

**From Hot Button to Law: Controversy follows a RAND study of Peacemaking in WWII**

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper describes a convergence of events in the summer of 1958 in Washington DC. Mid-August was probably hot; it always is in Washington at that time of year.<sup>1</sup> And the rhetoric was hot too, very hot. The crux of this paper is a stormy debate and legislation in the U.S. Senate, which made it illegal to spend Federal money to understand surrender strategies for ending wars. That debate has been described in one recent essay as a “legislative tempest . . . [that] can now be dismissed as inconsequential.”<sup>2</sup> I will argue that it was the opposite of inconsequential. In the very same August week that the military research system was instructed to stop trying to understand the termination of war, speeches about alleged missile “gaps” made their first significant appearance in the 1960 Presidential election campaign and U.S. submarine maneuvers gave tangible evidence of intensifying military and technological Cold War confrontation. The debate and legislation that banned future studies on wars’ endings, seen in their full light, had resounding immediate and long term impacts. These included a clear directive to American strategists and scholars that, in the midst of the Cold War it was not acceptable to discuss how to make peace except unconditionally. And over the long term the events of that summer of 1958 silenced scholarly and public discussion of an issue that remains as critical in 2008 as it was 50 years ago. Even now, five years into war with Iraq, U.S. elected officials still debate in perilously simple terms the issues we face in how to bring that war to an end.

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<sup>1</sup> According to US government data averaging the years 1961-1998, a hot spell generally begins around August 6<sup>th</sup> and lasts until August 21<sup>st</sup>: <http://www.diurnal.microclimates.org/AUG/VA-MD-DE.html>

<sup>2</sup> Sweeney, Jerry K. “The Better Dead Than Red Amendment: A Tempest Bereft of Teapot.” *American Diplomacy*, on-line journal at University of North Carolina. Submitted May 15 2004

### THE CONVERGENCE: "SURRENDER," MISSILES AND MILITARY ACTION

Silencing, or its corollary the angry shouting that implicitly denies the right to respond, is a hallmark of American politics. During an election season "hot-button" issues typically take on this quality. The hot-button word for Senators in August 1958 was "surrender." Now, we in the United States have a tradition dating back at least to the U.S. Civil War which means that the only time we can bring the ending of a war into the political realm is when we demand the unconditional surrender of the enemy. To "surrender" alarmists in the Senate the enemy was Russian, the Soviets had more missiles than the U.S. and to top off the crisis, the U.S. Air Force through a research contract with RAND, was paying for studies which might entail U.S. surrender in war. The alarmists' dismay was focused on a book, by RAND analyst Paul Kecskemeti, entitled "*Strategic Surrender: The Politics of Victory and Defeat.*"<sup>3</sup> Those who had read the book knew it was a historical study of the politics surrounding surrenders during World War II, in France in 1941, Italy in 1943, and in Germany and Japan in 1945. It advocated nothing defeatist at all. But the alarmists were right in two ways: 1) Kecskemeti's last chapter examined the likely dimensions of surrender in the event of nuclear war and 2) he explicitly argued that the U.S. unconditional stance might needlessly prolong an excruciating nuclear exchange. But few Senators cared much what the book itself said. And when the final vote came even those who recognized that Kecskemeti did not advocate U.S. defeatism found themselves voting to ban further research.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kecskemeti's work was actually published that same year by Stanford University Press. For those interested in seeing the original work in its original RAND report format, it can be downloaded for free from the organization's website: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R308/>

<sup>4</sup> A *New York Times* editorial three days after the debate explains: "Defeatism is a primary means of giving aid and comfort to the enemy.... It is an invitation... to seek refuge in appeasement. It is an appeal to fear, to cynicism, to irresolution.... This is not to suggest that we need a purblind chauvinism to solve our problems. We can ascertain all the facts and we can face them... [Still, a free people] cannot tolerate even the thought of surrender[ing].... their freedom... [if] they have faith in the righteousness of their cause and [are] confident of its ultimate triumph." Aug 17, 1958 p.2 Quoted by Sweeney in his essay dismissing the significance of the original debate. *American Diplomacy* May 2004.

The second strand of the convergence, the week that “surrender” found its way onto the Senate floor, was John F. Kennedy’s Senate speech about the U.S./Soviet “missile gap.” The partisan postures of that era may surprise us 50 years later, but in the 1960 presidential campaign Democrats wrapped Republicans in the mantle “soft on defense,” and Kennedy used his speech to promise an aggressive increase in military spending. It was obvious to his Senate colleagues that in doing so Kennedy was marking the beginning of his own campaign for the U.S. presidency. Despite the eloquence of his speech and his ultimate electoral victory, his claims about missile “gaps,” claims that the Russians were about to have an insuperable lead in the number of missiles built, were in fact examples of something I will argue is a critically damaging feature of U.S. political discourse: “the central role of *intentional elite exaggerations* of the threat at the time.” (Italics in the original).<sup>5</sup> More on that later.

