

A blue-tinted portrait of Barry M. Blechman, an older man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a light-colored suit jacket over a checkered shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Barry M. Blechman
**Reflections on a
National Security
Life**

Edited by Alex Bollfrass
and R. Taj Moore

STIMSON

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Preface

Condoleezza Rice

Barry and I first met in 1981. It was a time when the Cold War was still in full flight. In fact, relations between the superpowers were deteriorating – as the Soviet Union’s war in Afghanistan as well as stalled arms control negotiations and the emergence of America’s commitment to missile defense – unraveled years of détente. Barry and I were among the “young” experts who tried to make the country make sense of the threats and the possibilities of the times. We encountered each other in academic and government forums; in the private sector; and in non-profit organizations. We came to know each other as colleagues and friends.

Years later, as Secretary of State, we faced new challenges brought on by the rise of transnational threats and the questions without answers that emerged in the wake of 9/11. We had to reassess and redesign our approach to diplomacy and national security. The future was in hard places doing hard things. To be effective in the 21st Century, to uphold American global leadership, and help others, we needed an outside perspective on how to modernize our current set of diplomatic and development assistance institutions. Consequently, I commissioned the Secretary of State’s Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy. Barry’s deep experience in foreign affairs and national security made him the ideal co-chair alongside Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering. The final report reflected Barry’s tenacity of the challenge. The findings pushed the State Department to think innovatively about future political challenges, to increase coordination with partners, and reinvigorate our approach to helping others around the world.

The assembled essays in this volume testify to Barry's many other contributions, each from the author's personal perspective. Dr. Tamara Cofman Wittes opens by reflecting on Barry's initiatives as a scholar at the Brookings Institution, where he led the Defense Analysis Program and published his authoritative book, *Force Without War*, on the United States' political uses of military force. Russell Rumbaugh captures Barry's efforts to help Congress assert greater control over the Pentagon through budget controls and cultivating in-house policy expertise. Swedish Ambassador Anders Ferm focuses on Barry's work for the Palme Commission to deescalate existential tensions with the Soviet Union. R. Taj Moore details Barry's work to develop and pass the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Professor Robert Powell narrows the focus on nuclear policy. Professor Robert Powell narrows the focus on nuclear policy. Steve Irwin reflects on his entrepreneurial leadership at the defense consulting corporation Barry founded, DFI International. Michael Krepon discusses the co-creation of the Stimson Center. Frederick Whitridge, Jr. and Alan Platt each reflect on the grand arc of Barry's career as a national security thinker. Dr. Alex Bollfrass updates us on his ongoing work on nuclear disarmament. The conclusion provides a more personal take on Barry as the softball-playing, pumpkin-carving colleague we appreciated.

Together, these recollections show a career that not only reflected key themes and eras in American national security, but one that improved it. Although each author worked with him in different times on various security and foreign policy subjects, readers will find that Barry was the same over his long and productive career: a brilliant, energetic, and kind man with a tenacious commitment to achieving American security while honoring its values. As the Stimson Center marks its third decade, it is a pleasure to look back in celebration at the inspiring career of the savvy scholar, entrepreneur and policy wonk from Queens, my friend – Dr. Barry M. Blechman.

Think Tank Analysis in a Polarized Political Era

Tamara Cofman Wittes

Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program, The Brookings Institution¹

In 1969, the Brookings Board of Trustees approved a proposal to create a new Defense Analysis Program within the Institution's Foreign Policy division. The new program would review and analyze the defense budget, add analysis of force structure and defense to regional policy studies undertaken by other Brookings study groups, and carry out "special studies" of "national security or defense issues which become matters of public concern."² Barry Blechman joined Brookings in 1971 and took over the program shortly afterward.

At the time of the defense program's establishment, amidst fierce debates over the war in Vietnam and U.S.-Soviet competition, Brookings's president, Kermit Gordon, argued that "it is both vital and urgent to establish a mechanism for undertaking a public, responsible, and nonpartisan review and analysis of our defense policy and posture."³ To achieve that goal, Gordon sought to recruit distinguished defense experts and former officials from both parties to a bipartisan advisory board for the project in order to provide reviews and comment on the program's research product. Paul Nitze, accepting Gordon's invitation from his post at the School of Advanced International

1 The author wishes to thank Liam Stack and Sarah Chilton for research assistance in preparing this essay, and Stephen Hess and Stephen S. Kaplan for sharing memories and materials.

