CHAPTER SIX

The Deliberative Context

Leadership and Limitations in the Formulation of the New Look

The "New Look" national strategy adopted in late 1953 constituted an important shift in the U.S. definition of its national security goals and means.[1] Unlike the previous Truman strategy NSC-68, which gave higher priority to military security, the new approach deemed both economic and military security as equally important national interests. By emphasizing airpower and nuclear weapons, the New Look justified significant personnel reductions in the navy and particularly the army. In the long term, the strategy envisioned ground troops being slowly relocated from overseas bases to a central mobile and flexible reserve in the continental United States. Policymakers believed that these moves would achieve significant fiscal savings in the defense budget and contribute to the administration's efforts to adjust defense programs for the "long haul," a concept signifying the belief that the conflict with the Soviet Union would last a number of years. Previous planning under NSC-68 embodied the notion of a "critical year" in which open hostilities with the Soviet Union were thought most likely. The military used the critical year as a planning date to build up capabilities to counter the threat in that year. The shift in planning from a "year" of danger to an "age" of danger thus created potential savings, since defense expenditures could be stretched out over a longer period.

The New Look had its origin in Eisenhower's 1952 presidential campaign, which centered on four issues: Korea, communism, corruption, and lower federal government spending. After his election but before he took office, Eisenhower and his advisers began considering what he called the "great equation"—providing national security at an affordable cost. Although he remained largely noncommittal on the specific policies to reach this goal, he believed that reductions in Defense Department "waste" could largely achieve his objectives. Eisenhower's initial efforts to wring cuts from the FY54 budget ignited opposition from both Democrats, who complained about massive cuts, and Republicans, who pressed for more reductions. After meeting this stiff resistance in early 1953, he concluded that a more extensive reevaluation of the military was necessary to achieve his fiscal goal. Thus, he launched a broad study of national security, or "basic national security policy," as the administration referred to it, by the NSC and instigated a military strategy review by the JCS. Eisenhower then used these reviews to generate policy ideas and build an internal consensus on policy goals and means.

The NSC effort, designated "Project Solarium" (for the White House sun room where the meeting that originated the study was held), considered several alternative paths in the summer of 1953, ranging from then current containment policy to a rollback of communism. Eisenhower also appointed a new Joint Chiefs of Staff to reconsider American defense plans during the summer of 1953. The administration completed the new national strategy, NSC 162/2, in October, which incorporated the JCS's recommendations (identifying American overextension as the principal problem and calling for the redeployment of American forces from overseas). The new strategy identified the capacity for massive retaliation with nuclear weapons as the primary deterrent to war. Following the adoption of NSC 162/2, the JCS developed a new military strategy based on this new national strategy. This new military strategy provided significant fiscal savings, reduced personnel, and relied on airpower and nuclear weapons to offset these cuts. In January 1954, the administration presented the new military strategy and its FY55 budget to the nation (which partially implemented NSC 162/2), and Congress passed it largely intact in June. Eisenhower thus believed that he had adopted an approach to national security that provided both significant savings and a sustainable defense posture over the long term.[2]

My analysis found that public opinion had no influence on Eisenhower's determination to reduce defense spending, which he thought

was necessary because of his economic philosophy. As Eisenhower pondered how he would cope with the issue, public opinion limited the options he considered and persuaded him to formulate a new strategy in order to justify the spending reductions. To persuade the public to support the new strategy, Eisenhower decided that he must head off internal government opposition to his defense reductions and so initiated the strategic reviews to build this consensus. Although policymakers considered public opinion while they developed policy options, their attention centered mainly on whether and how to lead the public to support the policies the government would eventually adopt. Because Eisenhower believed that he needed an internal consensus on the new strategy to gain public support, he accepted the policy outcome of the strategic review (reliance on nuclear weapons), even though he had significant misgivings about it. By influencing Eisenhower's choice of the process by which he would develop the new strategy, public opinion placed a broad constraint on the eventual national strategy chosen. After reaching a decision, the administration was able to persuade the public to support the new strategy and budget.

Realist and Wilsonian liberal views portray public opinion's influence in this context differently. Given the long decision time and anticipation, the realists suggest that decision makers would have used this opportunity to lead the public. But they concede that public opinion might have limited decision makers in a pernicious manner, since the extended decision time might have allowed the public to mobilize and influence policy. For this reason, the primary prediction of the realist view is for decision makers to act consistently with the *lead category*. A secondary influence of the *constrain category* is also implied.

Wilsonian liberals predict that given the extended decision time, public opinion would become an important influence on policy. Since this added time was adequate for public opinion about policy options to develop, be ascertained by the government, and influence policy, these proponents would expect public opinion to affect policy as described in the *follow category*.

Beliefs predictions suggest slightly different behavior for Eisenhower and Dulles. Eisenhower would have attempted to lead public opinion, since the extended decision time would have given him confidence in his ability to formulate an effective leadership program to build public support. Because of his belief in the necessity of public support, he still might have been constrained by public opinion if he perceived the public's opposition as immovable. Dulles would have

acted consistently with the lead category, since the long decision time would have provided him the time he thought necessary to obtain public support. The one exception to this prediction would have been if the decision involved broad foreign policy goals, particularly as featured in the previous election. In this case, if Dulles perceived that the 1952 election revealed the public's preferences regarding these broad foreign policy objectives, he would have been constrained by public opinion or followed it.

During this case, public opinion affected decision making mostly according to the *lead category,* with a lesser influence from the *moderate constrain category*. For the most part, the realist perspective is accurate, since when decision makers considered public opinion, they did so with an eye toward leading the public to support the policy that they thought best. Although the need for a new strategy to persuade the public to accept the spending cuts restricted the decision makers, realists' expectations account for this form of limitation. However, realists' predictions are incorrect regarding the process by which this influence occurs. Although they expect that a mobilized public might constrain decision makers, the public stayed fairly subdued throughout the policy's formulation. Instead, decision makers were reined in by their anticipation of the public's reaction rather than a mobilized public. Except for Dulles's choices when forming his view of the issue, the Wilsonian liberal perspective is not supported, since decision makers did not follow public opinion. Although at times the decision makers adopted policies that were consistent with public opinion, process tracing reveals that they preferred these policies for other reasons.

The beliefs variable is supported in this decision context, and the influence of Eisenhower's beliefs is coded as a *supportive* influence. He expressed a desire to lead public opinion throughout the decision making and acted almost entirely consistently with this view. Because of concerns related to the necessity of public support, he was limited by public opinion in his choice of pursuing the strategic review and in accepting the policy that he had previously opposed that the strategic review produced. Dulles also acted consistently with his beliefs throughout this case, and their effect is coded as a *supportive* influence. In addition to favoring leadership of public opinion, his beliefs had a causal influence on his behavior when he suggested a broad review of American strategic policy because of the previous election results.

