

and the average attendance at that Section's panels.

Best Attended Panels

The best attended day-time panel at the convention was Political Knowledge for What? Two New Books on the State of the Discipline, with 116 people in attendance. The Roundtable on the Reagan Presidency was the next most popular with 93 in attendance, followed by the Presidential Election of 1984 with an audience of 76.

The fourth best-attended panel with 67 was the Roundtable on Area Studies and Theory Building, followed by the Roundtable on *In Search of France* (66) and the Roundtable on Congressional Committee Research to honor Richard F. Fenno, Jr. (65).

Plenary Sessions

The three plenary sessions, held on each of the three evenings of the conference, drew large audiences. At the first plenary session Program Chair Cooper presided as APSA's awards were presented to outstanding scholars, and Richard F. Fenno, Jr. delivered the Presidential Address, which will appear in an upcoming issue of the *American Political Science Review*. It was estimated that 375 people attended this session.

Fred I. Greenstein of Princeton University chaired the second plenary session on Reform of the American Political System with approximately 175 people in attendance. On the third evening I. M. Destler of the Institute for International Economics presided over a packed house (350 people) to hear Robert S. McNamara, James R. Schlesinger and Brent Scowcroft discuss the problems of and prospects for arms control.

Editor's Note: Full reports of the plenary sessions, Reform of the American Political System and Arms Control: Problems and Prospects, appear below. □

Prospects for Arms Control

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I. M. Destler, a Senior Fellow at the Institute of International Economics and moderator for the plenary session on "Arms Control: Problems and Prospects," described the panel participants as "doers and thinkers," individuals with high-level governmental experience who now are actively engaged in the enterprise of analyzing current arms control dilemmas. The speakers were indeed illustrious. They included Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and President of the World Bank from 1968-81; James R. Schlesinger, who has held such diverse positions as Chair of the Atomic Energy Commission (1971-73), Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (1973), Secretary of Defense (1973-75), and Secretary of the Department of Energy (1977-79); and Lt. General Brent Scowcroft (USAF, ret.), a former assistant to the President for national security affairs (1975-1977), member of the President's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control (1977-80), and, more recently, chair of a commission established by President Reagan on the MX issue.

All three panelists painted a gloomy picture of the prospects for arms control. Schlesinger argued that public expectations about what arms control can accomplish are exaggerated. In his view arms negotiations do not lead to cuts in defense expenditures, except in a marginal way, or eliminate the threat of nuclear devastation. Moreover, the public seems to believe that the United States alone can, if it wants, achieve progress in managing the arms race; but negotiations involve dialogue between two sovereign powers, the codification of decisions made by independent powers.

What, then, would successful arms talks entail? For Schlesinger, realistic goals consist of stabilizing the military balance between the two superpowers and in-



President Richard F. Fenno, Jr. (right) at the annual meeting with Executive Director Thomas Mann (left) and Michael Preston, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Blacks in the Profession.

creasing the probability that worthless weapons systems would not be deployed —goals that may fall short of public expectations.

But major obstacles block the achievement of even these more modest aims. Schlesinger singled out several impediments, including a lack of simultaneity in the degree of interest in arms control exhibited by the USA and the USSR in the past 40 years. In the 1970s, for example, the United States was prepared to accept a stand-off under the rubric of detente but the USSR deployed large numbers of missiles with heavy throw-weight. American willingness to accept restraint was not reciprocated. In the 1980s, on the other hand, the Soviet side may be prepared to exercise restraint but the United States appears unprepared for this at the moment. The moods of the two superpowers simply do not coincide.

Another barrier to arms negotiations in-

volves the Reagan administration's reluctance to accept American vulnerability as inevitable. The administration does not want U.S. survival to depend on Soviet forbearance. Schlesinger noted that Western European countries, as well as the USSR, believe in their own vulnerability; only the American historical experience generates this seeming inability to come to terms with this unpleasant reality.

Unable to accept such vulnerability for the U.S., President Reagan hopes to force the USSR to settle with us by engaging in an arms race that the USSR cannot afford to run. But Schlesinger dismissed this approach as an illusion, arguing that Congress has reached the "end of the road" with respect to defense spending; cuts in defense expenditures indicate that we are in no position to run a strategic arms race. Indeed, by drawing down expenditures on conventional weapons the United States is losing part



Robert S. McNamara, former Secretary of Defense, addresses the plenary session on arms control.

of its deterrent. In Schlesinger's view, the fond belief on the right that America can remake the Soviet defense posture in our preferred image is an illusion.