2 Author unknown, "Project Proposal - Foreign Policy Studies: Defense Analysis Program," dated 16 May 1969, Defense Analysis Program file, Brookings Institution archives.

3 Letter from Kermit Gordon to The Honorable Thomas S. Gates, 16 May 1969, Defense Analysis Program file, Brookings Institution archives.

Studies (which would later come to bear his name), cautioned, “I believe the project to be of very great importance but very difficult to do well.”⁴ Others expressed skepticism that the times allowed for such an effort. General (ret.) Harold Johnson declined to join the advisory board, writing to Gordon,

“I question very much whether or not the objectives that you list for your studies are possible of accomplishment. I doubt that a systematic and responsible review of the Defense budget is possible on an unclassified basis. Moreover, I question that the review can, in fact, be non-partisan. Office holders in one administration will have great difficulty being objective about the actions of their successor.”⁵

General Johnson’s concern reflected the increasingly polarized politics of Washington as the Nixon Administration settled into office, wielding a very different political style than its predecessors. A Brookings Institution history published in 1991 notes that, as early as May 1969, H.R. Haldeman had written a memo stating, “the President wants to issue an order to all White House staff people (I will have to do this verbally) as well as to Cabinet people (also have to be done verbally) that they are not to use Brookings Institution.” Vice President Spiro Agnew gave speeches lambasting Brookings and the Ford Foundation (a major funder of Brookings’s defense work) and “other tax-exempt organizations that were considered to be the pillars of the liberal establishment.”

Amidst the partisan scrutiny, Barry Blechman reviewed the defense budget for the annual Brookings budget book, *Setting National Priorities*, and carried out a series of studies of defense policy. The common thread running through his work was the view that evaluating advanced capabilities and, especially, technology, rather than bean-counting dollars or ships or warheads, was the best way to assess the relative strength of the U.S. defense posture.

As the White House itself shunned Brookings scholarship and policy became a matter for increasingly partisan rancor, Brookings scholars (much as they are doing today) turned their attention increasingly to influencing the working level of the executive branch, and to Capitol Hill. With time, Brookings became a go-to resource for members of Congress newly engaged on foreign policy and national defense, playing this role despite a strict policy of nonpartisanship and a refusal to comment on specific legislation. During his six years at Brookings, Barry testified before congressional committees at least eight times. He also embarked on an ambitious, multi-year study of the political uses of U.S. military force that lay the foundation for a generation of work on coercive diplomacy.

4 Letter from Paul. H. Nitze to Kermit Gordon, 23 May 1969, Defense Analysis Program file, Brookings Institution archives.

5 Letter from General (ret.) Harold K. Johnson to Kermit Gordon, 25 August 1969, Defense Analysis Program file, Brookings Institution archives.

Barry's interest in the political uses of military force began during his time at the Center for Naval Analyses, where he worked before joining Brookings. He brought this research agenda with him, and persuaded Kermit Gordon and foreign policy director Henry Owen to accept funding from the Department of Defense's Advanced Projects Research Agency (DARPA) to undertake a comprehensive study of the phenomenon. After advertising for a research partner in the American Political Science Association's newsletter, Barry hired a young political scientist named Stephen S. Kaplan to join him on the project.⁶ They worked with two research assistants and, eventually, five case-study authors to complete the most comprehensive and theorized examination to date of political uses of military force by the United States since World War II.

Combining statistical analysis of 215 cases, close analysis of a smaller sample of 33 cases, and in-depth studies of crises in specific countries, Force Without War's careful stock-taking of these events and their context produced a simple and compelling thesis: done well, the demonstrative use of military forces can gain time for diplomacy, stabilize a crisis, and help a U.S. president resist pressures for precipitous action. But, Barry and Stephen cautioned, "We have found that over the longer term such uses of the armed forces were not often associated with positive outcomes. Decisionmakers should thus not expect them to serve as substitutes for broader and more fundamental policies tailored to the realities of politics abroad, and incorporating diplomacy and the many other potential instruments available to U.S. foreign policy."⁷