Problem Representation: Setting the Agenda

The impetus for reconsidering the nation's defense strategy originated with Eisenhower. Long before he entered office, he had become an advocate of reformulating American defense strategy and reconsidering its assumptions, because he feared the high defense spending and budgetary imbalances fostered by the Truman administration would harm economic security and the American position over the long term. For example, on December 11, 1952, while still president of Columbia University, Eisenhower stressed that defense policy must be sustainable over the long term as well as being capable of coping with crisis circumstances.[3] Writing in his diary on January 22, 1952, he saw large national deficits as a significant threat to the nation's economic welfare because they stifled initiative and caused high inflation. The expense of defense preparations, he reasoned, must be weighed against the long-term internal cost of excessively high military budgets and deficits. Recalling America's history of neglecting the military in peacetime and then rapidly expanding it when confronted with a crisis, he felt that a more balanced policy was necessary to smooth out these precipitous surges and declines. In his view, the nation was on the "horns of a dilemma" consisting of "the danger of internal deterioration through the annual expenditure of unconscionable sums on a program of indefinite duration," on the one side, and the outside threat from the Soviet Union, on the other. To achieve a balance between these perils, Eisenhower wanted to cut the military budget to a level sustainable over the long term while maintaining the necessary military strength.[4]

Eisenhower committed himself to this view during the 1952 presidential campaign. At a September 12, 1952, meeting with Senator Robert Taft (R, Ohio), the leader of the conservative right wing of the Republican Party, Eisenhower agreed to cut the FY54 and FY55 budgets, especially defense spending, and provide tax cuts.[5] His September 25, 1952, campaign speech on defense policy reflected this meeting: "We must achieve both security and solvency. . . .[national security spending] is where the largest savings can be made. And these savings must be made without reduction of defensive power." He hoped to make these reductions through better management and planning.[6]

After winning the election, when returning from a campaign-promised trip to Korea on December 9–11 aboard the cruiser USS *Helena*, Eisenhower met with his close advisers to debate the "great equa-

tion." Their discussions led to the conclusion that the administration needed to end the Korean War honorably and to formulate a defense concept consonant with the long-haul conception.[7] Foreshadowing his future policy stance, Dulles stressed the importance of the "will and capability of reprisal at times, places and means of our choosing."[8]

Following the *Helena* discussions, Eisenhower wanted to build support for his policy both in Washington and in the public. He outlined his goals in a December 29 memorandum that he used as a basis for discussion with Senate leaders. He reiterated that the first objective must be to balance the budget, after which further reductions could be offset by tax decreases. Regarding defense, he recalled his campaign pledge to appoint a civilian group to study the workings of the Defense Department to achieve savings involving: "national purposes, problems and objectives—a field that can be termed *strategic*, in the broadest sense of that word."[9] In his February 2, 1953, State of the Union address, Eisenhower outlined his objective to "achieve adequate military strength in the limits of endurable strain on our economy" and insisted that "to amass military power without regard to our economic capacity would be to defend ourselves against one kind of disaster by inviting another."[10] Echoing his discussion with the senators a month before, he wanted to achieve the balance mainly by integrating programs and eliminating waste and duplication.

The administration soon realized, however, that the desired defense cuts would not be forthcoming without a major revision in strategy. At the February 24, 1953, NSC meeting, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson reported that very little could be "squeezed" out of the Truman defense budget unless the administration was willing to consider either a new national strategy or a slower achievement of its objectives.[11] At the NSC meeting the next day, Eisenhower announced that he had decided to appoint "a committee of distinguished Americans . . . to participate in [the administration's] review of basic national security policies." As he envisioned at the end of December when he discussed the creation of such a group with Senate leaders, the cost of defense programs would constitute the central focus of the committee's deliberations.[12]

On another front, at the March 4 NSC meeting, Director of the Budget Joseph Dodge presented the proposed fiscal limits on the budgets of government departments, including the Defense Department. He reported that Truman's $44 billion estimate for FY55 military expenditures needed trimming by $9.4 billion to $34.6 billion.[13] The Defense

Department was directed to submit estimates of program revisions to meet these fiscal requirements and their effect on national security policies and objectives.

Problem Representation: Defining the Situation

Early in the FY54 budget process, Eisenhower still believed that he could make most of the defense cuts by reducing waste. He commented in regard to defense savings at a March 6 cabinet meeting, "I simply KNOW there are savings to be made. One thing I know too well is [the military's] luxurious use of personnel and facilities—plenty can be cut there."[14] The perceived difficulty in reaching these goals soon increased, however.

In their March 19 report to Wilson, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (chaired by Army General Omar Bradley) described the grim consequences if the administration implemented the FY54 and FY55 cuts outlined in the March 4 NSC meeting. Any reductions in the previous Truman budget projections would "increase the security risk to the United States beyond the dictates of national prudence." The limits suggested at the March 4 meeting "would so increase the risk to the United States as to pose a grave threat to the survival of our allies and the security of this nation."[15]

The Joint Chiefs presented this report at the March 25 NSC meeting. After their presentation, Eisenhower revealed his exasperation with their views by impatiently commenting that maybe a study was needed to determine whether national bankruptcy or national destruction would occur first. Although some of the meeting's participants suggested possible tax increases to fund the military, Eisenhower rejected this viewpoint out of hand. Probably with conservative congressional Republicans in mind, Eisenhower felt that the administration would face a terrific problem with Congress if he asked for tax increases instead of reductions. He expressed some irritation with the American public's view of taxes, noting that people were "yelling about the burden of their taxes." He felt it "extraordinarily difficult to get Americans to see clearly the relationship between a balanced budget and decreased taxes, on the one hand, and the threat to national security, on the other." Even though he wanted defense cuts, he clearly felt pressure from the JCS's dire assessment to maintain the current level of defense spending. As it stood, the administration remained, in Eisenhower's words, on the "horns of a dilemma" between making cuts the JCS would inevitably

oppose or keeping spending at a level the nation could sustain only at the cost of continued deficits or tax increases.[16]

On March 31, Eisenhower attempted to gain some leverage when the civilian consultants presented their report on national security policy. They decided that defense expenditures could be reduced without threatening American security and that both continued budget deficits and/or increased taxes would harm the economy. To resolve this problem, they suggested reconsidering defense policy and military costs.[17]

Although Eisenhower agreed with this assessment, he felt that balancing the budget in one fell swoop was not feasible, since the government could not "suddenly cut off our developing policies and programs for national security." Instead, he wanted to show the public that the administration was moving in the direction of a balanced budget and that any failure to reach this goal could be blamed on previous Truman policies. Dismissing the suggestion to remove some American troops from Europe to save money, Eisenhower and Dulles believed that they could not pull a single division out of Europe at that time because the troops were an important physical and psychological deterrent to Soviet aggression. However, Eisenhower looked favorably on Wilson's suggestion that by adopting a "floating D-day" (instead of a specific date for readiness), expenditures could be cut significantly over time.[18]

On April 29, Eisenhower approved a new statement on basic national security policy, NSC 149/2, which placed greater emphasis on the need for gradually balancing the budget and abandoned the use of a crisis year for defense planning. Although the final budget would still run deficits in both expenditures and new obligational authority, the level of the projected shortfalls was cut significantly from the Truman estimates.[19]

The administration presented this budget and defense program to the Republican legislative leadership on April 30.[20] Based on NSC 149/2, Eisenhower underscored the dual threat to national security internally from economic and budgetary pressures and externally from the Soviet Union. In response to the presentation, Senator Robert Taft expressed his agitation at what he perceived as the lack of progress on the budgetary front. Claiming that in the public's mind, the Eisenhower revisions were no different from the Truman budget it replaced, he claimed that the result of the administration's proposed program would be large deficits or new taxes, either of which would doom future Republican electoral prospects in Congress in 1954 and in the presidential election in 1956. To resolve this problem, Taft recommended a com-

plete resurvey of national security policy to enable more cuts in the FY55 budget.