And yet it would be a mistake to describe the summer of 1958 as nothing but “hot-button” talk or purposeful exaggeration. The third strand of the convergence involved real changes in the military readiness and engagement of Soviet and U.S. nuclear forces. During 1957 and 1958, U.S. and Soviet Union military deployments intensified. Intercontinental missiles, just a handful to be sure, could now deliver Soviet and American warheads into enemy territory in minutes instead of the hours it would have taken for bombers to drop their load. And in August 1958 the U.S. Navy revealed to the world that it could now penetrate Soviet waters with impunity by crossing undetected under the North Pole. The Cold War was becoming distinctly hotter as both nations adjusted their strategic stance to instant retaliation at any sign of an enemy attack. At such a time where and how to end such a nuclear exchange was not to be considered.

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<sup>5</sup> Cramer, Jane Kellett, “Insufficient Information v. Lying: Explaining the Sources of the National Misperception of a “missile gap.” Unpublished paper prepared for the *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*. Boston, Aug 29-Sept 1 2002. p.3.

This paper centers on the ban. It rejects the notion that research constraints were inconsequential, offering explicit and implicit evidence that the ban had an immediate impact on research. But this is not just an old story. It is inextricable from ongoing reality: The U.S. to this day is suffused with anxieties about war and surrender, that are pressing once again since ways to end the war in Iraq will be a hot topic in the coming election. They were evident even a year ago. In April 2007 Democrats succeeded briefly in passing legislation that set a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Echoing around the mainstream press and the blogosphere alike, the word "Surrender" was front and center starting its journey at a White House press conference:

"The Senate has now joined the House in passing defeatist legislation that insists on a date for surrender"<sup>6</sup>

Traditional anxieties about surrender triumphed in 2007; thinking about war's ending was shut down and on Dec 15<sup>th</sup> last year the final version of the Defense Department funding legislation struck the time-table for withdrawal from Iraq from the bill.

#### SURRENDER 1958 – THE WIDER IMPACT

Back in August 1958, on the Senate floor, the legislative drama began as a result of a strange sounding U.S. Congressional prerogative, the right of any Senator to "read" any document into the Congressional Record. If every such document were in fact read aloud the words would constitute the Senator's own speech, and hence become part of the record but, as is more usual, Sen. Symington of Missouri simply asked on August 8<sup>th</sup> that a piece be entered as "read." The piece in question was a column written by retired Brig. Gen. Thomas Phillips published in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* on August 6<sup>th</sup> and headlined:

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted by CNN on April 26 2007. <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/04/26/congress.iraq/index.html>

**"Question of When United States Should Surrender in All-out Nuclear Attack Studied for Pentagon - Scientists Are Proceeding on Assumption Russia Has Achieved, or Is Rapidly Gaining, Intercontinental Military Superiority with Missiles."**

A central claim in Phillips column was that the Kecskemeti/RAND study of strategic surrender: was a "straw in the wind showing the direction of some thinking" – defeatist, appeasing, soft on defense thinking. On August 12<sup>th</sup> several Republican Senators drew this article to the attention of President Eisenhower and White House staff. On August 14<sup>th</sup> news reports of that White House meeting were headlined: **"Ike Blows His Top at United States Surrender Article."** (*New York Mirror*) and **"United States Surrender Study Publication Irks Ike."** (*Washington Post and Times Herald*). Both news articles describe all work in the Pentagon coming to a halt for two hours, while officials tracked down the studies in question.

That same day, August 14<sup>th</sup>, and responding to the morning's news coverage of Eisenhower, Senator Russell of Georgia offered an amendment to legislation funding the Atomic Energy Commission, in other words legislation to fund the research for nuclear weapons. The amendment stated that no part of the funds appropriated in that bill or any other act be used to pay anyone, either a government employee or a contractor for studies of U.S. surrender in war. Russell was effusive and passionate in laying out his shock and dismay that work on surrender had ever been done at all. During that August day, more moderate Senators, Republicans Saltonstall, Knowland and others, the very men who had alerted Eisenhower to the problem in the first place, tried various stratagems to get Russell to drop his amendment. They failed.

As a result, U.S. military initiatives have, for most of the last 50 years, been conducted in blind ignorance of what it takes to end a war once fighting has begun. The blinkers came down in 1958

during a dangerous phase in U.S./Soviet Relations. And in dangerous times, many in the U.S. find it hard to challenge those who cry out against “appeasement,” those who denounce any suggestion that the United States might want to “settle” rather than “win,” those who equate military service with patriotism. The ban on surrender studies, Chapter XI, Sec. 1602 of P.L. 85-766, was unarguable, and lest anyone dismiss its significance, the General Provisions containing that particular section reverberate with McCarthy era echoes. They promise felony convictions and a \$1000 fine<sup>7</sup> to anyone who accepted such money whose “character, associations and loyalty [mean that] reasonable grounds exist for belief that such a person is disloyal to the Government of the United States.” Saltonstall and others failed to get Russell and his allies to drop the amendment despite administration interventions and the legislation, dated August 27<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. Congressional Code, passed 88-2 with six abstentions.<sup>8</sup> Eisenhower signed it. As far as I can tell it has never been rescinded.<sup>9</sup> So the question arises: did the ban have an impact? And the answer is yes.

