their power to keep the peace in Kosovo. Somehow Cochran’s isolationist attitude changed when there is enough money for the air traffic controllers at Keesler AFB.

\(^{6^5}\) Cochran, 1997a, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/
\(^{6^8}\) CRP, 2000d, http://www.opensecrets.org/candidates/pac/S8MS00055.htm
\(^{6^9}\) Cochran, 1999c, http://www.senate.gov/~cochran/
Lastly, we come to Cochran's support of a specific private industry, although it too is related to the defense department. Bird-Johnson is a subsidiary of the Rolls Royce Corporation's naval division, with plants in Massachusetts, Maryland, and Pascagoula, Mississippi. The Pascagoula plant is the sole privately owned foundry in the United States capable of casting USN acceptable propellers for large naval ships. In October of 2000, it was realized by many foreign defense-contracting companies that language was inserted into the defense appropriation bill which dictated that all propellers for the US Navy must be domestically produced. The language was inserted by Trent Lott and Thad Cochran, and was called by many foreign companies a "classic case of pork-barrel politics."^70

Essentially this all points to Sen. Cochran's ability to be swayed by contractors in his state, but also by defense companies who have a vested interest in the production of NMD. By outlining the actions of Cochran with regard to Ingalls, Bird-Johnson, the various military installations in Mississippi, and yes, his relationship to Sen. Inyoue, a pattern emerges of bought and paid for legislation. Cochran has lost objectivity with regard to the defense industry and, therefore, the NMD industry as well. What also emerges is a somewhat narrowly focused span of attention, one that is not necessarily focused on national security. One that seems to be focused on individual job security.

70 Nicoll, 2000, pg. 8.
Those Defense People: The Big Four

Without any sort of conclusive evidence to the contrary, it could be said that the missile defense issue is not one that moves voters.\(^7\) Or, more appropriately, NMD isn't an issue that American voters pay attention to, especially in comparison to things such as the economy or crime.\(^7\) As James M. Lindsay noted, “When the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations asked people in 1998 to name the ‘two or three biggest foreign-policy problems facing the United States today,’ the most common response by far, at 21 percent, was ‘don’t know.’”\(^7\) This is not to say that the average American cares all that much for issues in general, after all, the idea of campaigning now is for candidates avoid tough stands so no one will be alienated. NMD is a very safe issue in that it seems to be immune to negative public opinion and feed off of positive public opinion.

One area where Americans might care what effect an NMD would have on their lives would be in the arena of what company managed to procure the contract. This would theoretically mean more jobs and Americans are very concerned with the state of the economy.\(^7\) Certainly, for whatever company does manage to find this holy grail of defense, profits stand to be gained by any sort of success.\(^7\) Success isn’t even as much a factor as simply coming up with new ideas to sell Congress on, but not necessarily the public.

The lead systems-integrator (LSI) of this particular go around is the Boeing Company, with plants in 27 different states and over 197,000 employees as of November

\(^{71}\) Lindsay, 2000, p. 3
\(^{73}\) Lindsay, 2000, p. 5
\(^{75}\) Crock, 2000, p. 232
2000. Boeing is not only working on this new NMD system, but they are also working on more short range defense solutions such as the airborne laser and new cruise missile defense. What must be realized here is that any development in missile interception, be it long-range, tactical, or simply cruise oriented, is a step toward NMD.

For example, the airborne laser has been mentioned continuously as a future battlefield defense against non-nuclear missiles not unlike those used against US soldiers during the Gulf War. Allusions have been made in the press that this system could eventually become an "added layer" to US NMD by deploying it in space. However, in 1997 (and much earlier, for that matter) Boeing already had the idea to mount this very large laser on a military reconnaissance aircraft so as to hit missiles being launched in boost phase as a part of a new TMD. This was not the first time a laser has been considered for missile defense, but contractors will simply not let it die. Make no mistake; it is quite clear that Boeing plans to make more movements into space-based technology having "spent more than $20 billion over the last 3 1/2 years gobbling [up] space businesses." This new shopping spree of small space companies allowed Boeing to crush Lockheed-Martin's hopes for securing new and lucrative defense contracts, from spy satellites to NMD. After spending this much money on acquiring the ability to compete with other companies for government defense contracts, the $300,000 Boeing has spent on PAC donations this election cycle is a drop in the bucket. And, judging by the fact that Boeing did receive a three-year $2.2 billion contract to manage whatever

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77 Faulk, 2000, p. 17
78 Faulk, 2000, p. 17
79 Faulk, 2000, p. 17
80 United States. General Accounting Office, 1997b
81 Sur, 2000, p. C1
82 Kwan, 2000, p. M07
new NMD system would be put in place, it was money well spent. On top of this, Boeing secured "the $6bn contract for the development phase of NMD...to generate annual revenues in excess of $12bn."85

The point is that Boeing as a private corporation has a vested interest in acquiring defense oriented contracts so as to stay in business regardless of whether or not they are NMD or TMD. The line is so fuzzy between the two that some of the research and development done for one system can be used in the construction of another. Yet despite this vested interest, it is extremely difficult to find any independent expenditure campaign on behalf of Boeing, or any other corporation for that matter, designed to sway voters on the issue of NMD. Industries such as Boeing have funded pro-NMD organizations to conduct focus groups, but I am not aware of any directed endorsement of a specific candidate. Boeing had indicated that it was going to "break an industry standard" and begin to run a series of ads so as to better educate members of Congress and the public as to the issue of NMD because Clinton and congressional support were wavering in June of 2000.86

It is very easy to trace to whom Boeing donates funds, and they donate quite liberally, especially to candidates in whose district they possess a plant. Granted, it is almost impossible to be a representative or senator and not have a constituency group who has an interest in Boeing or any other defense contractor, for that matter. However, the lack of effort Boeing has put into getting the message out seems almost as if they are trying not to alert the public as to the funding of NMD. After all, voter opinion has

84 Cohen likely to endorse steps, 2000
85 Sommerville, 2001, Business p. 1
86 Schneider, 2000b, p. E03
remained constant without any sort of outside influence from corporations, why should they fix something that has not been broken?