Eisenhower became quite upset by Taft's attacks on the proposed budget reductions. After months of "sweat and study," Eisenhower defended the revisions, saying that though he felt it important to reverse the upward trend in expenditures, his proposed budget would not be "ruinous to Republican prospects in 1954."[21] He felt he could not endanger national security by approving an inadequate program and proclaimed, "No one should let budget-cutting principle override national security." They might eventually get national security expenditures to the area of $35 billion where Taft wanted them, but Eisenhower insisted that if the administration were "suddenly [to] abandon" the defense program, "we would scare our people to death."[22]

In the next few weeks, the situation crystallized for Eisenhower and his administration. At a May 1 cabinet meeting, Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey estimated that in order to achieve the tax reductions they wanted, the administration must first end the Korean conflict and then develop a completely new military posture.[23] In addition to pressure from the Republicans for more cuts, the administration also became concerned about possible Democratic assertions that the proposed cuts would endanger national security.[24]

As pressure on both sides mounted, members of the administration considered reevaluating the national strategy. On May 2, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles invited CIA Director Allen Dulles, Undersecretary of State Bedell Smith, speech writer C. D. Jackson, and Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Robert Cutler to his house to discuss his views concerning "a thorough overhaul of the prior Administration's basic national security policy." John Foster Dulles suggested, "Shouldn't we tackle a policy statement to fulfill our campaign ideas? I conceive three possible alternatives to choose from or to combine in part some way or another. To begin is the important thing." The group viewed Dulles's ideas favorably, with Cutler advising that they approach Eisenhower with the concept and Smith recommending a staff review of Dulles's options.[25]

On May 8, 1953, Eisenhower met with the May 2 group in the White House solarium. Dulles outlined the challenges facing the United States in very drastic terms. He argued that time was working against the United States and that the Soviets presented "the most terrible and fundamental" threat to the West since the invasion of Islam in the tenth century. He warned that the present defensive policy would lead to dis-

aster because it would eventually result in the piecemeal destruction of the free world, economic bankruptcy, and the loss of the support of the Congress and American people. To avoid such a disaster, he advocated the development of a new approach to national security. The administration, he contended, should institute a study to consider the advantages and disadvantages of three possible alternatives: (1) publicly drawing a global line and notifying the Soviets that if one country on the American side fell to communism (from external aggression or internal uprising), it would mean war between the United States and the Soviet Union; (2) drawing a regional line and notifying the Soviets that if one nation fell, the United States would "take measures of our own choosing"; and (3) winning back areas already controlled by the communists. Although American allies might "shudder" at the alternatives, Dulles believed that "people look to the new Administration to appraise the alternatives and see if there is not some different way."[26] Eisenhower supported the three-task-force concept, noting that it was important to convince "ourselves and our friends" and the congressional leaders of the "rightness of the course adopted." He agreed with Humphrey's position that the present policy was "sapping our strength" and "leading to disaster" and that something had to be done "or the American people will turn against us."[27]

Eisenhower remained torn. He "desperately" wanted to win the 1954 congressional elections.[28] Although they disagreed on the timing, Taft's comments at the April 30 meeting had reinforced Eisenhower's desire for budget reductions and tax cuts. The policy to reach this goal remained elusive, however. Increasing taxes to reduce the budget deficit was philosophically and politically untenable for Eisenhower. On the contrary, he strongly wished to lower taxes and had promised to do so but would not until the United States was "reasonably secure" against the Soviet threat.[29] He found his initial attempt at reductions while maintaining security in March hindered by strident JCS opposition. As Dulles and he noted at the March 31 NSC meeting, large reductions in aid to the European allies or the removal of troops from overseas were seen as unacceptable, given the psychological damage and political ramifications that such a move might cause. As indicated at the April 30 meeting, he ruled out an abrupt shift in military strategy or the defense budget because of the potential public reaction to such a dramatic move. To add to these difficulties, the Democrats continued to criticize Wilson for the limited (in light of the reductions under consideration)

defense cuts in the FY54 budget. These factors contributed to what Eisenhower called the "near impossibility of major reductions in the budget in the face of the psychology of the country which insists on maintaining the great obligations contracted in bygone times of peace, and also approves of huge defense expenditures."[30]

Eisenhower also thought the public could be persuaded to support the administration's position on the timing of balancing the budget and tax cuts. Unlike Taft, he felt the public would respond to the argument that national security should take precedence over balanced budgets (which could be achieved progressively over a number of years).[31] Even though Taft felt that immediate tax reductions were necessary to win the 1954 elections, Eisenhower believed the public could be persuaded to support the Republicans in the 1954 election if tax cuts were made at least in the FY55 budget.[32] He noted in his June 1 diary entry:

> I believe that the American public wants security ahead of tax reduction and that while we can save prodigious sums in the Defense Department without materially hurting our security, we cannot safely, this year, knock out enough to warrant an immediate tax reduction. . . . But I do believe that we can make sufficient reductions this year to show the American people that we are doing a sensible and sane and efficient job, and win an election next year on the record of economy, efficiency, and effective security. With consistent attention to these matters, I believe that we can cut government expenditures far enough to justify real tax reductions for the fiscal year '55.[33]

Poll results from earlier in the year support Eisenhower's analysis of the public's view. The public favored balancing the budget first. A March 1953 Gallup poll asked: "Some members of Congress argue that federal income taxes should be cut 10 percent beginning this July 1. Others argue that income taxes should not be cut until the budget is balanced. With which side do you agree?" Sixty-nine percent said balance the budget first, 25 percent supported cutting taxes first, and 6 percent had no opinion. The June and August 1953 polls found the same sentiment. The public may have wanted a balanced budget and tax cuts, but it also favored the current size of the military. A September 1953 poll asked: "Do you think too much of the taxes you pay is being spent for defense—or is too little being spent for defense?" Forty-five percent said the spending was about right, 20 percent saw it as too much, and 22 percent viewed it as too little.[34]

Option Generation

The administration developed its policy options between May and October 1953 through a two-track process. The May 8 solarium room meeting led to the creation of three task forces considering American national strategy, under the code name Project Solarium, which eventually resulted in the New Look's integrated national strategy statement NSC 162/2. The Defense Department and Joint Chiefs used this paper to guide both their December New Look military strategy, JCS 2101/113, and the FY55 budget. The second track instructed the newly appointed JCS to reconsider American military strategy during the summer of 1953, whose results were eventually integrated into NSC 162/2.