For Schlesinger, the acceptance of mutual vulnerability constitutes a prerequisite for arms control, the bedrock for the arms talks that took place in the 1970s. The former Defense Secretary argued that Star Wars, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) has shaken that foundation. SDI reflects a characteristic American attitude that there must be a technocratic solution to our vulnerability, but Schlesinger saw a number of dangers inherent in this approach.

Although the Reagan administration now advertises and defends SDI as a research effort, largely in response to the reactions of our European allies, Schlesinger characterized this approach as "mighty odd" since it reverses the normal process of conducting technological research and then choosing weapons systems. Policy has preceded technology.

Moreover, SDI has the unique capacity to evoke seemingly conflicting fears in our European allies: the fear of cooptation

into a conflict in which they have no role *and* the fear of abandonment by the United States. With respect to the latter issue, Schlesinger compared SDI to the French Maginot line, which sent a signal that France had no interest in Eastern Europe. In addition, SDI might undermine the British and French independent strategic deterrents. These two countries have an interest in keeping defensive systems at low levels so that their relatively small independent nuclear forces would retain effectiveness. In Schlesinger's view, European governments simply will not support deployment.

He also pointed out that SDI undermines existing strategy, which calls for selective nuclear strikes if the Soviets move westward, an option that becomes impossible if the USSR and the USA have SDI. Ironically, only a massive strike could penetrate the shield of strategic defenses; and we arrive back where we started—with mutual assured destruction (MAD).

The return to Geneva is, in Schlesinger's words, "an unalloyed blessing for the Soviet Union." After two years of Soviet

difficulties in the foreign policy realm, with the downing of the Korean airliner, the walkout at Geneva, heavy-handed involvement in Western European politics, and questions raised about a Soviet role in the attempted assassination of the pope, the USSR now faces the opportunity either to restrain American technology or, more likely, to exploit allied reservations over strategic defense.

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Schlesinger sees little hope of a serious, substantial arms agreement. One possible scenario would involve using SDI as a bargaining chip. While a high price could be extracted from the Soviets, the administration would have to give up hope of American invulnerability. Instead, the United States goes to Geneva with the administration unwilling to use SDI as a carrot and the Congress unwilling to use MX as a stick. As a consequence, the Soviet Union has no incentive to compromise.

Schlesinger argued that the SDI proposal as put forth by the administration fails to address a central contradiction: how offensive weapons can first be drawn down and then SDI deployed, since SDI increases the premium on the numbers and throw-weight of offensive weapons. In other words, if the Soviet Union believes that we are turning toward a generic defense, they will counter that step with a build-up of offensive weapons.

Scowcroft, like Schlesinger, placed considerable emphasis on the problem of inflated public expectations concerning what we can expect to accomplish through arms talks. In his view, the primary aim of negotiations is to "reduce chances that characteristics of the weapons systems will help transform crisis into conflict." What Scowcroft termed "strategic crisis stability" is undermined by the increasing accuracy of missiles and the known location of major targets. While neither side wants a

"bolt from the blue scenario," the problem is that with such weapons a crisis could develop rapidly and make a first strike more plausible.

Scowcroft criticized the freeze movement for its "simplistic" assumption that all change in strategic forces is bad and charged that both liberals and conservatives question the continued utility of deterrence. In Scowcroft's judgment, there are no single, simple solutions to arms control; but there are strategic force structures that would offer less military incentive to attack than the current structure of forces.

With respect to SDI, McNamara said that except for the president and perhaps the secretary of defense no one in government believed the SDI could eliminate our strategic vulnerability. Other SDI advocates had very different notions of its purpose. In fact, Scowcroft wondered what it was, noting that at least five versions of SDI with different goals in mind have received attention from the Reagan administration. Scowcroft thought that the administration had not yet sorted out where it is going; and, while he recognized that a combination of weak offensive systems and strong defensive systems would be stable, he questioned, as had Schlesinger, whether there was "any way to get there from here."

In [Schlesinger's] view negotiations do not lead to cuts in defense expenditures . . . or eliminate the threat of nuclear devastation.

But Scowcroft disagreed with Schlesinger about the meaning of the ABM treaty, arguing that it had not enshrined mutual vulnerability as a principle, but, instead, had represented a tactical decision that the defensive systems that could be developed at that time were not worth deploying. But Soviet research has not stopped in this area, and Scowcroft suggested that the Soviet Union has exhibited considerable enthusiasm for strategic defensive activities—that their

public comments on this subject do not reflect their true views.