Looking at Lockheed-Martin, Raytheon, and TRW one sees more of the same, except for the fact that they have been out competed by Boeing. In particular, Los Angeles based Lockheed-Martin has been affected quite heavily by the new kid on the NMD block. Perhaps calling Boeing the new kid on the block is a bit of a misnomer due to their historical presence in defense contracting, but the fact that Boeing was able to become the LSI for the NMD project is a notable accomplishment. It is especially noticeable when looking at Lockheed’s plummeting stock price. From over $100 per share in June of 1998, Lockheed-Martin has tumbled in value to a current price (as of 10-27-00) of $35 per share. Despite this current stock price crumble, Lockheed-Martin still remains the nation’s largest defense contractor with revenues with sales last year of $25.3 billion.

What is also interesting to note about the corporate performance of Lockheed-Martin is that it, like Boeing, does not appeal directly to the public for government support, but rather keeps the issue confined to Congress. In particular, Lockheed has close ties with many senators and representatives, including Curt Weldon. Compounding this fact is that on June 4, 2000, Weldon along with the Ballistic BMDO co-chaired a weeklong conference with Lockheed-Martin about current NMD proposals in, Philadelphia. What is interesting to note about this conference is that it was closed to the public, involving very few policy elites and representatives from foreign militaries.

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87 Beckett, 2000, A1
88 Little, 2001, p. 13C
89 Schneider, 2000a, p. H01
However, this sort of behavior is currently the norm for missile defense proponents due to the fact that, "the companies in attendance and others in the defense sector do virtually no marketing of missile defense in the media."\textsuperscript{90}

TRW and Raytheon have very similar stories. Both of these companies have had extensive losses in the years preceding the decision in 1998 to go for a new NMD with Boeing as the LSI. Because of a more leery Congress and internal problems within the company, Raytheon has begun to see a tumble of its Class B shares from $75 in July of 1999 to $32 as of Oct. 27, 2000.\textsuperscript{91} Raytheon not only is having problems with management and corporate profits, but also with labor relations. According to the Boston Globe, in August of 2000, Raytheon had 2,700 blue-collar employees walk out on the job on strike.\textsuperscript{92} This is mainly a consequence of the fact that Raytheon, in an effort to diversify its production ability and move more in the direction of high-tech, has lost the need for blue-collar, union employees. Again, according to the Boston Globe, "Raytheon is busy cutting costs, meanwhile, by sending more of its manufacturing work to plants in Arizona or to non-union subcontractors."\textsuperscript{93} This has all stemmed from the company's need to turn around its financial misfortunes. In July of 2000, "Raytheon reported net income of $49 million, down from $290 million a year earlier," due to Raytheon's selling of several major divisions within its company.\textsuperscript{94} Raytheon, in such a dire financial situation, is lobbying hard not just for the survival of NMD, but for its expansion. The company estimates that NMD will be worth over $5 billion by the year 2005 for

\textsuperscript{90} Schneider, 2000a, p. H01
\textsuperscript{91} Kerber, 2000a, p. C3
\textsuperscript{92} Kerber, 2000c, p. G6
\textsuperscript{93} Kerber, 2000c, p. G6
\textsuperscript{94} Kerber, 2000c, p. E3
Raytheon alone. Even if the program is shut down, it could perhaps apply the technological advancements made for NMD to the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) contract it received recently worth $1.4 billion.95

TRW isn’t exactly in the best financial situation, either. Often, TRW and Raytheon work with one another on defense-oriented projects, sometimes even as each other’s subcontractor. TRW never propounds to be a defense giant such as Lockheed-Martin or Boeing, but it does employ a notable 10,000 men and women.96 In February of 1999, TRW along with Boeing were working on a missile detection system when costs began to mount and spill over the originally intended budget. The contract itself was worth $148 million to Boeing, a paltry sum for such an industrial behemoth, but it was worth $683 million to TRW, a substantial amount.97 As a result of the gross overrun, the USAF decided to terminate the contract. TRW pledged to absorb the 170 jobs that would be lost as a result of this termination and Raytheon, a sub-contractor on the job, also said they would relocate the 300 jobs within their company that would be affected.98 TRW has also seen its stock fall significantly in two years following the current NMD plan, from a high of $54 per share in January of 1998 down to $34.40 as of April 5, 2001.99

However, money is only a portion of TRW’s NMD woes. On March 6, 2000, Dr. Nira Schwartz told the world that TRW had been faking tests and fudging data on NMD related projects.100 During her stint on the company’s antimissile team in 1995 and 1996, Dr. Schwartz saw many tests where the interceptors failed to hit their targets but her

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95 Kerber, 2000c, p. G6
96 Gerdel, 1999, p. 2C
97 Air Force ends missile-defense contracts, 1999, 12A
98 Gerdel, 1999, p. 2C
100 Broad, 2000, A1
superiors insisted that they performed adequately.\textsuperscript{101} This scandal not only sheds light on the possibility and prevalence of fraud in the NMD world, but it also (if only briefly) brought the issue to the attention of the nation from an opposition perspective. Obviously TRW is not happy with this. In order for a company to be able to milk the NMD cash cow, the company has to at least be somewhat benign in the court of public opinion. Because many companies, giants and midgets alike, are pushing the development of many more diverse types of NMD, many stand to benefit provided they are politically innocuous.