Stephen says he had talked to Barry about the project for less than an hour when he started work at Brookings in January 1975. But, shortly after Stephen joined the staff, Barry got busy with the defense budget review for that year's edition of *Setting National Priorities*, and so Stephen "got [his] head in the game" and wrote the first chapter, framing the concept Barry had described into a book and outlining the dataset and methodology to be used. Barry then sat down and, says Stephen, "In between one and three days, he wrote the second chapter that put the whole thing together."⁸ From there, the collaboration proceeded organically: Barry provided structure and strategic logic and Stephen developed the research methods, recruited the case study authors, and edited their contributions. One innovation of the project for Brookings was the use of its modest new computing center – all the data relating to Barry and Stephen's 215 cases were coded onto punch cards and fed into the computer to produce frequencies and regression analyses. The magnetic tapes containing the dataset were given to the funder, DARPA, and the Social Science Consortium at the University of Michigan at the end of the project.

6 Author interview with Stephen Kaplan, Washington, DC, April 2018.

7 Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1978), p. 532.

8 Kaplan interview.

The project that produced *Force Without War* catalyzed a new literature on coercive diplomacy; but its consequences reached beyond scholarship⁹. For Barry and Stephen, the collaboration sparked a friendship that has lasted through all the years since. For Stephen and for another contributor to the project, case study author William Quandt, working with Barry helped connect them to jobs in the executive branch – where Barry also landed after Jimmy Carter’s election to the presidency in 1976. And for Barry, the subject of *Force Without War* remained a deep interest throughout his career. Indeed, I met Barry in the late 1990s, when he hired me as a research assistant to produce a study of post-Cold War coercive diplomacy for the National Academy of Sciences. That study was ultimately published in *Political Science Quarterly* as “Defining Moment: The Threat and Use of Force in American Foreign Policy.”¹⁰ Of all my publications in the twenty years since working with Barry, that article remains my most-cited.

Stephen says that what distinguishes Blechman’s work, then and now, is that “Barry is an analyst’s analyst...able to take a mass of data and find the points in it of prescriptive value...it’s a gift...Barry could see the analytic forest and what it meant.” This quality is evident in the final passages of *Force Without War*, where readers are reminded that, although the study generated insight into when political uses of military force can be effective, this is not necessarily what’s most important. As Barry and Stephen write, “A distinction should be drawn between utility and wisdom. The former is addressed in this study, the latter is not...the methodology employed accepts the objectives of U.S. decisionmakers as given and assesses only whether or not those objectives were achieved. The question of the wisdom of establishing those objectives is beyond the scope of this study.”¹¹

9 The concept was defined and categorized first by Alexander George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: Laos, Cuba, Vietnam* (New York: Little, Brown, 1971).

10 “Defining Moment: The Threat and Use of Force In American Foreign Policy,” Barry M. Blechman and Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Political Science Quarterly* 114:1 (Spring 1999), pp. 1-30.

11 *Force Without War*, p. 517

Empowering Congress through Expertise

Russell Rumbaugh

At the start of the 1970s, Congress aimed to reassert itself over the executive branch.¹ The Pentagon Papers, released in 1971, convinced the American public the presidency not only could not be trusted to run the Vietnam War, but could not even be trusted to tell the truth about what was happening in the war. Meanwhile, the Pentagon had recently adopted an internal decision-making process called “systems analysis,” a math-based language used to assess the costs, benefits, and risks of policy decisions. While useful for insiders at the Pentagon, the language was entirely foreign to Congressional representatives, making the basic aim of reining in the executive branch more challenging. Worse still from a congressional perspective, a new president, Richard Nixon, weaponized the power to withhold funds already appropriated. By doing so, Nixon threatened to do away with Congress’s most significant tool: the power of the purse.²

Looking around for a way to combat these pressures, Congress found Barry Blechman. That’s an overstatement, primarily because it is not entirely accurate to describe Congress as a cohesive unit and because Barry was part of a team of experts at the Brookings Institution. Members of Congress, however, did find Barry. And Barry had the skills and savvy Congress needed to reassert itself. He and his colleagues helped Congress regain its independence from the Department of Defense by providing the expertise needed to interpret the Pentagon’s new language and creating

1 Alan Platt dates the resurgence from the Senate’s debate on the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1969. Alan Platt, *The US Senate and Strategic Arms Policy, 1969-1977*, (Westview Press: 1978)

2 Neil M. Soltman, “The Limits of Executive Power: Impoundment of Funds,” *Catholic University Law Review*, Volume 23: Issue 2, Winter 1973

the Congressional budget committees, which allowed Congress to fend off Nixon's efforts to impound appropriations and prevent government budgeting from going on automatic pilot.