At the May 8 solarium room discussion, Eisenhower directed the three task forces to examine the alternatives of containment, deterrence, and rollback and to present their conclusions in terms of the "goal, risk, cost in money and men and world relations."[35] The instructions defined alternative A as the status quo policy of containment originally adopted by the Truman administration and accepted by Eisenhower in NSC 149/2.[36] Alternative A focused on maintaining "over a sustained period armed forces to provide for the security of the United States and to assist in the defense of vital areas of the free world," without risking general war. Alternative B, the deterrence option, would draw a line in the world around the Soviet bloc "beyond which the U.S. will not permit Soviet or satellite military forces to advance without general war." Finally, the rollback position, alternative C, would, at the risk of general war, "increase efforts to disturb and weaken the Soviet bloc and . . . create the maximum disruption and popular resistance throughout the Soviet bloc" to force the Soviets to concentrate on defending their possessions rather than further expansion.[37]

After more than a month of study, the three task forces presented their final reports at an expanded, full-day NSC meeting on July 16. At the end of the presentations, Eisenhower gave his analysis: "If you demand of a free people over a long period of time more than they want to give, you can obtain what you want only by using more and more controls; and the more you do this, the more you lose the individual liberty which you are trying to save and become a garrison state." He warned that the central problem was how to meet the threat posed by the Soviet Union without at the same time bankrupting the nation or sacrificing the system of government. On the domestic side, he commented, "If we are to obtain more money in taxes, there must be a vigor-

ous campaign to educate our people—and to educate the people of our allies."[38]

On July 30, the NSC considered the task forces' reports and a memorandum on a new basic national security policy by Cutler based on his effort to provide a unified policy statement.[39] Noting that he was essentially creating task force D to combine the other task force reports, Eisenhower instructed the interagency NSC Planning Board to draft a new basic national security policy based on Cutler's memorandum and the July 30 discussion. The final modified memorandum and instructions for the Planning Board incorporated ideas from each task force, although it rejected the goals of task force C's liberation concept.[40] It directed the Planning Board members to formulate a policy based on the creation of, at the lowest possible cost, a strong retaliatory offensive capability, a continental defense capability, and a sufficient mobilization base. This Planning Board's report became NSC 162, which the NSC discussed on October 7.

In conjunction with Project Solarium and spurred by the Republican congressional leadership's suggestions in late April, Eisenhower decided on May 7 to appoint a new JCS to examine the country's military strategy and structure.[41] Political considerations—particularly the criticism he was receiving at the time from the Democrats for making too many defense cuts—drove his decision to have the new JCS perform a policy review that would both allay criticism that the cuts in the FY54 budget were jeopardizing security and lay the groundwork for cutting the FY55 budget.[42] This study, Eisenhower hoped, would assure the Congress and public that any defense cuts would be made on the basis of national security rather than fiscal austerity.

The Joint Chiefs submitted their assessment of military policy to Secretary of Defense Wilson on August 8. They warned that the United States had overcommitted itself to areas of peripheral importance and had dangerously overstretched its forces. To rectify this situation, the chiefs recommended placing first priority on "the essential military protection of our Continental U.S. vitals and the capability for delivering swift and powerful retaliatory blows." In addition, the United States should begin to withdraw its forces from peripheral overseas positions (including Europe) into a mobile reserve (in the United States), coupled with a statement indicating a "clear positive policy with respect to the use of nuclear weapons."[43]

The NSC discussed the JCS's report during its August 27 meeting (Eisenhower did not attend). When the JCS Chair Admiral Arthur

Radford indicated that the report foresaw a review of the American relationship with NATO, Dulles noted that such a troop withdrawal would mean the United States would have to place greater reliance on airpower and nuclear weapons. Although domestic opinion would be "delighted" by the proposal, Dulles warned of a "grave disaster" if not enough time were allowed to "prepare" foreign opinion on the subject. He feared that the allies would not be capable of increasing their defense budgets to compensate for a complete American withdrawal. Given their apprehension about a return to Fortress America, the United States needed to avoid a position that would either undermine free-world cohesion or completely shift the defense burden onto itself. In deference to Dulles's worries, the NSC decided to recommend to Eisenhower that the secretary of state consider the foreign policy implications of adopting that course of action.[44]

On September 2, Cutler briefed Eisenhower on the meeting, and he approved the NSC's recommendation, adding, "This concept is a crystallized and clarified statement of this administration's understanding of our national security objectives since World War II." Cutler also reported that Eisenhower "reiterated several times that the concept was not new; must and could not properly be thought of or mentioned as new." He told Cutler that "from the beginning," the stationing of American troops abroad was seen as a "temporary expedient" and he assumed that allied forces "would be able to hold vital areas with indigenous troops until American help could arrive." Eisenhower's favorable reaction to the redeployment concept at the core of the JCS report indicated a shift in his thinking from earlier in the year when he rejected redeployment because of concern over the allies' reaction.[45]

While the Solarium and JCS projects proceeded, other developments revealed the evolution of the administration's thinking on national strategy, defense strategy, and the FY55 budget. Pressure continued on Eisenhower to reduce taxes. In response to a friend who suggested that the Republicans *should* lose the Congress if they did not cut taxes, Eisenhower replied that he knew this sentiment was shared by "millions of Republicans." But he felt compelled to eliminate the deficit first by cutting spending, or the nation would face the economically debilitating prospect of continued high deficits and inflation. Although the public continually pressed him in letters for tax reductions, regardless of the deficit, Eisenhower said he would still balance the budget first: "So I spend my life trying to cut expenditures, balance the budget, and then get at the *popular* business of lowering taxes."[46]

In a September 6 memorandum to Eisenhower, Dulles again underscored his view of the current strategic problem faced by the United States and his apprehension over the possible troop pullback. Dulles argued objectively that American self-interests would best be supported by placing more emphasis on nuclear weapons, continental defense, the redeployment of troops back to the United States, and budgetary and monetary stability. Nonetheless, "the NATO concept is losing its grip" because the growing Soviet nuclear force was undercutting American nuclear superiority. This raised the prospect that the United States' vulnerability to nuclear attack might prevent it from aiding Europe or cause Europe to decide to stay out of a conflict between the United States and Soviet Union. Given this situation, Dulles felt that the August 8 JCS policy that stressed these components would be seen in Europe as the final proof of the United States' return to isolation and would destroy the alliance. Because the United States would then have to rely on itself completely for defense, the end result would be less security at a higher cost. Instead, Dulles outlined a program for a reduction of tensions with the Soviet Union, a mutual withdrawal of forces from Europe, and the creation of a strategic reserve in the continental United States that would enable a fiscally sustainable force level. This end would be accomplished through a series of nuclear and conventional arms control agreements, the opening of East-West trade, an understanding on Soviet satellites (politically free but friendly to the Soviet Union), and the Soviets' renunciation of their goal of world revolution.[47]

In his September 8 response, Eisenhower noted his general agreement with Dulles's points, especially those regarding efforts to reduce world tensions and a possible mutual troop withdrawal from Europe. In addition, he did not think it wise to place more reliance on nuclear weapons and stated that any troop withdrawal from Europe that implied a change in "*basic* intent" would "cause real turmoil abroad." Eisenhower felt that "programs for informing the American public, as well as other populations, are indispensable if we are to do anything except to drift aimlessly, probably to our own eventual destruction." He believed that even though the public wanted tax reductions, they did not understand the security implications of such a move. Consequently, "if we are to attempt [a] real revision in policies—some of which may temporarily, or even for a very extended time, involve us in vastly increased expenditures, we must begin now to educate our people in the fundamentals of these problems." Even the adoption of a well-thought-out defense program that was approved unanimously by "the President,

the Cabinet, and the bipartisan leaders of the Congress would not, in themselves, be sufficient to assure the accomplishment of the resulting objectives. *We must have the enlightened support of Americans* and the informed understanding of our friends in the world." Eisenhower concluded that the government must first decide on its program, and then "a carefully thought out program of speeches, national and international conferences, articles and legislation would be in order."[48]