In 1958 RAND, the contractor under whose auspices Kecskemeti had done the research, was a primary non-governmental, nuclear weapons “Think Tank.” The Air Force was its sponsor and RAND’s researchers were committed strategists and planners, theorists and quantifiers to be sure, but well aware that their research had immediate and direct policy implications. Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter, Bernard Brodie, Alain Einthoven<sup>10</sup> and others were critical in shaping the entire military posture of the United States in the 1950s and into the early years of the 1960s.

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<sup>7</sup> In 2008 dollars measured in relation to the “consumer bundle” this would be a fine of just under \$10,000. <http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/uscompare/result.php>

<sup>8</sup> *United States code congressional and administrative news 1951-*, St. Paul, West Publishing Co. p.1032. 1958 was the year before Alaska and Hawai’i were admitted to the Union, so the Senate had only 96 members.

<sup>9</sup> It was still listed as 50USC sec 407 in the last update of the US Code published in 2006.

<sup>10</sup> RAND published dozens of their works including Wohlstetter on nuclear confrontation just months after the events described in this paper: *The Delicate Balance of Terror*, Albert Wohlstetter, P-1472, November 6, 1958.

So the fact that a RAND project was so roundly criticized will not have gone unnoticed.

Kecskemeti was not in the inner circle among nuclear theorists but the last chapter of his book addressed the nuclear age, and suggested strongly that U.S. military traditions that sought unconditional surrender would likely lead to catastrophic destruction if invoked in the nuclear era. After the Senate debate RAND and Kecskemeti changed direction. He next shows up working for RAND on the social dynamics of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, having shifted from history with a global and strategic orientation to history local, tactical and perhaps personal too. It took nearly thirty years for RAND to begin publishing substantial amounts of work related to making peace and ending wars. In 1991 with the Cold War safely over the pace finally picked up. In 1958 Strategic Surrender had been RAND's only book on war termination. Between 1991 and 1994 RAND lists 14 items published on the topic. The most recent list offers 184 items since 2006.

The impact of the storm in the Senate was also felt outside the RAND community. Kecskemeti's book was quickly and widely reviewed, and many of the reviews' authors were leading scholars in strategic studies.<sup>11</sup> The claim, quoted above, that the legislative storm was a "tempest in a teapot" comes from an essay published only in 2004. When the book was just published scholars were far less sanguine. Among the eleven reviews listed in the footnotes, six comment on the Senate's response to Kecskemeti.

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<sup>11</sup> All reviews were laudatory. De Conde, A., *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Feb., 1959), pp. 101-102; de Sola Pool, Ithiel, *Science, New Series*, Vol. 128, No. 3320 (Aug. 15, 1958), pp. 354-355 (appearing as the debate was under way); Feis, Herbert, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Oct., 1958), pp. 78; Hermens Ferdinand A., *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Twentieth Anniversary Issue: 1 (Oct., 1958), pp. 696-698; King, James E. Jr "Strategic Surrender: The Senate Debate and the Book" *World Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Apr., 1959), pp. 418-429; Fox, William T.R., *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Mar., 1960), pp. 131-132; Gareau, Frederick H., *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Feb., 1959), pp. 152-153; Michael Howard, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Jan., 1959), pp. 73-73; Merrill, M. R., *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Jun., 1959), pp. 609-611; Odegard, Peter H., *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 321, Contemporary China and the Chinese (Jan., 1959), pp. 189-190; Kaplan, Morton A., *Political Research, Organization and Design : PROD*; May 1958; 1, 5, p.41.



Neither for the future security of the United States, which almost got lost in a bad-tempered partisan exchange, nor for the future of government-supported research, was this debate particularly auspicious.<sup>12</sup>

The extreme distastefulness of even considering surrender in this age of ideological cold and hot wars was forcibly brought to our attention recently by the lively reaction of the President and Congress to the fact that a private research agency had undertaken a study for the Air Force of the possibility of U.S. surrender in a future war.<sup>13</sup>

This book is published under the auspices of the Rand Corporation, and its very title was enough to cause paroxysms of fury in the United States last summer.<sup>14</sup>

The midsummer madness of 1958, in which a United States senator charged that in producing this book government funds had been used to study what to do if the United States in a future war were brought to the point of surrender, ought not to obscure the merits of this solid, substantial and subtle analysis.<sup>15</sup>

The Rand Corporation authorized the study, and the funds were provided by the taxpayers via the United States Air Force. When the word reached the August United States Senate that federal funds were being employed on a "surrender" project, the senatorial wrath was unleashed. Surrender is a concept that senators abhor, and they promptly passed a resolution, eighty-eight to two, forbidding the use of government funds to pay a person or institution who would ever propose or conduct any study or plan regarding "the surrender of the government of the United States."<sup>16</sup>

Over eighty members of the United States Senate recently recorded their opposition to any federal expenditures for research suggesting that this country might consider the possibility of surrender in some future nuclear war. The stimulus for this demonstration of senatorial ostrichmindedness was this challenging study of *Strategic Surrender* by Paul Kecskemeti. Prepared

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<sup>12</sup> King, James Jr., *World Politics* p.422.