Background

Congress found Barry because, in 1971, he had joined the Brookings Institution, one of the original think tanks in DC.³ Barry had come to DC the decade before for a doctorate at Georgetown and found work on the Army staff and at the Center for Naval Analyses, one of the federally funded research and development centers. At these jobs, Barry already represented the rise of something new: civilian analysts tasked with solving problems for national security outside of the orthodoxy of a lifetime in uniform.⁴ As a member of this new breed, he also learned how to speak the language of systems analysis or operations research that was taking over the Pentagon's decision-making under Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and his whiz-kids. In joining Brookings, Barry found a platform from which to speak that language and a place that was building a whole new language of national budgeting.

Congress Needs Defense Budget Expertise

Congress was not entirely new to thinking about defense issues, but it was new to dealing with the details of Pentagon operations and budgeting.

For instance, Congressional representatives had always cared about what was built in their districts, leading some to call the defense authorizing committees "real estate" committees because that's what they spent their time on, and not broader defense policy.⁵ But the advent of the Cold War brought sustained high levels of defense spending on subjects the uniformed military no longer had a monopoly of expertise on, like nuclear weapons and air defenses.⁶ In 1959, Congress passed the Russell Amendment, which required authorization of defense appropriations and, with each

3 See Tamara Cofman Wittes essay for the story of Barry's think tank days.

4 US Congress Office of Technology Assessment, A History of the Department of Defense Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, OTA-BP-ISS-157 (US Government Printing Office: June 1995), p. 2-3. For the creation of CNA, see page 23.

5 James Lindsay, Congress and the Politics of US Foreign Policy, (Johns Hopkins University Press: 1994), p. 59.

6 Jamie Morin, "Squaring the Pentagon: The Politics of Post-Cold War Defense Retrenchment," (Yale University unpublished diss: 2003), p. 160-1.

passing year, added more detail to the bill.⁷ Congress's expertise needed to expand alongside this. By 1982, Congress was authorizing 100 percent of military personnel, procurement, research and development, and operations and maintenance.⁸

When Congress first started to engage with the details of defense budgeting, however, it had very little independent ability to evaluate the defense budget—it did not have the staff and it did not know the language. Since 1946, congressional committees—other than appropriations—had been limited to six professional and four administrative staff.⁹ Similarly, executive-branch civilian leaders, including President Eisenhower, also had been frustrated with their inability to direct the military services (relying, instead, on uniformed military personnel).¹⁰ As a response, in the 1960s, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara sought greater control by introducing the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System, and expanding the role and size of the staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.¹¹ At first, McNamara's efforts were applauded as a “revolution” and embraced by members of Congress who believed they too would be empowered by the new approach.¹²

But by the late 1960s, Congress found that McNamara's system also limited their own choices, not just those of the uniformed military. McNamara's system, dubbed systems analysis, successfully provided an alternative way to decide military issues other than the traditional method, which relied on military judgment gained only through many years of serving in uniform. McNamara and his team replaced this experience-based process with systems analysis, built on the math-based operations research developed in World War II to evaluate how to find submarines and protect airplanes from anti-aircraft artillery. Overall, Congress was supportive of this effort as it looked for an independent way to evaluate issues like nuclear weapons policy and air defense, matters the military services historically had pursued along parochial lines, with the Army, Navy, and Air Force each claiming its own role in these missions. Systems analysis provided a way to cut across the military services' parochial arguments and to provide, in theory, a universal language for decision-making.

7 When Senator Richard Russell offered his amendment to the FY1960 Military Construction Act, he was chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the second-most senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, chair of the defense appropriations subcommittee and member of the military construction appropriations subcommittee. *Ibid* and “US Senate Committee on Appropriations: 138th Anniversary, 1867-2005,” 109th Congress Document No. 5, 2005. By doing so, Russell himself subverted the traditional semi-adversarial relationship between authorizers and appropriators described in Aaron Wildavsky, *The Politics of the Budgetary Process*, (Little, Brown and Company: 1964)

8 Barry Blechman, *The Politics of National Security: Congress and US Defense Policy*, (Oxford University Press: 1990), p. 31.

9 “Organization of the Congress,” Final Report of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, December 1993.