[One] barrier to arms negotiations involves the Reagan administration's reluctance to accept American vulnerability as inevitable.

McNamara emphasized that both the United States and the USSR are driven by deep-seated fears that the other side seeks to achieve a first-strike capacity. The majority of American experts envision a scenario that calls for the Soviet Union launching an attack that would eliminate our Minuteman missiles; the only viable American response, retaliation against Soviet cities, would not be carried out; and the result would be capitulation to Soviet demands.

According to McNamara, this analysis assumes that Soviet leaders are detached from reality. Their actions would be predicated on two shaky premises: (1) that the United States would not launch its missiles when an attack is detected; and (2) that a well-coordinated and massive Soviet attack would work, despite the uncertainties attached to this essentially "untested" enterprise. In McNamara's words, "only a madman would opt for such a gamble, and whatever you think of the Soviets they aren't mad."

Nonetheless, McNamara noted that all arms negotiations must be based on the assumption that the other side seeks to achieve a first-strike capacity. Each side does engage in the vigorous deployment of new weapons systems that threaten the other side's land-based missiles. In the American case, the D-5s now being deployed on our new submarines can destroy Soviet missile silos.

McNamara particularly stressed his concern over SDI's implications, contending that it would stimulate an offensive arms buildup and lead to an American abrogation of the ABM Treaty, an important symbol of detente, within the decade.

All three panel participants had advice to tender to President Reagan. At Geneva, McNamara would use SDI as an opportunity to reduce and reshape strategic forces: the numbers of accurate Soviet land-based missiles to our Minuteman silos would be cut; and the United States would adjust the numbers of D-5 forces yet to be deployed. SDI would be clearly established as a research program, with development prohibited, pending discussion of its strategic implications. In McNamara's view, this approach would allow both sides to emerge as winners.

Schlesinger similarly called on President Reagan to use SDI as a bargaining chip. The Soviet Union would need to provide us with restraint on offense; in return, the United States would exercise restraint on defense. In exchange for rough equality, the United States would reaffirm the ABM Treaty. There would be no visible development and deployment of SDI.

Scowcroft took a somewhat different view. While basically echoing the positions of the other speakers with respect to the need to restructure strategic forces, he was not so pessimistic about the prospects for defensive systems, arguing that the way the administration has proposed moving toward SDI will not work; but that other ways of "getting there from here" might be devised. Scowcroft suggested the introduction of limited defense for certain areas in order to build up confidence between the two superpowers and perhaps pave the way for the adoption of further measures in the future.

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McNamara noted a peculiar mirror image between the present bargaining situation at Geneva and discussions between

Premier Aleksei Kosygin and President Lyndon Johnson in 1967. At that time the Soviet Union was deploying an ABM system around Moscow and the United States did not know whether Soviet intentions involved deployment across the USSR. In June of 1967, when Kosygin and Johnson met at Glassboro, NJ, Johnson warned the Soviets that America would respond with more offense in order to penetrate Soviet defenses and to maintain deterrence. Kosygin grew angry at the American objections, asserting that defense is moral and offense is immoral. Now the United States is using Kosygin's arguments.

All three panel participants had advice to tender to President Reagan.

Finally, the subject of nuclear proliferation was raised. Schlesinger predicted that if nuclear weapons are used in the next 50 to 100 years, the most likely place will be the third world; hardly a happy prospect, but not the end of human survival. McNamara commented that although nuclear proliferation has been slowed, it cannot be stopped and that the United States and the Soviet Union must discuss how they would react to the use of nuclear weapons by a third party. Scowcroft added that the two superpowers largely agree on attitudes toward nuclear proliferation. □

Reforming the American Political System

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Is change needed in American political structures? The plenary session on

Carol Nechemias reports regularly for *PS* on the plenary sessions of APSA's annual meetings.



Thomas Cronin of Colorado College responds to a question from the audience at the plenary session on political reform.

"Reform of the American Political System" brought together a panel of experts well suited to tackling this issue. The speakers included Lloyd N. Cutler, a member of the Washington, D.C. bar since 1946 and former counsel to President Carter; Barber B. Conable, a former member of the House of Representatives, who served with distinction on the Ways and Means Committee and as Chair of the House Republican Policy Committee; and Colorado College Professor Thomas Cronin, a noted specialist on the American presidency. Presidential scholar Fred I. Greenstein of Princeton University served as moderator.



Former Member of the House Barber Conable (R-NY) warns reform advocates that underlying realities make party government in the U.S. highly improbable.