The defense industry has many fierce competitors, though the majority of the NMD contracts awarded are given to only four companies due to defense consolidation.\textsuperscript{102} These amalgamations are not limited to NMD, for "[t]he defense industry of the NATO alliance engaged in an orgy of mergers and acquisitions to adjust to a big drop in demand after the cold war."\textsuperscript{103} Consolidation creates a level of conniving behavior among these companies, but, because they are dependent upon congressional dollars for programs, it also creates a close-knit alliance. This alliance is not unlike those at the international level designed to discourage war; whenever a NMD issue is brought to the forefront, all four of these companies begin to appeal directly to congresspersons as a single NMD advocate. A duality results; TRW, Raytheon, Lockheed-Martin, and Boeing are all applying for jobs both independently and as a collective whole. This alliance is usually strong during times of NMD funding abundance, but begins to fragment when money is scarce. The competition between the four companies affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of blue-collar and white-collar citizens and registered

\textsuperscript{101} Broad, 2000, A1
\textsuperscript{102} Schneider, 2000a, p. H01
voters as well as affects the visibility of NMD at the policy-making level. It, in fact, becomes an interesting version of marketing a very specific product to Congress.

This marketing must pay off. In the 1998 election cycle alone, Lockheed-Martin gave over $1 million in direct PAC donations to specific candidates, and they have given over $800,000 so far in the 2000 election cycle.\textsuperscript{104} As far as total contributions are concerned in 2000, Lockheed-Martin has given $1.8 million, Raytheon $700,000, TRW $400,000, Boeing $300,000 in the 2000 election cycle in the forms of PACs and soft money contributions; for a grand total of $3.2 million from these companies alone.\textsuperscript{105} In 1998, when the current NMD contract was being considered, the dynamic of contributors had changed slightly, but noticeably. Lockheed-Martin and Boeing were vying for the LSI position and each dumped in a substantial amount of money, $1.4 million and $700,000 respectively.\textsuperscript{106} This amount of money not only helped these two companies compete for individual contracts, but it also helped them to maintain issue recognition. The most important numbers to compare here are the amount of funds contributed by Boeing in 1998 and 2000 where a $400,000 difference exists. It appears as though Boeing was lobbying heavily for the position of LSI on the project in 1998, but now they are backing off by lowering their contributions. On the flip side, Lockheed-Martin needs to gain its preeminence in the defense community by ensuring that congress knows who is still on top both in development and campaign contributions.

The good news for defense contractors is that they are allowed substantial deviance from their original budget proposals for NMD systems. In September of 1998,

\textsuperscript{103} Nicoll, 2001, p. 10

\textsuperscript{104} CRP, 2000a, http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/contrib.asp?Ind=D
\textsuperscript{105} CRP, 2000a, http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/contrib.asp?Ind=D
just five months after Boeing had won the original LSI contract for NMD; Lockheed, Boeing, and Raytheon had all overrun their given budgets by a combined total of $195 million dollars.\textsuperscript{107} There is so little control by the Pentagon over sub-contractors under LSI's that one, Northrop Grumman, is actually suing Lockheed for breach of contract to "test the practice of awarding defense projects to large contractors and allowing them broad discretion over which subcontractors to use."\textsuperscript{108} According to the \textit{New York Times}, "The lawsuit...underscores the tremendous latitude large contractors have over the distribution of subcontracts in military industry in the post-cold-war era."\textsuperscript{109} The U.S. Defense Department, who "used to manage such relationships more closely",\textsuperscript{110} takes on the extra cost above the estimate; which makes NMD one of the sweetest deals around.

There are many conclusions that can be drawn from following the path that money takes through the hands of companies to congress. Let's face it, the concept of money being able to influence government is almost a cultural faith rather than my personal epiphany. However, the money in this issue is not being used to benefit the public, at least not directly. There is no large coordinated campaign that exists from all the major company players to sell the public on the concept of missile defense. There are almost no arguments out there that try to appeal to a broad-based public concern regarding the issue; mostly there is intensive lobbying of individual congressional members and defense department officials. As Schneider states in the \textit{Washington Post}: "Although ballistic-missile defense will be worth about $ 4.7 billion in the next year alone, military contractors have done virtually no advertising and little direct lobbying on

\textsuperscript{106} CRP, 2000a
\textsuperscript{107} Missile Defense System is Millions Over Budget, 2000, C2
\textsuperscript{108} Little, 2001, p. 13C
\textsuperscript{109} Northrop and Lockheed go to court, 2001, p. 3C

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the issue in recent years, in part because congressional support seemed solid."\textsuperscript{111} In short, there is essentially an immense amount of money trading hands in an effort to better defend the US, but no education of citizenry on the issue. Boeing said it was going to make an attempt to better educate the public to try and abate the fears that some Americans were posing for their representatives and senators. Though some pro-NMD individuals were excited about this change, it was met with an icy response from the other three of the big four.\textsuperscript{112} In an effort to "soften public opinion and ultimately congressional opinion," to use the words of John Isaacs, president of the arms-control group Council for a Livable World\textsuperscript{113}, Boeing may be cutting its own throat.

The objections raised by TRW, Raytheon, and Lockheed-Martin regarding Boeing's noble quest to reach out and educate the country as to the values inherent in an NMD system, as well as soothe the fears of workability, are matters of pragmatism. It is far more expensive and difficult to educate 300 million people than it is to educate 555 representatives, senators, and one president. As this was written, I was not able to find much public information to the contrary being used to educate Americans, and US public opinion is in the camp of the big four. TRW, Raytheon, and Lockheed-Martin are simply looking at the situation as a win-win for their profits. These companies see Boeing's crusade as a possible threat; that the lack of knowledge on the issue is perhaps one of the main forces is allowing for such general public support.