10 Gerald Clarfield, *Security with Solvency: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Shaping of the American Military Establishment*, (Praeger: 1999).

11 Arnold Kanter, *Defense Politics: A Budgetary Perspective*, (University of Chicago Press: 1979), p. 79.

12 William Kaufmann, *The McNamara Strategy*, (Harper & Row: 1964), p. 1-3.

But it was more complicated in practice. Understanding the new system required unraveling pages of abstract technical analysis and speaking an esoteric language only few actually knew well. The generals adapted by sending their young officers to learn the language, but Congress found itself without the decoder ring for such explanations. When this language allowed Congress to side with the Secretary of Defense against the military services' parochial interests, Congress was pleased with it. But when Congress wanted to contest the Secretary of Defense's policy preferences, including partisan policy preferences, Congress found it had no way to argue against the math McNamara would present.

As the war in Vietnam and an increasing defense budget gave Congress more reasons to oppose the Lyndon Johnson administration, Congress looked for new answers. To start, Congress allied with the military services to bring military judgment back in and undermine McNamara's decisions. But, while an effective alliance, this left Congress dependent on the uniformed military just when Congress was most suspicious of their judgment.

Starting in 1970, with Richard Nixon as president, Congress looked to empower itself with larger staffs, both personal and committee. Over the next decade, Congress shifted from capping its committee staff by number to being budgeted in accord with the committees' needs.¹³ In the House, members increased their number of staff from 13 in 1969 to 22 in 1979, a 70 percent increase. In the Senate, members tied personal staff to the number of committees each Senator served on. While these increases in staff gave each member of Congress more independence, staff still oversaw very large portfolios and could not be experts on every issue, leaving Congress still searching for expertise it could tap into independent of the executive branch.

Into this gap stepped the Brookings Institution. In 1969, Henry Owen, director of the Foreign Policy Program, established a subgroup, the Defense Analysis Project, funded by the Ford Foundation.¹⁴ This project began exploring defense issues, questioning the Pentagon's conclusions while using the Pentagon's own numbers and language. This was precisely what Congress was looking for.

The project started a series called "Studies in Defense Policy." Originally labeled as just "a staff paper," these were short books of 75 pages or so, often with appendices of another 25 to 30 pages to lay out all the data the authors were drawing conclusions from. Barry himself wrote the third book, "The Changing Soviet Navy," in 1973 drawing on his CNA expertise. He also wrote the fourth, "Strategic Forces: Issues for the Mid-Seventies," with Alton Quanbeck, a former Air Force colonel and, at

13 "Organization of the Congress," Final Report of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, December 1993.

14 Fred Dews, Carisa Nietzsche, and Cory Scarola, "Centenary Timeline," (Brookings Institution: 2016) 15 "1977 Nominations," CQ Almanac: 1977.

the time, director of the project until Barry took over.¹⁵ By 1976, the project had produced 14 such studies and Brookings continued to use the brand, “Studies in Defense Policy,” into the 1990s.

These books, the analysis the project was doing, and the analysts themselves were hugely influential. In one New York Times article from 1972, the author twice references “...the Brookings Institution, using data supplied by the Pentagon and which [Secretary of Defense] Laird acknowledged, recently reported...”¹⁶ Barry’s co-author, Quanbeck, went on to serve as a task force leader for the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, better known as the Church Committee. This committee had uncovered what the CIA had done since its founding and led Congress to establish standing committees to oversee intelligence activities.¹⁷ William White, who wrote the Defense Analysis Project’s study on US tactical air forces in 1974, also served on the committee. Brookings itself described the project by stating, “Work from the project is influential among congressional decision-makers.”¹⁸

Congress needed help to contest the Pentagon and had given itself the staff to find the expertise, but still needed Barry and his colleagues at the Brookings Institution to provide the actual expertise. Fortunately, the team at Brookings had foreseen the need and was building that skillset at just the right time.

Creating the Congressional Budget Committees

As Congress was arming itself to oversee the Pentagon more effectively, it faced even greater threats to its influence on the budget. One threat was the advent of significant mandatory spending, which sent large sums out of the Treasury without further Congressional action. Another threat came from a president looking to defang Congress’s most potent policy tool, the spending power. Here, too, Congress turned to Barry and the Brookings Institution.