<sup>13</sup> Gareau, Frederick H., *Journal of Politics* p.152.

<sup>14</sup> Howard Michael. *International Affairs* p.73

<sup>15</sup> Fox, William T.R., *Political Science Quarterly* p.131.

<sup>16</sup> Merrill, M. .R., *Western Political Studies Quarterly*. P. 609

as part of a research program of the Rand Corporation under contract with the United States Air Force, it presents a searching scientific inquiry of what the author calls "the Politics of Victory and Defeat."<sup>17</sup>

As these quotations make clear, the community of academics in universities had become aware as quickly as that any further work on how wars come to an end was likely to be punished.

William Fox stands out among the reviewers of Kecskemeti's book, because he did in fact take up the "war termination" question again, as lead editor for a special issue of *Annals of American Political and Social Science* on ways the Vietnam War might end, published in 1970.<sup>18</sup> Eighteen years after that collection appeared, I came to realize that my own research agenda was probably being affected by the ban. An examination of the Cold War as a modern form of siege war, as opposed to an armed peace, took me to the library to look for materials on how wars come to an end. To my amazement there seemed to be almost nothing available. Yards of bookshelves devoted to the onset of war, and virtually nothing, not even a Library of Congress subject or keyword category, about endings. Kecskemeti sat alone on the shelves. Nearby was one other book, also implicitly a challenge to U.S. preferences for unconditional surrender: Paul Pillar's 1983 book *Negotiating peace: war termination as a bargaining process*.<sup>19</sup> Fred Ikle had a short book out making broad generalizations with almost no data,<sup>20</sup> but after the Fox *Annals* issue appeared, academics in the U.S. were silent once more. In the 1980s Americans and Israelis began an extended discussion of how the Arab, Israeli and Palestinian violence might stop, and it was in a piece in one of their edited volumes by noted U.S. strategic scholar Thomas Schelling that I finally found a direct reference to the Senate debate and the influence it had had

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<sup>17</sup> Odegard, Peter, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* p. 189.

<sup>18</sup> Fox, William T. R., *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 392, How Wars End (Nov., 1970), His opening essay was called "The Causes of Peace and Conditions of War:" pp. 1-13. Berenice Carroll had published a single article on these issues the year before. "How Wars End: An Analysis of Some Current Hypotheses;" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Special Issue on Peace Research in History (1969), pp. 295-321

<sup>19</sup> Pillar, Paul R., *Negotiating peace: war termination as a bargaining process* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1983

<sup>20</sup> Ikle, Fred Charles *Every war must end*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1971

on serious thinking about how to bring wars to an end. Schelling describing government thinking put it this way:

Among the reasons [that there is little planning for how wars end] is the fact that certain events simply cannot be planned on by governments, and often not even studied.

For example, there are those events, the possibility of which cannot be acknowledged. In the summer of 1958 [a newspaper] report appeared during the final days that the U.S. Senate was in session. The last thing the Senate did before recessing for the season was to pass a resolution to the effect that that no government funds would be spent. . . . Meanwhile President Eisenhower had already said that . . . the people who had done it would stop.<sup>21</sup>

Schelling was a contemporary and associate of those strategists working at RAND and nearly 30 years later he was still aware of and commenting on the impact of that ban passed so quickly and confidently in 1958.

### MISSILE GAP AND ELECTIONS

The Senate found it easy to pass the ban in part because to do so was connected with a much larger issue: the putative U.S./Soviet missile-gap. And claims that the U.S. was seriously behind in nuclear missiles received intensive scrutiny the very same day that Russell offered his amendment, August 14<sup>th</sup> 1958. That day John F. Kennedy made what was in effect the maiden speech of his Presidential campaign. His topic? The missile gap. Sen. Symington, Secretary of the Air Force during the Truman administration, the very man who had brought Kecskemeti's book to Senate notice, was the best known energetic critic of the Eisenhower strategic planning process. Missile gaps were associated first and foremost with him, and Symington may well not

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<sup>21</sup> Schelling Thomas C. "Internal Decision Making" in Nissan Oran, *Termination of wars: processes, procedures, and aftermaths* Jerusalem : Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1982, p.10.