Finally, after looking at the recent history of these four companies as interest groups, it is possible to see that they are dependent upon defense contracts. It seems to

\textsuperscript{110} Little, 2001, p. 13C

\textsuperscript{111} Schneider, 2000b, p. E03

\textsuperscript{112} Schneider, 2000b, p. E03
be that the only numbers moving throughout the whole debate are not polls, but stock prices. Boeing and Lockheed-Martin are not putting all their eggs in one basket, mainly because they are both very large companies with diversified civilian contracts. However, smaller companies such as Raytheon and TRW are greatly affected by what does and does not make it out of a committee, therefore they have much more to lose. As a result of this, these companies could be more likely to make noise and "fudge" data in order to ensure that the NMD legend does not die. These companies are not trying to defend America for the greater good, nor are they being particularly altruistic.

Imagine it in terms of a dinner table. They all boil down to for-profit companies who are trying to get their share of pork at the defense table. The servers at this meal are congressional officials, while the cooks are defense department officials. The servers have the choice of what to give to whom, based upon how much they have paid (in money or lobbying) to get in. Notice how there really is no role for the public in this situation; if there were to be a health code violation (not unlike a whistle-blowing incident experienced by TRW), perhaps the servers would be questioned, as would the cook. But, at an exclusive establishment, the average individual would not be let in, therefore the secret recipe would never get out.

It is simply more profitable and effective for these four and other companies to keep the public away (silent) from the table. And so it will stay this way unless the critics of NMD are able to mount an effective campaign that raises individual consciousness about the benefits and consequences (internal and domestic) that would result from NMD deployment. So far there have not been many takers.

113 Qtd. in Schneider, 2000b, p.E03
114 Broad, 2000, A1
The Say of the Public (or lack thereof)

So to where does all this lead? The decision of President Clinton on September 1st of 2000 to postpone the deployment decision was not expected, yet quite politically safe. However, what must be examined in this case is that the public opinion of the United States as a whole was not much of an influencing factor in the president’s decision, if a factor at all. In fact, in Clinton’s supporting speech to Georgetown University on September 1st, almost every reason other than US popular opinion were given regarding his move.115 Something else was at work here. As public opinion polls had consistently shown, supporting NMD was not an issue that would make or break the 2000 election. In essence, Clinton was able to “pass the buck” to the next president while, at the same time, informing the public as to his reservations regarding deployment.116

On March 17, 1999, President Clinton endorsed Thad Cochran’s SB 257, a move that caused many journalists to wonder where Clinton truly stood on the issue.117 Only two months after Cochran and Inouye’s bill was adamantly opposed by the president, Clinton did a complete “flip-flop” in the words of John Broader.118 The actual administration opinion at the time SB 257 was being presented in the committee on armed services, as was stated by Samuel Berger, was quite pointed and direct, calling the phrase “as soon as technologically possible” an “unacceptably narrow definition [that] would ignore other critical factors that the Administration believes must be addressed

115 Mr. Clinton’s Strategic Pause, 2000, p. NA
116 Mr. Clinton’s Strategic Pause, 2000, p. NA
117 Senate OKs National Missile Defense Bill, 1999, p. 3
118 Broader, 1999, p. A22
when it considers the deployment question in 2000 . . .”\textsuperscript{119} The minority view reported in the committee went on to support this statement by further defining the “critical factors” spoken of by Berger as such things as the possible effectiveness of a system just ready to be deployed, affordability, and the actual threats faced by the United States.\textsuperscript{120} All these factors, in Berger’s view, made for the decision to be better made on a case-by-case basis, rather than from an edict created to give a few representatives and senators full hawk status.

Or so the administration preached on February 12, 1999. A little over a month later, the Democratic members of the Senate had done a complete 180, and had taken the White House with them. On a vote of 97-3, the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 was passed; causing many people to wonder why there had ever been a debate in the first place. Why had Clinton turned his people around by dropping his opposition to this issue? Many people say that it is due to the fact that he was simply trying to ensure that Democrats were not outflanked on matters of national security as they have been for some time.\textsuperscript{121} Polls show that Republicans are more likely to be trusted and given responsibility regarding international issues, whereas the same sentiment is true for Democrats on issues of domestic policy.\textsuperscript{122}

After the Rumsfield report was released in 1998, capped off with the launching of a three (actually only two worked) stage intermediate range missile from North Korea, politicians in Congress as well as the White House were able to make a credible case to the public regarding NMD. According to Jonathan Reichart of the Buffalo News, “The

\textsuperscript{119} United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1999
\textsuperscript{120} United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1999
\textsuperscript{121} Kornblut, 1999, A1
\textsuperscript{122} Broader, 1999, A22
commission's report immediately energized advocates of a nationwide anti-ballistic missile system. 'Armed with the substance of the report,' Congress 'has a stronger political case for the more urgent development of missile defenses.'" The legitimacy for this case was rationalized by the perception of Congress and the presidency that public opinion on this issue was both general and intense, in other words, an issue that really mattered to Americans. And why not? After all, it was the national security of the United States supposedly at stake in this case, who wouldn't want to jump on this bandwagon?

Well, first of all, President Clinton only wanted to be on part of the ride. The Rumsfield Commission is at best controversial, with analysts such as Joseph Cirincione saying "that all the Rumsfield Commission really did was to change the standards by which the US intelligence community measures the ballistic-missile threat to the US by substituting 'possibility' for "probability."" True, he did want to ride any sort of rising (albeit it quite slowly) tide of support for NMD, just as much as he would like to ride a rising tide for any program. However, in his speech on September 1st, he doesn't mention the phrase "the American people" once, nor does he allude to how he was persuaded by some large volume of support for postponement. In fact, in his earlier decision to rescind a veto threat of SB 257, the administration adamantly stated that many factors other than public opinion influenced his decision on NMD.