Eisenhower's negative reaction to the idea of further reliance on nuclear weapons was not new. He had long harbored suspicions about the viability of relying to a greater extent on the threat of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons to prevent Soviet aggression, and he had communicated these doubts to Dulles even before becoming president. After reading an advance copy of Dulles's 1952 article "A Policy of Boldness" in which he proposed a policy of massive retaliation, Eisenhower expressed his feeling that although he found the cost savings attractive, the policy would fail to confront all sources of Soviet aggression.[49] In a letter later that year, Eisenhower emphasized though the policy might be able to meet the Soviet military threat, other political, economic, and spiritual efforts were necessary to confront the Soviet political threat.[50]

Once in office, Eisenhower's doubts continued. On March 6, 1953, he observed that a policy emphasizing nuclear weapons as the decisive factor in world politics "ignores completely the facts of world politics, the whole matter of allied nations. . . .This whole idea that the bomb is a cheap way to do things is wrong."[51] At his April 30 meeting with the legislative leaders, he rejected Taft's call for greater reliance on airpower and insisted that relying on the "threat of reprisal by bombing" would not provide security. He felt that the United States needed to maintain strength in all areas or it would face "the danger of Russia taking [American allies] over gradually without having to fight."[52] Eisenhower repeated this view in public at his May 14 press conference: "For example, one extremist believes that merely in the fear of retaliation is safety. I doubt that many believe in that extreme view."[53] Although he was tempted by the cost savings of massive retaliation, he found the merits of the policy lacking.

The core problem confronting the United States remained. At the September 24 NSC meeting, Eisenhower described the central "paradox" of American policy as defending a way of life as well as saving money and protecting people. Eisenhower spoke of the need "to devise methods of meeting the Soviet threat" that "avoid transformation into a garrison state." Given the long-term threat, he preferred a minimum

military establishment with a rapid mobilization base. Despite his thinking that he could get the American people to support whatever program he deemed necessary to meet the threat, he "did not want the American people to do what the Administration deemed necessary over so long a period of time that it ended in the destruction of the American way of life."[54]

The discussion of defense expenditures continued at the October 1 NSC meeting.[55] In reference to the defense program, the director of mutual security, Harold Stassen, declared that the administration should formulate its policy without regard to the opinions in Congress and move only afterward to secure its cooperation and support. Eisenhower emphasized his agreement with Stassen's analysis, saying, "You are giving my speech." Instead of increasing taxes, Eisenhower hoped that a redeployment of divisions from overseas could save a substantial amount of money. Radford contended that the only way to justify redeploying overseas forces was to claim that either the Soviet threat had diminished or, as he preferred, that the preponderance of nuclear weapons allowed a reduction in conventional forces. Wilson added that the United States could reduce its ground forces in Europe to token levels by relying more on the air force and navy, since a few divisions in Europe would not make a practical difference in the defense of Europe.

Policy Selection

After some investigation, the administration rejected Dulles's proposal. Early plans for a speech on the international control of nuclear weapons, eventually presented as the "atoms for peace" proposal in December 1953, included Dulles's mutual withdrawal concept.[56] Because of American reliance on European forward bases for nuclear retaliation, it became apparent that the United States could not abandon its position in Europe by agreeing to a mutual withdrawal without first reaching an agreement on nuclear weapons.[57] For this reason, the administration abandoned the broader mutual withdrawal proposal and removed it from the final version of the speech.[58]

The NSC considered the NSC 162 policy paper at the October 7 NSC meeting.[59] Three central issues arose in this discussion: (1) the priority of national security versus the economy and balanced budgets, (2) the redeployment issue, and (3) nuclear weapons. The meeting's participants were divided in large part between those who believed the military threat posed by the Soviet Union necessitated placing military

spending above economic concerns (Dulles, Radford, and Wilson) and those who wanted equal emphasis on economic considerations (Dodge and Humphrey). Eisenhower adopted a position between these two groups.

The discussion began with a consideration of the Soviet threat, national security, and the economy. Eisenhower expressed his concern with any position that would impose extreme economic controls in the name of security and felt that the economic threat needed recognition. He "readily agreed that you could get the American people steamed up to do whatever you told them was necessary for a certain length of time. If, however, this process was to go on indefinitely, it would be necessary to resort to compulsory controls." Dulles believed, however, that balanced budgets were not critical and that security should not be sacrificed for the sake of the budget. Eisenhower and Humphrey both explained that no one was arguing that the budget should take precedence over security, merely that the economic damage from large deficits needed to be considered. Wilson countered that it would be a "terrible day" if the administration ever told the American people that the government was putting budgets ahead of security. Eisenhower reiterated his position on public opinion: "You could get the American people to make these sacrifices voluntarily for a year or for two or for three years but no eloquence would sell this proposition to the American people for the indefinite future." Despite opposition by Dulles and Wilson, Eisenhower decided to include a statement indicating the need to meet the Soviet threat without harming the economy and recognizing the importance of a strong economy over the long run for a satisfactory defense.

Although this decision established the dual threat to the economy and security, the NSC still needed to address the balanced-budget issue. In the draft paper, one side, representing all the drafting members except the Treasury and Budget representatives, emphasized meeting security needs, argued that tax levels could be increased to offset any revenue shortfalls caused by higher security costs, and concluded that the public could be persuaded to support the plan if the government explained its necessity. On the other side, the Treasury and Budget representatives stressed balancing the budget by cutting expenditures without increasing taxes (barring fundamental changes in the world situation). After discussion, the NSC agreed on a position splitting the difference between the two groups. Thus the final paper set a balanced budget as a goal but not a necessity. Although security needs would

eventually predominate in any decision, the administration stressed the necessity of a sound economy.

The redeployment issue arose in this same discussion. Dulles pointed to the delicate political nature of redeployment in terms of the allies' reaction. If not embedded in a larger operation, "the redeployment could bring about the complete collapse of our coalition in Europe." Eisenhower preferred a clear statement on redeployment but agreed that news of the policy's consideration should not become public until "our Allies had also been brought to realize that such a redeployment was really good military policy," since the Europeans expected the Americans to remain indefinitely, so any abrupt withdrawal of the troops from Europe would "completely destroy" the allies' morale. Although Eisenhower was sympathetic to redeployment at some point, he approved a less vigorous statement on the issue that concentrated on American overextension, the damage a major withdrawal would cause to the Western alliance, and the need to convince America's allies that the United States' strength rested on a centrally based mobile reserve and a commitment to strike back against an aggressor.

Finally, Radford pressed Eisenhower for a positive statement regarding the use of nuclear weapons. Eisenhower expressed concern regarding the allies' reaction to any such statement at that time. While granting the point, Wilson insisted that the military needed to know "whether or not to plan for the use of these weapons. Do we intend to use weapons on which we are spending such great sums, or do we not?" Eisenhower stated that he would make any final decision and would use them if dictated by security interests but allowed that the JCS could plan to use nuclear weapons in a general war, though not in minor conflicts.