have been entirely pleased that August day to see Kennedy take up his special issue with such eloquence. Symington, after all, had Presidential aspirations of his own. But in 1958 Kennedy was a young Senator just coming to the end of his first term, and Symington was a seasoned political professional. With hindsight we know that Kennedy's campaign was the one which was ultimately successful.<sup>22</sup> Even without hindsight though it would have been clear he was aiming for rhetorical intensity and political heft, ending his speech with Churchill's portentous command to his fellow citizens: "Come then—let us to the task, to the battle and the toil—each to our part, to our station . . . Let us go forward together in all parts of the (land). There is not a week, not a day, not an hour to be lost."<sup>23</sup>

Kennedy and Symington had surrogates who argued their case in the press as well. Symington's was retired Army General Thomas Phillips. His was the article which had stirred up the storm on Kecskemeti and a second piece appeared on August 13th, also in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, headlined

**Experts consider American Long-Range Missile program to be shockingly inadequate – they foresee Reds having a 20 to 1 superiority – Soviet Air Defenses will reduce SAC effectiveness to negligible proportions.**

This too Symington entered into the Congressional Record though the Senator, active all day in the debate on the Russell amendment, did not make a significant speech on the missile gap and indeed he denied that he had been planning to make a significant issue of either of the Phillips pieces. It was others who brought them to public attention. And it was Kennedy who was ready that day with the grand strategic speech. "Kennedy's chief source of information was nationally

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<sup>22</sup> By the time the 1960 primary season was done, Symington never captured more than 10% of the vote even in Illinois and Nebraska the states closest to his home state,. Kennedy meanwhile was regularly capturing 75% even in a field of 6 or more candidates.

<sup>23</sup> *Congressional Record – Senate* Aug 14, 1958, pp 17569-17573, p.17523,

syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop, one of the Eisenhower administration's leading missile gap critics in the media. On August 1, 1958, Alsop accused the administration of a 'gross untruth concerning the national defense of the United States.' Alsop declared that President Eisenhower himself had been either 'consciously misleading' the American public, or that he had been badly misinformed about the true state of the nation's defenses. Finally, he charged the administration with "gambling the American future" on untested missile technology to close the missile gap."<sup>24</sup>

And yet even that August many among the power brokers in Washington DC knew very well that the U.S. missile deficiencies were vastly exaggerated.<sup>25</sup> In July and again on August 6th 1958 Allen Dulles, Director of the CIA, had arranged for Symington to be given secret intelligence data that only six Soviet missile tests had taken place since the launch of Sputnik III the previous May. Although Symington had met with the doubters, he preferred to work with more alarming data from Thomas Lanphier, an executive in the missile building company Convair. For the next two years he continued to make charges he knew the CIA and the White House could not support. And journalists like Alsop were just as committed to keeping the "gap" in the public eye: "This important national misperception was caused by intentional elite exaggerations of the time of the threat – by lying about the threat in order to gain power (Democratic Senators who were presidential hopefuls) or to increase budgets (Air Force and CIA)."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> That August Alsop too was writing: Joseph W. Alsop (JWA), "Our Government Untruths," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 1, 1958, p. 10. Quoted in Preble, Christopher A., "Who Ever Believed in the 'Missile Gap?': John F. Kennedy and the Politics of National Security." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. Washington: Dec 2003. Vol. 33, Iss. 4; pg. 803.

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We now know that the Soviet's actual missile building pace was much much slower than even the most sanguine strategists believed. Cramer, P.9

<sup>26</sup> Cramer p. 31. Kennedy too was unmoved and in early 1961 when his own Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara presented him with overwhelming evidence that there was and never had been a missile gap, Kennedy simply set the information aside, unwilling to admit that his accusations against the Eisenhower administration were erroneous. See Cramer p.4.

The August 14<sup>th</sup> Senate debate on Russell's ban on further studies of surrender was taking place in the middle of a much larger political drama, a contest among Democrats about who would be the candidate and a serious threat to Republican presidential hopes in 1960. The Republicans had been in the political wilderness for 20 years, with Democrats in control of the White House and Congress 1932 – 52. Eight short years of the Presidency risked becoming an isolated reprieve. In many ways the highly "political" nature of the vote on the Russell amendment is demonstrated in the 88-2 outcome. Republicans had offered cogent, clear and effective arguments against Russell throughout the debate. And yet when it came time to vote, even Capehart, Knowland and Saltonstall did not dare vote against the ban. Military strategy was being designed and debated with electoral sound bites foremost in the minds of key legislators. Politicians and their allies in the media managed to ensure that the week of August 14<sup>th</sup> 1958 would focus the public attention on the dynamics real or imagined of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. And just as the attention swung that way, serious strategic consideration of the ways such a war might end had become illegal.