His September 1st justification was made in more general security terms such as signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or ensuring that the United States

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123 Reichart, 1999, p. 1H
124 Cheong, 2001, p. 16
125 Clinton, 2000
126 Broader, 1999, A22
help to maintain the integrity of the ABM treaty with Russia by not leaping too far ahead, none of which have large ramifications on public opinion.\textsuperscript{127} President Clinton probably realized far before the September speech that public opinion has not really been an issue with regard to NMD because polls have usually been supportive of it. In response to his "flip-flop" on SB 257, "Administration officials said Mr. Clinton had been swayed by more than public opinion, which has always looked favorably on some form of missile defense."\textsuperscript{128} This opinion is prevalent despite the fact it is thought "the US is under considerably less threat of attack by ballistic missiles now than it was a decade ago."\textsuperscript{129} In essence, Clinton was endorsing this bill purely for DC political capital and not to satisfy voters in any extraordinary way.

Secondarily, one need only look as far as those in power to understand that public opinion for or against a foreign policy program is usually dilute at best. The military in general is a large issue as well as a popular one. We saw evidence of this in the 2000 presidential race when Bush continued to hammer away at the idea that the United States needs to be safer by an expansion of our military.\textsuperscript{130} The fact is that foreign policy issues, especially those specific programs such as NMD, are usually untouched in congressional campaigns. In the words of Joseph Biden (D-DE), ranking minority member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "I'd bet that in the last eight to 10 years, not 1% of those [senators] who come here [to the senate] talked about foreign policy in their campaigns."\textsuperscript{131} The specific NMD issue simply is not as important to

\textsuperscript{127} Clinton, Bill, 2000 and Princeton Survey Research Associates, 2000
\textsuperscript{128} Broader, 1999, p. A22
\textsuperscript{129} Cheong, 2001, p. 16
\textsuperscript{130} Wood, 2000, p. 5
\textsuperscript{131} Qtd. in Marshall and Mann, p. A1
Americans as are issues that are closer to home or affect them directly, such as taxes or the state of the economy. During the debates, both presidential candidates showed off their foreign policy prowess by demonstrating knowledge of foreign issues; but they quickly “hurried back to the home front” in their closings, focusing on education and tax policy.\textsuperscript{132} Granted, foreign relations and sanctions influence both of these domestic issues, but this is a long-distance call many Americans are unwilling to make.

As a general rule, many Americans don’t pay attention to foreign issues unless they are directly affected by them, thereby allowing foreign policy matters to drift into the hands of aspiring politicians looking for an easy and safe issue to grab hold of. As James Lindsay put it, “Absent a clear and present danger, the temptation to dismiss foreign policy as a trifle will remain powerful.”\textsuperscript{133} Adding to this general apathy, both among constituents and leaders, is the fact that it is becoming more and more difficult to fill such foreign policy icons as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. According to the \textit{LA Times}, the senate even considered this lack of interest as one of their reasons for demoting the high-level committee so that many senators could pick it as their second choice.\textsuperscript{134}

Though Americans have remained uninterested, the rest of the world is livid. “Not since the United States deployed short-range cruise missiles in Western Europe during the mid-1980’s has an arms issue so galvanized European opposition.”\textsuperscript{135} In fact, Americans seem unaware or ambivalent toward the Russian threat to “double defense

\begin{itemize}
\item[132] Traub, 2001, p. 28
\item[133] Lindsay, 2000, p. 3
\item[134] Marshall and Mann, 2000, A1
\item[135] Kettle, 2001, p. 14
\end{itemize}
spending over the next ten years” if the US proceeds with NMD.136 Ironically, President Bush has been courting world, mainly European, opinion concerning NMD rather than US opinion.137 Europeans have been cold to the necessity of such a system in the post-cold-war era; Moscow has been icy. These efforts are seen as a ploy to convince the world that Bush cares about global opinion while many Europeans think “Mr. Bush will largely ignore the concern expressed in western Europe, Russian and China that a missile shield poses more of a threat to global stability than the challenge it is intended to disarm.”138 Foreign leaders are also skeptical. Most foreign leaders, Vladimir Putin in particular, believe that NMD would require a “major rewriting of the 1972 ABM Treaty”139 which has, thus far, kept relative nuclear peace. The only international support for the issue seems to be from the Conservative Party in the UK, though sentiments in that country are amongst the most scathing in the world. The London-based Independent sums up the opposition concisely: “The case against it is simple: it is expensive, it is unproven, it will destabilize arms-control efforts, and it does not even meet the most likely threats from rogue nuclear states, chief among them the ‘bomb-in-a-suitcase’ scenario.”140 With such fervent foreign opposition, both in the foreign press and amongst the populations of other nations, the US population looks as though it is unconcerned with international issues when compared with our global counterparts.

However, many people will discount and even argue adamantly against this assertion by claiming that opinion polls taken constantly have revealed Americans are

136 Fighting the next war, 2001, p. 14
137 Gordon, 2001, p. A8
138 Baker, 2001, p. 1
139 Traub, 2001. p. 28
140 Mr. Blair must tell Mr. Bush his Star Wars missile system is folly, 2001, p. 3
quite involved in foreign relations due to their wealth of opinions on specific programs. This is a valid point and one that needs fleshing out. It is true that a poll taken in June of 1999 indicated that 82% of those surveyed felt it was necessary for the senate to support and approve the nuclear test-ban treaty.\textsuperscript{141} It is also true that both the Contract with America as well as Bob Dole’s presidential campaigns both contained specific aspects to their platforms pertaining to the necessity of building and maintaining a national missile defense.\textsuperscript{142} And, it is most certainly true that there is a solid majority of the nation that feels as though we should build a national missile defense system, regardless on which dates they have been polled over the past two years. These are all facts that construct a valid argument in the NMD debate regarding the efficacy of perceived public opinion to lobby Congress.