The implications of these decisions on the prospects for balancing the budget while maintaining security remained unrealized by key decision makers. The conflict between these three decisions and a balanced budget did not become clear until October 13 when the JCS presented their budget based on NSC 149/2. Eisenhower and the NSC then discovered that by rejecting immediate redeployment and avoiding further reliance on nuclear weapons, their attempts to reduce the budget deficit had fallen short of the mark.

The October 13 meeting revolved around an October 2 JCS plan based on NSC 149/2 which, instead of calling for reductions in the armed forces, actually included a slight increase.[60] Wilson presented the $43 billion Defense Department program (only a $2.5 billion cut from the Truman FY55 program) which troubled Dodge and Humphrey, who

expected significant military cuts. The program contained no major reductions in combat forces because the JCS determined that they could not justify them because there were no changes in the threat from the Soviet Union, basic national security policy, or policy on the use of nuclear weapons.[61] To achieve cuts, Wilson suggested that the National Security Council needed to change American commitments, clarify the use of nuclear weapons, and/or initiate changes in overseas deployments before the JCS could reasonably make further recommendations.

Eisenhower reemphasized to Radford the need for cuts in personnel, especially in support forces, on the basis of "a respectable as opposed to a perfect posture of defense" and was particularly disturbed by the JCS proposal to increase the armed services to 3.5 million personnel when he expected a reduction to 3 million. Dulles pressed Radford over whether the JCS's force level reflected the possible use of nuclear weapons, which Radford said it did not. Wilson, Humphrey, and Radford stressed their support for greater reliance on nuclear weapons to achieve Eisenhower's desired cuts. Humphrey added the critical importance of the FY55 budget for preserving the "public confidence" in the economy and the president. If it appeared that Eisenhower was conducting business in the same way as the previous administration had done, Humphrey predicted that "the American economy will go to hell and the Republican Party will lose the next election." To this, Eisenhower commented,

> If he could be convinced that we need all this money he was prepared to fight for it everywhere and with all the energy he could summon up, although he said he did not want to scare the people to death and did want our military posture to be calculated on a long-term basis.

Despite refusing to allow the JCS to plan to use nuclear weapons, Eisenhower recognized that the redeployment of troops from Europe was not possible in FY55 because the costs of returning them would outweigh any savings and would hurt European morale. Eisenhower thus hoped to achieve the needed cuts by reducing support forces and instructed the JCS to begin deliberations on the matter.

The NSC completed the new basic national security strategy (NSC 162/2) during a discussion of a revised version of the paper (NSC 162/1) on October 29.[62] The most controversial aspect of discussion centered on a new statement calling for the creation of "a strong military posture, with emphasis on the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power."[63] Although the JCS recommended that

the national strategy "include the capability" of massive retaliation as one component of the overall program rather than as the strategy's focal point, this proposed change made nuclear retaliation the central component of the national strategy rather than just one part of a broader approach.[64] Eisenhower supported the new wording and felt the "with emphasis" phrase communicated the administration's intention of not equally building all types of military strength. After further discussion, Eisenhower accepted the "with emphasis" phrase, since the administration intended to "keep the minimum respectable posture of defense while emphasizing this particular offensive capability." The paper also changed the status of nuclear weapons "as available for use as other munitions" and rejected any major withdrawal of troops from Europe. As Radford had recommended at the previous NSC meeting, the national strategy placed greater reliance on nuclear weapons at both the strategic and tactical levels to justify budget cuts.

Eisenhower was already thinking about obtaining public support for the defense budget. He found it difficult "to get expenditures down without the country getting the impression that the Administration was throwing the country to the wolves."[65] In a letter to his brother, he again referred to his intention to have the administration reach its own decisions and then lead the public to support its action. He planned "to use 1953 largely as a period of study and formulation of programs." The "Administration Bible," as he called FY55 budget, would be brought to Congress in early 1954, and

> once we have taken our stand on that program . . . then, of course, all of us, with me in the lead, will constantly pound the drums for the necessary legislation. I suspect that all kinds of conferences, arguments, speeches and other forms of persuasive action will have to be taken, both clandestinely and publicly, to implement the program.[66]

The administration found its solution to the problem of "how to provide necessary security and still reduce the Defense budget for '55" in an Oval Office conference of Dulles, Wilson, Humphrey, and Eisenhower on November 11. At this meeting, Dulles proposed that the United States begin to withdraw ground troops from Korea, which would allow the administration to show its confidence in air and naval power and allow a substantial reduction in the active strength of the army. Dulles's argument was persuasive. Eisenhower noted, "It was agreed that the dependence that we are placing on new weapons would justify completely some reduction in conventional forces—that is, both ground

troops and certain parts of the Navy." Eisenhower also decided that defense savings would come through reductions in personnel by decreasing the number of divisions in Korea and cutting overhead and support personnel in Europe.[67] By allowing a minor redeployment of troops and cuts in the aggregate force levels, the reliance on nuclear weapons gave the administration the solution it needed to simultaneously preserve security and cut defense spending in an attempt to balance the budget. Even though Eisenhower initially rejected the military's request for greater authority to plan to use nuclear weapons, his views shifted after the JCS budget presented on October 13 provided a slight increase in defense spending. On reflection, Radford's suggestion to rely on nuclear weapons to achieve defense cuts struck a chord with Eisenhower. Because he needed to justify any cuts in defense spending, Eisenhower soon gave in to the greater reliance on nuclear weapons, even though he had serious doubts about the policy's strategic validity.

On December 2, Eisenhower pressured Wilson to force the JCS to pare down the number of armed forces to 3.1 million, even if he had to "nag and worry" them. To achieve the required savings, Eisenhower stressed that the numbers needed to be brought down by "*the beginning of [the] fiscal year!*" He found it "ridiculous" that the 3.5 million Korean wartime personnel figure could not be cut, especially because the Korean armistice had been signed in the summer of 1953.[68] This prodding apparently succeeded, since the JCS eventually cut back the number of forces requested in its budget. At the December 16 NSC meeting, the JCS presented their revised military strategy, JCS 2101/113, to implement the NSC 162/2 national strategy.[69] The new military strategy emphasized the withdrawal and regrouping of some overseas forces into a central strategic reserve in the United States, a reduction in the size of the military, a reorientation toward nuclear weapons to take advantage of American technological superiority and offset a Soviet manpower advantage, and a reliance on massive retaliation.[70] The envisioned cuts in military personnel were significant. A force of 3.55 million personnel on June 30, 1953, would be decreased to approximately 3.04 million by the end of FY55 and to 2.8 million by June 30, 1957.[71]

As the administration's plans became clear, government officials gradually began to reveal to the public the results of the interagency process. On October 28, Eisenhower announced that the government planned no cuts in combat forces, and he observed that nuclear weapons would be bound to affect the "composition of your military forces," thus intimating that the air force would probably grow.[72] Wilson expanded on this sub-

ject on November 10, indicating that the new plan might end the balanced-forces concept (placing equal reliance of each branch) but that a greater reliance on airpower might allow greater strength at less cost.[73] He later explained that the cuts in defense spending to reduce the budget deficit would not harm security and cited the formulation of plans to simultaneously increase security while decreasing expenses and personnel.[74] At the same time, Admiral Radford gave two speeches outlining and defending the defense strategy, on December 2 at the American Ordnance Association and December 14 at the National Press Club.[75]

Policy Implementation

In 1954 the administration expended considerable effort on creating public support for its program. These activities centered on convincing the public and Congress, through a series of public speeches, congressional hearings, and private conferences, of the value of the national strategy, defense strategy, and budget. In large part, these efforts reflected those that Eisenhower earlier recommended be undertaken to implement the program.