### MILITARY ACTION

And all this was happening at a time when, due to military technological development, traditional diplomatic practices – negotiation, third party intervention and preventive diplomacy were about to become much more difficult under the time constraints of newly deployed U.S and Soviet weapons systems. The late 1950s saw a number of dramatic military technological achievements which left Americans both proud and alarmed. On August 8<sup>th</sup> 1958, the White House decided to boost the pride, to make a big public statement about the successful voyage of the U.S. Nautilus under the polar ice cap. The President and Naval Chiefs were there and Commander Anderson, the ship's commander was flown back from Iceland especially for the event, while the rest of his

crew was still taking the ship into port.<sup>27</sup> Though the official statement made much of the commercial benefits of a shortened “sea route” of course no commercial goods would ever travel by submarine under the Arctic. The questions from the media covered nothing but simple technical issues – how long were they submerged (16 days and 97% of the voyage), could they see anything (yes it was light 24 hours a day and the ice above was like clouds) and were they ever in any trouble (no never). No one in the United States was talking about the military and strategic significance of the voyage but there was direct evidence in the press conference: The entire voyage had been a complete secret from everyone. And yet the Russians were allowed to learn about it the very day its success was assured. In the context of that dramatic August week in 1958, it was very clear to those in the inner circles of strategy that the nature of the submarine nuclear risk had changed forever.

Submarines were not the only escalation of the Cold War in the second half of the 1950s. In 1957, Sputnik had conveyed to ordinary people only that the Russians were up in space, but to serving military officers the ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) delivering that satellite into orbit demonstrated that the U.S. was, in the future, no more than minutes away from Russia in a missile-launched nuclear attack. The hours of early warning allowed by aircraft-delivered warheads were gone forever. Through that August 1958 voyage the U.S. delivered a similar warning to the Soviets – harder for the world to see but easy for any Soviet commander to grasp. Virtually instantaneous submarine-launched attacks against Soviet targets were now a reality. The Soviets too had lost their hours of early warning. U.S./Soviet confrontation was becoming a 24/7 operation, spanning more and more of the global arena.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The President presented Anderson and the Nautilus’s Captain Presidential Citations, the first time they had even been given in peacetime. Eisenhower Presidential Papers, Newsconference with Cmdr. Anderson p.2

<sup>28</sup> Meyer-Knapp, Helena, *Nuclear Seige to Nuclear Ceasefire*, PhD Dissertation, The Union Institute, 1990, 369 pages; AAT 9027786

Missiles, when they were called “rockets” suggested space exploration, adventure and new frontiers. As a teenager during the Kennedy years I was aware of the excitement of the satellites rather than their connections with war and missiles. But the Cuban missile crisis was truly terrifying, and before Kennedy had been President even for a year, people everywhere understood that nuclear catastrophe could happen without warning. With the end of the Eisenhower era the American government was deploying surrogates and soldiers (the Bay of Pigs, the first U.S. forces in Vietnam) while the Soviets challenged by building the Berlin Wall, by sending the missiles to Cuba that had caused the crisis. And in the United States it was Congress in the hands of the more militarily minded Democrats who pushed Pentagon budgets even higher than Departmental requests. War fighting capabilities were changing and Congress provided all the money needed and more, making ever bigger and bigger military threats. But at the same time they were making it illegal to consider how to end a war should the fighting ever again cross the nuclear threshold.

#### THESE EVENTS ECHO IN 2008

Three strands of strategic discourse and planning converged in 1958 – war fighting intensified at sea and in space, election-inspired rhetoric heated up, some of it purposefully inaccurate and key terms associated with ways to end wars became quite literally taboo – officials and government contractors were not allowed to think or talk about surrender in war. Today, fifty years later, U.S. strategic and political dynamics seem alarmingly vulnerable to the same forces.

From September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 onwards U.S. war-fighting really did intensify. The attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center represented a new level of seriousness in an ongoing confrontation aimed by Al Qaeda at U.S. targets. Like the development of ICBMs and transpolar



submarines in the Cold War arsenal, the U.S. really did find itself in a more dangerous military situation than it had been before 2001. And yet, like the Democrats with their dishonest claims about missile gaps, it now seems all too clear that at the hands of the Republicans, Americans and indeed the rest of the members of the United Nations have been subjected to “*intentional elite exaggerations of the threat at the time.*” (Italics in the original).<sup>29</sup> In President Bush’s State of the Union address on January 28<sup>th</sup> that year, he included 16 words about Iraqi purchases of Uranium in Niger which were known by his security staff as unlikely to be true. Secretary of State and former General Colin Powell gave a speech on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2003, just before the UN was to vote a resolution on whether the U.S. could attack Iraq, which we now know contained intentionally exaggerated and even dishonest statements. Bush and the government leaders of his “Coalition of the Willing” went to war to stop what they already knew to be a non-existent Iraqi project to make Weapons of Mass Destruction. Though it seems impossible to pursue government lying in Congress, perhaps because of the unpredictable political damage that is the fallout of investigations and impeachment threats, it is quite clear that at very least American officials have been purposefully exaggerating the threat quite steadily since the first public talk about war with Iraq during the summer of 2002.