In order to respond to these contentions, one must only look to who (i.e., those individuals who make up the public) exactly is supporting this, and how hard they are campaigning for it. First off, let’s examine why members of Congress vote the way they do by looking at Robert Bernstein’s book entitled: \textit{Elections, Representation, and Congressional Voting Behavior: the Myth of Constituency Control}. The essential conclusion that Bernstein reaches is that the ignorance of the public leads to a policy making process not necessarily controlled by public opinion. Rather, it is that constituencies influence congresspersons mainly through the selection of candidates.\textsuperscript{143} He also states that if members of Congress are influenced by public opinion, it is out of fear of electoral retribution.\textsuperscript{144} This would stand to support the hypothesis that

\textsuperscript{141} Ratify Treaty to Ban Nuclear Testing, 1999, 3B  
\textsuperscript{142} Jensen, 1999, p. 27A  
\textsuperscript{143} Bernstein, 1989, p. 75  
\textsuperscript{144} Bernstein, 1989, p. 83
representatives and senators are making decisions that do not deviate from public support, such as supporting seemingly popular programs like NMD. There would not be much electoral retribution for supporting a program that many people seldom read or hear about.

Secondarily, let’s take a look at how the public supports programs and ideas in general, especially with regard to US foreign policy. To attempt to debunk the notion that “If the public supports a program, it must be a high priority for Congress,” one must simply look to the concept outlined by James Lindsay titled, “Elianation.”¹⁴⁵ In response to surprisingly high poll numbers supporting various foreign policy initiatives and programs, Lindsay says: “What really counts is not how many people line up on each side of an issue, but how intensely each side holds its opinions.”¹⁴⁶ This intensity usually comes in the form of large rallying cries from fired up constituency groups who are quite adamant about their issue. Unfortunately, other than a silent minority, this cohesive, adamant support simply isn’t the case with the NMD issue.

Take for example a New York Times/CBS Poll taken September 9-11, 2000. The poll’s result were not dissimilar to many of those before it; 40% of voters said that “it was very important that the United States try and build a missile defense system,” while roughly 66% of those voters stated “they favored such an effort, even though the government has already spent $60 billion trying to develop one.”¹⁴⁷ This would be all well and good for the average campaign consultant, as such a high level of general support for any program in the United States would be thought of as an important issue to

¹⁴⁵ Lindsay, 2000, p. 3
¹⁴⁶ Lindsay, 2000, p. 3
¹⁴⁷ Berke and Elder, 2000, p. A1
voters. That is, of course, until one looks at the other questions asked. Roughly 28% of those who responded understood that the United States is without an NMD system and 70% stated that they hadn’t read or heard much about the issue.\textsuperscript{148}

With regard to NMD being a campaign issue in the past, the results are sketchy at best as to how much it really moved voters. Domestic policies will usually win unless there is that clear and present danger looming over them as the most immediate problems. People will be more concerned with their children’s education or their employment opportunities; Boeing’s new airborne laser program usually doesn’t pique the interest of soccer moms and Reagan Democrats. During the past election cycle, a statistically insignificant amount of people said that NMD would be a criterion upon which they would base their choice for president.\textsuperscript{149} The Contract With America had a small plug for NMD, which was forgotten in the final months of the 1994 campaign,\textsuperscript{150} as well as was bitterly defeated by a presidential veto in the legislation following the surge of change in Congress.\textsuperscript{151} Quietly forgotten in the minds of Congress and, therefore, in the minds of the public. The same verse, second situation, with regard to Dole’s Defend America Campaign. Dole pushed for a national missile defense in 1996 until his own internal polling data suggested that it was not an issue that was going to get him elected.\textsuperscript{152}

Being an election year, the past 12 months or so have afforded us with many opportunities to test the political waters with regard to a myriad of issues, including national missile defense. Through the many polls present and accounted for, some trends emerge. First of all, the people of the United States usually support the concept of a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{148} Berke and Elder, 2000, A1
\item \textsuperscript{149} Washington Post, 2000
\item \textsuperscript{150} Jensen, 1999, p. 27A
\item \textsuperscript{151} Hess, 1995, p. A2
\end{itemize}
national missile defense, even in the face of an adverse international reaction to such a program. Caveats such as the possibility of creating international security instability, or perhaps breaking a treaty with Russia in an effort to build an NMD, or even the financial cost of the system don’t seem to affect this growing monster.

The most recent opinion poll taken on the subject, sponsored by Princeton survey research associates, showed that 47% of Americans think that the United States should develop a ground- and space-based missile defense system despite the fact that it could potentially be “costly” and “interfere with existing arms treaties with the Russians.”153 In a similar poll taken later, 47% would “support NMD if it broke an existing arms treaty with Russia.”154 According to another poll funded by CBS/NYT taken one month prior also indicates that 79% of Americas feel as though it is at least somewhat important that the US build an NMD, with 42% responding saying that it is very important.155 Another poll taken more recently than the aforementioned Burke and Elder article upped the development ante by including a cost-estimate range from “$60 billion to $100 billion;” the percentage of people dropped to 57% of those originally wanting a missile defense system still supporting it.156 Sixty-two percent would support “a missile defense system (even) if scientists raised doubts about whether it could ever completely protect the US

152 Jensen, 1999, p. 27A
155 CBS News and NYT, 2000
from incoming missiles." As is seen by these numerous examples, citizens seem to think quite highly of NMD.