After the programs were announced, the Democrats challenged the New Look budget on January 2, saying that the cuts in the army and navy risked national security and played into Russian hands.[76] The administration moved to counter these attacks at a January 5 bipartisan leadership meeting at which Wilson presented the defense budget. He justified the budget with reference to the JCS study and their unanimous recommendation of the budget force levels, and he accented the evolutionary rather than revolutionary content of the strategy. When pressed by the Democrats on a possible loss of military strength from the program, Eisenhower replied that national defense would actually be stronger in June 1954 than that planned by the previous administration.[77]

Eisenhower continued these themes in his January 7 State of the Union address in which he stressed the influence of nuclear weapons on military planning and monetary savings. He argued, "The usefulness of these new weapons creates new relationships between men and materials. These new relationships permit economies in the use of men as we build forces suited to our situation in the world today."[78] The logical result, he reasoned, was the emphasis on airpower in both the navy and the air force. He justified the defense cuts with reference to the JCS study, stating that the defense program "is based on a new military program unanimously recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and

approved by me following consideration by the National Security Council."[79]

To assess the success of his leadership efforts, Eisenhower in February asked Roy Howard, president of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, to conduct a survey of editors from around the nation for him.[80] Eisenhower wanted these editors to provide an objective assessment of the views of the people in their geographic regions on a list of issues important to him, including the public's feeling about the administration's efforts to emphasize airpower as a defense strategy.[81] Howard told Eisenhower that the editors found the people held nearly universal support for the policy and were willing to trust Eisenhower's judgment on the matter.[82]

Apparently emboldened by these reports of the strategy's popularity, at one point Eisenhower told Press Secretary James Hagerty if asked about the New Look at a press conference, he would give them a "lecture on fundamentals."[83] The opportunity for the "lecture" came later the same day at his press conference. In response to a question about whether the massive retaliation policy was really "new," Eisenhower stressed the continuity of the New Look with past policies, pointing out that it was "new" only because it was attempting to incorporate a new type of weapon into the defense strategy. He instructed, "To call it revolutionary or to act like it is something that just suddenly dropped down on us like a cloud out of the heaven, is just not true, just not true."[84] In a television and radio address on April 6, Eisenhower also stressed the nuclear retaliatory capacity as the main American deterrent toward war.[85] In all, his actions represented a concerted effort to gain the public's confidence in both the strategy he had adopted and the budget that began to implement it.

Other officials in the administration also attempted to create support for the defense program. Perhaps the most controversial and most remembered speech was Dulles's January 12 address, which outlined the "massive retaliation" strategy (although the exact phrase never appeared in the speech itself).[86] To keep defense at an affordable cost, he argued, the United States needed a long-term policy that relied on allied forces for defense around the world and a deterrent component maintained by the United States. The way to achieve this deterrent was "for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing." As a result, the administration was "able to get more security for less cost."

Asked about the speech at his press conference the next day, Eisenhower refused to elaborate on Dulles's comments except to say that

given the speed of war in the nuclear age, "about your only defense is the knowledge that there is a strong retaliatory power."[87] Dulles recognized that his speech had stirred up quite a "public and congressional controversy," which led to his decision to transform it into an article for the April issue of *Foreign Affairs*.[88] At the press conference to release the article, Dulles attempted to clarify that the *capacity* for retaliation provided the key deterrent, rather than *instantaneous* retaliation, and that the policy did not force a choice between doing everything or doing nothing (a criticism that continued to dog this approach).

On February 11, Vice President Richard Nixon argued that the new reliance on massive retaliatory power would better protect national security than would stationing troops all over the globe.[89] Admiral Radford gave an extended interview to *U.S. News & World Report*, in which he maintained that although the new strategy changed the relative emphasis on airpower and nuclear weapons, it did not alter the need for all branches of the military.[90]

Congress did not intensely investigate the New Look's basic premises and strategic approach, and the administration maintained a unified front during the program's presentation, except for a dissent from Army Chief of Staff Matthew Ridgway during congressional hearings.[91] The Democrats mounted a minor challenge to the New Look in Congress during the floor debate over the budget and in speeches elsewhere, but Congress eventually passed the FY55 defense budget, and Eisenhower signed it into law on June 30, 1954, with the administration's requests to implement the New Look remaining mostly intact.[92] Eisenhower had requested $29.9 billion in new obligational authority, resulting in $37.6 billion in expenditures for the military, and the Congress approved $28.8 billion in new obligational authority for FY55, resulting in $35.5 billion in expenditures.[93] This budget created a $3.0 billion deficit in FY55. Later years under the New Look program were more successful. FY56 supplied a $4.0 billion surplus, whereas FY57 had a $3.2 billion surplus.[94]

In the end, Eisenhower achieved his goal for FY55 by adopting a budget that established the defense spending levels that most government officials agreed provided for national security. In selecting a national and defense strategy relying on nuclear weapons, Eisenhower adopted the one policy purporting to offer both security and economy that was acceptable to the government. Since these qualities made the new strategy a useful tool to justify the cuts to the public, Eisenhower selected the policy for this reason rather than the policy's merits, since he had long opposed a heavy reliance on nuclear weapons.

Variables

The decision makers assessed public opinion throughout the policy's formulation. Because Eisenhower felt pressure to win in the 1954 election, the public's reaction to his budgetary policies remained a constant concern. He sensed that the public preferred a few, possibly contradictory results: tax cuts, a balanced budget, and an adequate national security. Even so, he recognized that the public would accept spending cuts that moved toward, but did not achieve, a balanced budget in FY54 and that tax cuts in FY55 would be enough to satisfy the public in time for the 1954 elections. Regarding strategy, Eisenhower believed that it could not be radically changed in a short period of time because it would upset the public. But he also knew that if strategy were not changed, the public would eventually turn against his administration.

Eisenhower continually repeated his belief that the public could be led to support whatever position the administration adopted. He also insisted that the administration needed public support to implement any strategic change and felt the need to educate the public on any selected policy. This concern for leading the public and maintaining public support was integrated into the Solarium study instructions, and he initiated the new JCS study in part to enhance his ability to lead the public to support whatever policy the administration selected. He believed that the security review that resulted in NSC 162/2 and the new military strategy provided a vital factor in justifying the cuts to the public and creating confidence in the government's decision.

Dulles's assessment of public opinion also affected him. He wanted the administration to examine national strategy in order to "fulfill campaign ideas," meaning that he believed that administration leaders would be held accountable for their campaign promises in the next election. If the administration did not make this assessment, he felt it would lose public support as the world situation turned against the United States. Dulles also reacted to his perception of the public's confusion about his speech by authorizing an article to clarify his positions.