And if it remains hard in official forums to raise questions about purposeful lying, it turns out that it is even harder to talk with any subtlety about ways to end the war with Iraq. Three weeks into the war a U.S. Department of Defense news bulletin was right back on the unconditional surrender trajectory:

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<sup>29</sup> Cramer, p.3



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Unconditional Surrender Demanded of Iraqi Regime

By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 1, 2003 – The only thing the coalition is willing to discuss with the leaders of the Iraqi regime is their unconditional surrender, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said today.

To be clear. Even if we have long since given up hoping for something called “unconditional surrender” there is no straight forward way to withdraw American forces from Iraq. Words like “Exit Strategy” are much too deceptively simple in their connotations.<sup>30</sup> When we embark on the project to end the violence in Iraq, to restore peace-time systems of justice to the United States, to stop injuring and killing U.S. and Iraqi military and civilians living and working in Iraq, to find a way home for the 2 million Iraqi refugees in Syria, to reinvigorate the Iraqi and American economies, to repair damage, to address reparations, to repatriate the dispossessed and to release the prisoners we will need to forget simple one and two word phrases. Peace-making is hard work, it is dangerous and it takes a long time. U.S. government officials who remain invested in unconditional endings prevent any serious discussion of ways to end that war.

Election campaigners too, speaking of their abhorrence of U.S. surrender are also harmful to efforts to end the fighting,<sup>31</sup> and that word “surrender” has just as much potency in 2008 as it had in 1958. Talk about ending the war, even negotiating any kind withdrawal lays open a political

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix I. Helena Meyer-Knapp, “Exit Strategy Anyone?.” Unpublished essay, Nov. 2004

<sup>31</sup> Democratic candidates spoke repeatedly about the need to end the war in Iraq, to set time-tables, to plan the departure of US forces and American private contractors as well. And yet when the new Democratic majority realized in May 2007 that they found they did not have the votes to get a timetable passed, the Canadian Broadcasting Company offered a predictable analysis:

**“Democrats surrender, Iraq war marches on**

Washington newspaper headlines pretty much tell it all. In the more liberal *Washington Post*, the story is headed: ‘Democrats Relent On Pullout Timetable.’ In the conservative *Washington Times*: ‘Democrats Surrender.’”  
Champ Henry: “Democrats surrender, Iraq war marches on” *CBC News*, May 23, 2007 | 03:49 PM

speaker to an astonishing array of invective. Republican Candidate Senator John McCain, in an interview May 26, 2008, put it this way: "He [Obama] really has no experience or knowledge or judgment about the issue of Iraq and he has wanted to surrender for a long time." In a speech on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> in San Antonio he said: "If we do what Senator Obama wants to do, and that's immediate withdrawal, that would mean surrender in Iraq. So I guess that means he would surrender and then go back," The *Washington Post* drew attention to a June 12<sup>th</sup> story in the Army's daily roundup of news called "Stand To" which "contained an entry under "WHAT'S BEING SAID IN BLOGS" that struck [the Post] as unusual -- both for its headline and its patent political bias:

'Obama: World peace thru surrender (KDIHH)' The [Stand To] link goes to a milblog called "Knee Deep in the Hooah."<sup>32</sup>

The blog's author is an Army officer serving in Iraq who had posted the comment a few days earlier. Each one of these stories was covered nationwide and on 24 hour news cable networks it was replayed again and again. Senator Obama is well on the way to being associated with planning for surrender, a kind of planning which was made illegal 50 years ago and is no more acceptable now than it was then.

In 1958 surrender was a powerful totemic word, stopping all serious consideration of how to end a war in its tracks. In 2008 history need not repeat itself. Whether and how U.S. forces and contractors should withdraw from Iraq presents Americans, Iraqis and many others around the world with a very complex political, logistical and emotional challenge. Difficult though it certainly is to imagine wisely sorting through the many dimensions of this challenge, it is positively terrifying to think that we may return once more to the willful blindness of 1958, the year the United States government closed off all serious consideration of the ways wars come to an end, silencing a critical strategic conversation for at least 30 years.

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<sup>32</sup> *Washington Post*, Carter, Philip "Intel Dump" his blog on national security and the military.

But it is now 50 years since the Kecskemeti inspired ban went into effect and in the last 20 years a good deal of meaningful expertise has been developed and shared on how wars do end. My own research culminated in a book *Dangerous Peace-Making* published in 2003.<sup>33</sup> Many people have written about their work in war zones around the world including Ervin Staub an august member of the International Society for Political Psychology. Our Israeli colleagues in ISPP, including Daniel Bar Tal have produced important studies of the issues facing them in their homeland. Humanitarians working in conflict zones including Paula Gutlove and Kim Maynard have seen and written about the development of community-based contributions to post-war justice, repair and reconstruction. And outsiders, watching from afar have been spectator to several serious attempts to end wars around the world in the last 15 years. Politicians on the ground, Mo Mowlam in the North of Ireland, Richard Holbroke in Bosnia, Nelson Mandela in South Africa and even his rather maligned co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Frederick De Klerk have indicated some of the paths through the thorny issues that could help the U.S. make progress towards something like a settled peace. Back in the United States one of Kecskemeti's most consistent findings pertains: serious attempts to end the fighting rarely even begin until the governing politicians who have overseen the combat are replaced by new officials willing to work in new directions.