However, this should not serve to bolster the hopes (and budgets) of those missile defense hawks who will try to use a poll as a mandate for legislation. As has been the case in the past, when US public opinion has shown general support for such programs, this support has been shallow and unfounded. According to the same CBS/NYT poll, 14% of respondents had no idea whether or not the US currently has an NMD system. Compounding this are the 58% of those surveyed who felt as though the US, in fact, already has a "missile defense system to protect against nuclear attacks." Add to this the aforementioned CBS/NYT poll that indicated that 69% had "heard or read" not much to nothing at all about "the current debate surrounding the proposed missile defense system to protect against nuclear missiles." A poll taken two months prior by Harris Interactive had indicated that Americans were similarly well informed on the issue as were those queried in the September 9, 2000 CBS/NYT poll, 47% hadn't "seen, heard, or read anything about the missile defense system which the Pentagon [sic] had been developing for testing." What is most interesting about this particular poll is that it occurred just a few days after the most recent and highly publicized NMD test in July. Essentially, when NMD was at its media zenith, the test failure (on which Cochran, of course, claimed victory) was still unbeknownst to the majority of those Americans upon whose opinion political decisions are supposedly based.

This is not to say that the average voter is particularly informed in general with regard to political issues. Cynicism aside, usually voters have enough trouble identifying who is representing them in Washington, much less how these individuals have voted on pieces of specific legislation.\textsuperscript{161} Defense and foreign policy issues in particular "are issues that sharply divide members along ideological lines. And those issues are ones that constituents are not likely to know or care a great deal about."\textsuperscript{162} Americans seem particularly unaware on this issue, especially with regard to the international consequences with respect to what this could mean for relations with both our adversaries and our allies.\textsuperscript{163} As has been seen in polling data, when supporters of NMD are informed of additional concerns (workability, affect on arms treaties, cost), public support drops. What is important to realize here is that, despite this apparent fact, many members of Congress still look to public opinion at least during election years, which means that, if only for one year out of six (or two in the case of representatives), these people are making decisions upon which they can campaign.

\textsuperscript{161} Bernstein, 1989, p. 68
\textsuperscript{162} Bernstein, 1989, p. 70
\textsuperscript{163} Fidler & Nicoll, 2001, p. 14
Conclusion

In the beginning of the paper I set out to prove who was moving the NMD Lazarus (or Phoenix, take your pick of metaphor) irrespective of how educated the public support. In the end, I am definitely sure who has not been moving the issue, who has been left behind in the whole policy process: The People. I am not naïve enough to believe that the American system is perfect, or even palatable at times. I do understand that there are other factors involved with moving political issues that far exceed the scope of what we believe to be popular sovereignty. The United States is a country governed by a great many institutions, and I am not referring to some sort of religious conspiracy but merely those institutions of money, power, and fear. However, the NMD issue is an example of where these institutions have deliberately all but excluded the public. Coincidentally, there is also a lack of knowledge regarding the general concepts of missile defense, much less its intricacies, among the citizenry. The immediate counterpoint to this statement is that there are many small issues that get passed through Congress, literally, every day that are not known to the general public and are subject to only a few lobbying interest groups. It could be said that the national missile defense issue is not unlike an issue pertaining to one specific industry; that it is no different from a mere rider attached to an appropriations bill allowing for the construction of some fill-in-the-blank pork project. Whoever would be saying this would, unfortunately for him/her, be extremely wrong.

First of all, let's take a look at this from those institutions aforementioned in the preceding paragraphs. With regard to money, this is no small issue. The amount of money being literally dumped into campaign coffers and political parties is staggering.
Individuals such as Weldon and Cochran are only the tip (albeit a large one) of the iceberg with regard to the money given in the form of PAC’s, soft money, and lobbying efforts. This doesn’t include contributions to various pro-defense groups such as the Center for Security Policies, which has received $2 million in donations from the missile defense industry since 1988.\textsuperscript{164} Whereas these contributions have been linked to specific NMD groups, these organizations have not conducted much in the way of public education, but rather have been an arm of the defense industry at the congressional lobbying level. The companies aren’t exactly throwing their money out the window here, nor are they exhibiting some sort of strange opulence. The Big Four are actually being quite frugal by only spending money on very few Americans rather than the entire voting bloc. And, by doing this, they can stay at least marginally far away from partisan politics, therefore allowing them to appeal to a greater portion of their constituency. After all, why expand an issue they were winning? The decisions made by Weldon and particularly Cochran with respect to what industries they favored have all been influenced by the presence of these companies in their districts.

The figures become even more profound when it is added to how much these industries affect economies in the communities in which they reside, this is not an issue that will effect mere seasonal employment or a small construction firm that happens to have good ties with a representative from their district. True, the defense lobby would proffer no contest to other lobbies such as finance or agriculture, and it is true as well that NMD contracts do not make up the entire industrial production of the Big Four. What is also true is that the Big Four depend heavily upon defense contracts that are division specific, that is to say, they need x-amount of work in some plants that really focus the

\textsuperscript{164} Cheong, 2001, p.16
majority of their production of NMD related materials. Often, as is the case with the Joint Strike Fighter, these contracts are a “bonanza” for one company, but regard for the well being of the nation as a whole over a particular constituency is done away with.\textsuperscript{165}

The amount of money involved in these contracts is no small sum. More than sixty billion dollars has been spent on NMD since President Clinton resurrected the issue. This figure can only rise, with Raytheon alone standing to gain over $5 billion dollars in the next five years if the next president decides to go with the proposed system.\textsuperscript{166} The deal becomes even sweeter for Raytheon over the next 15 years, with figures pushing near $19 billion if the new system is successful.\textsuperscript{167} And, despite Raytheon’s inability to hit their target in the July missile test, they are still counting on defense spending in the NMD arena to bring them out of their economic doldrums.\textsuperscript{168} What is interesting here is that Raytheon is simply a subcontractor on the current NMD contract and probably will be again if President Bush decides to truly deploy a system. The profits for Lockheed-Martin and Boeing would be quite welcome.