Other interests, notably Eisenhower's concern with the nation's long-term economic and military vitality, primarily influenced the decision to make a balanced budget and defense reductions his priorities. The central problem, as he saw it, revolved around responding to the Soviet threat while preventing national bankruptcy, preserving the American political and economic system, avoiding a resort to a garrison state, and balancing the budget to prevent inflation. He appeared ready

to support any policy that would encompass these competing interests. At a broad level, Eisenhower's policy preferences were based on his economic philosophy to eliminate budget deficits because of potential inflation. But he would not sacrifice national security in order to achieve a balanced budget and rejected immediate tax reductions in FY54 for this reason. He also rejected tax increases for philosophical reasons and the resulting congressional opposition to such action. Potential Democratic opposition to such spending cuts also worried him.

Dulles viewed the JCS report suspiciously, largely because he feared the allies' reaction to it. Accordingly, he proposed two solutions to overextension that avoided redeployment. First, he suggested a major settlement with the Soviets to reduce tension. Second, the United States could shift its strategy to rely on nuclear weapons to justify personnel cuts.

Beliefs predictions suggest that Eisenhower would have attempted to lead public opinion unless he perceived the public's opposition to be unchangeable, in which case it might have limited his decisions. Consistent with these beliefs, his approach was constrained by public opinion on two issues: (1) the need for a new national strategy to maintain long-term public support and (2) the process by which it needed to be created (the public would not support his defense cuts unless they were part of a well-formed approach to national security developed after due consideration). When the process based on these limitations produced a policy that he had long opposed, he nonetheless approved it because of his concern for public support. Despite this restriction, he thought he could lead public opinion to support the policy the administration chose. After selecting a policy, his leadership approach stressed those factors that he thought were most likely to create public support, such as his experience and knowledge, the NSC and JCS studies as the justification for the policy, and security as the basis for the policy selection rather than economy.

Dulles was predicted to lead public opinion. On broad foreign policy questions, he was predicted either to follow or be held back by public opinion, especially if it were expressed during an election. Process tracing reveals that he recommended consideration of a new basic national security policy (a broad foreign policy question) because of campaign promises and the need for public support in the future (which would be difficult to maintain if the current policy were continued). Also consistent with his beliefs, he felt the specifics of the new strategy should be developed, using the government's best judgment, to meet the Soviet

threat. Dulles had long favored the massive retaliation option he put forward, and his behavior reflected the combination of following and leading public opinion expected from him on these issues. In addition, he recommended withdrawing U.S. troops from Korea to demonstrate to the public and allies the administration's confidence in the new strategic posture. Dulles also acted consistently with predictions that he would lead public opinion, as evidenced in his speech and the *Foreign Affairs* article.

In all, this analysis suggests a *supportive* coding for the influence of beliefs for both decision makers. Eisenhower acted *consistently* with his beliefs when setting the agenda and reacted to them *causally* while defining the situation, generating options, selecting a policy, and implementing it. Dulles's behavior was *consistent* with beliefs during agenda setting, option generation, policy selection, and implementation and had a *causal* influence only during the definition of the situation.

Coding the Influence of Public Opinion

Public opinion played an important part in the formation of the New Look. Eisenhower recognized that the administration faced a problem with public opinion over the long term if the nation's defense posture was not adjusted. Public opinion acted to limit how Eisenhower attempted to achieve his goal of reducing defense expenditures. The need to explain the policy to the public made it necessary for an interagency review and an administration consensus on strategy so that the country did not feel that national security was being compromised. To obtain this consensus, Eisenhower chose the solution that met the views of various government actors (reliance on massive retaliation and nuclear weapons), although he doubted the intrinsic merits of this alternative. As a result, the need for public confidence in defense decisions set into action a policy process that resulted in Eisenhower's adopting a policy about which he had deep strategic doubts. Even though public opinion did not limit policy selection specifically to the nuclear option (no evidence directly ties public opinion to the choice to rely on nuclear weapons), it did condition the decision-making process in such a way as to limit the policy outcome.

Even so, Eisenhower and others in the administration felt that they could persuade the public to support the selected policy. Most of the administration's efforts regarding public opinion were, in fact, directed at leading it. Overall, then, the coding of the entire case falls under the

lead category because the policymakers' main concern with public opinion while making their decisions was convincing the public of the value of their selected alternative. The *constrain category* did have a *moderate* influence on the decisions by setting the broad policy context.

Realist predictions suggest that decision makers lead public opinion in this context and that they may be constrained in their choices by a mobilized public opinion (see table 6.1). This case mostly supports this view, with Eisenhower and other decision makers feeling that they could lead and taking actions to persuade the public to support their policies. The limiting influence of public opinion also was anticipated by the realists. Public opinion narrowed the decision makers' range of action because of campaign promises and, primarily, the requirements that public support placed on the formulation of a new strategic policy (need for a study, any change in strategy must occur slowly).

But this influence did not occur through the means that the realists predicted. Rather, the realists argue that public opinion may become mobilized and restrict the ability of decision makers to make policy. In this case, decision makers effectively explained the new policy to the public in such a way so as to prevent the mobilization of public opinion that might have damaged security policy. However, decision makers were limited by their anticipation of how the public might become mobilized and so took action to prevent this mobilization. Their fears of the possible public reaction, rather than the actual public reaction itself, provided the most significant constraint on decision makers. As a result,

TABLE 6.1 **Influence Coding: Deliberative Case**

Predicted Public Influence			**Actual Public Influence**	**Influence of Beliefs**
Realist	Wilsonian Liberal	Beliefs		
Lead/ *Constrain*	Follow	DDE: Lead/ *Constrain*	Lead/with lesser Constrain (moderate)	DDE: Supportive
		JFD: Lead/ *Follow on broad foreign policy*		JFD: Supportive

Note: Italics indicate conditional predictions.

public opinion affected policy in the manner that the realists argued it would, although not by the process they predicted.

The Wilsonian liberal perspective suggesting that decision makers follow public opinion finds little support from this case study. Only Dulles at the definition of the situation stage turned to public opinion as a guide to action, and he was motivated in part by other concerns. This failure of predictions is striking, given that previous research on this subject showed that public opinion would have the strongest influence in this context.

Policymakers' views about public opinion derived mostly from their anticipation of the public's views. The anticipation of public opinion affected Eisenhower's conclusion that (1) the public would respond negatively to any dramatic changes in strategic policy; (2) public support would be lost if the government did not alter its strategic policy; (3) tax reductions in FY55 would be enough to help in the 1954 elections; and (4) he could win public support on his budget position by framing his actions to the public as placing national security above fiscal issues. Dulles also relied on his anticipation of opinion, since he predicted that the administration needed to work on fulfilling their campaign ideas or they would face difficulties in the next election. In addition, he believed that public opposition would soon develop if the government did not alter its national strategy. Specific measures of opinion entered the decision process when Dulles saw the election results in 1952 as a mandate to rework the national strategy and Eisenhower conducted an informal survey of newspaper editors on opinion.

As with the Formosa Straits and Indochina cases, the anticipation of opinion, especially in regard to upcoming elections, played an important part in policy deliberations. This attention to future public views, rather than readings of the public's prevailing viewpoint, reflects its potentially critical role in officials' decisions. This component is especially important given the next chapter's conclusion that several of the post–World War II presidents were likely to be responsive to public opinion.