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<sup>33</sup> Helena Meyer-Knapp, *Dangerous Peace-Making*, Olympia WA, Peacemaker Press, 2003.

APPENDIX (An essay I wrote four years ago)

**EXIT STRATEGY ANYONE**  
2004

Nov.

From time to time a piece of Washington DC military jargon escapes the Beltway, and reappears again all over the country -- on local talk radio, in coffee shops, on college campuses.

Exit strategy is one such term. It pops up repeatedly in conversations about the flaws or hopes in the Bush Administration's post-combat plans for Iraq. Those post war plans have turned out to be dreadfully flawed, as bad if not worse than the pre-war intelligence over WMD – another Beltway jargon escapee. And yet, the idea that the U.S. controls when

and how we will exit Iraq is as attractive to those who opposed the war as to those who supported it.

There's a treacherous flaw lurking, equal to any of the postwar management disasters and it is hidden in the image itself of our "exiting" Iraq to end the war. Picture it. We civilians are the audience watching a painful, disjointed and discouraging story play itself out. Over in a corner above a darkened door, bright green letters – EXIT—there to guide U.S.. If things get really bad we, actors and audience alike, will creep over to the door and slip quietly away.

The reality ahead for all Americans will be so very much harder than that. There's danger of course, and a surprise too. We, the United States, have no choice but to depend on Iraqis for the go ahead to leave. Whenever and however that happens, whether after successful elections or in the midst of even fiercer Iraqi strife, we cannot go without the Iraqis' help. In fact we need more than help. We need to make an agreement, to get their permission to leave.

At a purely logistical level, withdrawing a large field army is an immensely complex task, requiring active cooperation from the people living wherever the troops are dug in. In Vietnam, U.S. troops rarely faced the challenge of trying to evacuate from "insurgent" territories. Then our soldiers left gradually, protected even in the hectic closing weeks by the South Vietnamese army. During the closing days in 1975, Americans had lost their protection and their remaining staff with a few favored supporters ended up trapped inside the U.S. Embassy, waiting to be rescued by helicopters, which dared to touch down only briefly on the roof.

Paul Bremmer made a remarkably similar departure from Iraq last June. He too ran for a helicopter, a day earlier than announced, to avoid risking his life in a public or ceremonial power transfer.

If it took that much to get one man safely out of Iraq, what will it take to get 130,000 of them back to the U.S.? Troop convoys are already endangered targets. If a single airplane can take no more than 500 people, safe evacuation will require hundreds of landings and take offs and hundreds of exposed convoys just to lift out the people. Without drivers and still more convoys, the U.S. will be forced to leave behind untold millions of dollars worth of equipment.

Iraq hasn't got an army to protect such massive maneuvers, and while the media keep talking about Falluja, a hostile stronghold that U.S. forces still cannot get into, the biggest problem ahead is that have no viable plan to get these same forces out of the rest of Iraq.

And the problem is much more than logistical. In the end we will have to talk our way out, because even occupiers have to craft a peace. Then and only then can they leave. If anyone doubts the cost of failing to make peace, the last 40 years of Israel's suffering, and 50 years of U.S. deployments in Korea -- a truce never converted to peace -- paint a grim picture. The cost in lives and cold hard cash is incalculable,

Our government is clearly hoping that elections will be enough to "pacify." Of all people, on this November day, we ordinary Americans clearly understand that in fact elections are just as likely to inflame hostilities as to ease them.

Our government ought to turn to the British once more to hear about a truth it took London 30 years to learn: to make peace in a divided community where death lurks on every corner, all the combatants, even the marginalized and the violent have to be at the table. What is more, each one of them has to concede values it once held sacred, even sitting governments.

Americans both pro and anti war will have to stop talking as though we are "outsiders." With 130,000 people on the ground we are stakeholders, and like all stakeholders we will have to go to the table to negotiate our path to peace. We must expect to sacrifice and to contribute if a viable agreement is to become possible. If we persist in looking for that darkened doorway marked EXIT, there is nothing but tragedy ahead.

In this war we will never get an enduring cease-fire without a good faith, negotiated effort at peace-making.

And until such a process begins, our men and women in Iraq are stuck there. No matter what happens in Falluja, the U.S. in 2005 will once more face a truth we learned in 1991 and in 2003: winning through to a lasting peace takes much more than successful military operations.