Looking at fear, we can see that many people are somewhat frightened by the possibility that there could be a rogue missile flying our way right now, and we would have nothing to say or do about it. Emerging threats such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq have been mentioned many times in the media. Though Americans don’t pay attention to most foreign policy issues, perceived threats from foreign nations do create a visible and immediate rallying point. This fear of total annihilation has created an environment in which people can get some support for being pro-defense and pro-new defense ideas.

\textsuperscript{165} Fighting the next war, 2001, p. B14
\textsuperscript{166} Kerber, 2000b, p. C3
\textsuperscript{167} McLaughlin, 2000, p. 29
\textsuperscript{168} Kerber, 2000a, p. C3
Republicans see NMD as a panacea for world security woes. “To them, a missile defense system is the key because it gives the US the advantage of a first strike without fear of reprisal.”\(^{169}\) To the administration and the people, NMD “holds out tantalizing promise of instant security in an inherently insecure world.”\(^{170}\) Republicans jumped on Rumsfield’s (who, by the way was President Ford’s defense secretary) admonitions by trying to paint Democrats as soft on defense, thereby turning it into a voting issue.\(^ {171}\) Thus far, it hasn’t been successful, not at least with regard to NMD.

However, it is possible to believe that individual members of Congress could feel as though there are legitimate threats from other nations in terms of nuclear weapons. By delving into the backgrounds of Weldon and Cochran, we can see that Congress is ripe for the taking. They seem as though they have lived similar lives to the average citizen, therefore they could be influenced more heavily by sitting in on defense meetings or corporate lobbying. They could also truly believe that the United States is standing naked on the battlefield. They could even believe that there actually is a battlefield to stand on. We are all human after all. This still doesn’t exculpate them from the act of misinforming, or simply not informing, the public regarding NMD to serve their own electoral ambition.

Finally, we come to the issue of power, the issue that is slightly more difficult to prove with hard facts mainly because the concept of power is nebulous, at best. Theoretically, power in the United States is supposed to reside within its people, and these people supposedly give this power to their representatives, senators and presidents in an effort to make for a more efficient government. However, power, as it is commonly

\(^{169}\) Cheong, 2001, p. 16  
\(^{170}\) Traub, 2001, p. 28
known to Americans, still resides within the hands of the public because we are those who elect and un-elect those people with whom we have entrusted our popular sovereignty. The transference of power has been altered somewhat by the advent of polling which “has typically been used as an adjunct to policy implementation.”

Because of this phenomenon, politicians now have the ability to better tailor their voting and campaigning for re-election, which has given more weight to the American voter. This weight is relative, though, mainly because general support for an issue does not mean that people feel intensely about it, and if people do not feel adamant about an issue, it will not change their vote. Polls themselves only serve to make passive opinion national opinion due to the fact that they “organize and publicize opinion without requiring initiative or action on the part of individuals.”

Regardless, these polls are still looked upon as the heartbeat of the nation, therefore they are also manipulated for political gain. Americans have been kept in the dark on the NMD issue, and poll numbers remain high along with challengers’ campaign funds low. The ability of a junior congressman such as Curt Weldon to be the preeminent figure in the NMD debate after only 14 years in the House is interesting and notable. But, the fact there is only one Boeing plant and one shipyard in his district, cause more than a few eyebrows to be raised. If it were simply local industry driving the issue, why aren’t representatives and senators from Washington and California more prominent than senators from Mississippi and Hawaii? The fact that it is now a low-key national campaign at the congressional level allows for anyone, regardless of a vested interest to fly right into the NMD fray.

171 Gordon and Myers, 2000, A1
172 Ginsberg, 1986, p. 70
The fact that Americans are willing to admit their ignorance on the issue of NMD and still offer varying degrees of opinion to surveyors regarding its creation indicates that there is a very dangerous situation that lies ahead of this nation. As has been shown in the polling data, the public changes its tune when informed of other nuances of the issue. Therefore, it could be said the public is uniformed. Public opinion is often used as a motivating factor by congresspersons, especially by those who don’t have an opinion on the issue, themselves. This opinion is not pure, nor should it be used as a guiding force on an issue about which Americans clearly have no idea or cogent opinion. Some feel as though this is the way democracy was intended to function, that constant polling on specific issues is the best form of government. Others disagree. In the words of Benjamin Ginsberg: “Though opinion may be expressed more democratically via poll than through alternative means, polling can give public opinion a plebiscitary character—robbing opinion of precisely those features that might maximize its impact on government and policy.”\textsuperscript{174} And, even though these polls are given credence, the only push for the system comes from Pentagon generals bent on fighting the last war, from contractors eager to build this expensive boondoggle and from Republican conservatives who want to avenge their hero, Ronald Reagan, who never got his ‘Star Wars’ system.\textsuperscript{175}

NMD is a case, as tends to happen with specific issues of foreign policy, where the political process has broken down; a case where the people have virtually no say in what policy their government enacts. It appears as though President Bush is spending more time attempting to sway European public opinion than he is educating his own

\textsuperscript{173} Ginsberg, 1986, p. 64
\textsuperscript{174} Ginsberg, Benjamin, 1986, p. 84
\textsuperscript{175} Fighting the next war, 2001, p. B14
The fact that this issue has far-reaching global implications makes it all the more serious and tragic. As a consequence of misguided members of Congress, NMD, regardless of the status of its technical feasibility, has been touted as the ultimate defense of America. It has also been presented as having a high level of popular support; a possible result of an ignorant public forced into the decision-making process. NMD has been pushed through the US government, and will continue to be pushed through by the Big Four and greedy politicians. However, it is important to realize that the only way it can be pushed through Congress is by pushing the voter out of the way.

\[176\] Beeston, 2001, p. NA
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