From the Korean War through most of the 1960s, defense made up half of the US government budget. But with the passage of the Johnson administration’s Great Society program, the United States joined other developed nations in devoting more resources to non-defense programs. Non-defense spending surpassed defense spending

15 “1977 Nominations,” CQ Almanac: 1977.

16 Robert Sherrill, “SCRAM, SCAD, ULMS and other aspects of the \$585.9 billion defense budget,” New York Times, July 30, 1972.

17 Staff List, “Final Report,” Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 1975-76, S. Rep. No. 94-755 (1976).

18 Fred Dews, Carisa Nietzsche, and Cory Scarola, “Centenary Timeline,” (Brookings Institution: 2016)

in 1970 and by 1973 non-defense spending nearly doubled defense spending.¹⁹ Most of these increases occurred in mandatory programs rather than discretionary programs. Discretionary programs require annual action by Congress to appropriate funds from the US Treasury. Mandatory programs, in contrast, release funds from the Treasury so long as a claimant meets eligibility set out in a law passed by Congress. The most notable of these programs are Social Security and Medicare. Congress tried to manage these changes, but its tools for dealing with the budget overall were fragmented, relying on appropriations bills or tax bills or a number of separate authorizing committees.²⁰

President Richard Nixon, too, was grappling with the change in budgeting, without being willing to roll back the Great Society legislation.²¹ He turned towards impoundment, instructing executive agencies not to spend money already appropriated by Congress. While the power had existed, Nixon began to use it more liberally than prior presidents. In 1973, he impounded \$18 billion, more than 10 percent of the totals appropriated by Congress that year.²² This threatened Congress's ability to decide where money should be spent as Nixon was moving money around in a way to reshape US policy. Coupled with its lack of expertise, Congress realized it was ill-prepared for modern budgeting.

Luckily, the Brookings Institution was prepared. Brookings' head, Kermit Gordon, had been Lyndon Johnson's budget director. He asked Charles Schultze, Gordon's replacement as Johnson's budget director, to offer an alternative take on what the U.S. government could be. Schultze, with Edward Hamilton and Allen Schick, did just that, publishing *Setting National Priorities: The 1971 Budget*. It was immediately influential because Brookings offered members of Congress options in the same language the executive branch was speaking, just as the defense analyses had.

The next year Schultze coauthored with Ed Fried, Alice Rivlin, and Nancy Teeters. Ed Fried was an economist who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and then served on the National Security Council. When he came to Brookings, he reported to Henry Owen in the Foreign Policy Program and, in turn, Barry reported to him. Schultze and his three co-authors wrote the study for three years, offering alternatives for fiscal years FY1972-1974. When the original authors moved on to other projects, Barry was trusted with the premiere annual study for FY1975 and FY1976, along with Edward Gramlich and Robert Hartman, despite

19 Office of Management and Budget, FY2012 Historical Table 8.2.

20 "United States Senate Committee on the Budget: 1974-2006," Government Printing Office, Senate Document 109-24, 2006, p. 28.

21 Gareth Davis, "The Great Society After Johnson: The Case of Bilingual Education," *The Journal of American History*, March 2002.

22 United States Senate Committee on the Budget: 1974-2006," Government Printing Office, Senate Document 109-24, 2006, p. 29.

having come from the defense side rather than the budget or economics side.

While the Brookings scholars were drafting these formal works, they were also working informally with Senator Ed Muskie and others to create a new congressional budgeting process, which--along with other efforts like the official Joint Study Committee on Budget Control--culminated in the 1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act.²³ Alice Rivlin herself eventually was selected to head the newly established Congressional Budget Office. This appointment served to bring in-house many of the same analyses Brookings had been doing on the outside, testifying to how much Congress valued the Brookings work.

The first Senate budget committee staff director, Doug Bennet, pursued Barry in hopes of him joining the committee staff. Though Barry continued to provide informal advice, he passed on the committee position, but served as a consultant to the Defense Subcommittee under Senator Muskie, before serving on President Jimmy Carter's campaign and transition teams and eventually being confirmed as the assistant director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

The early Setting National Priorities authors all played prominent roles in US policy. Schultze became the Chairman of the Council on Economic Advisors. Nancy Teeters became the first woman to join the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors. In 1997, Edward Gramlich also joined the Fed's Board of Governors after first serving at CBO. Ed Fried became executive director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Robert Hartman followed Alice Rivlin to the Congressional Budget Office.

Most importantly, by drawing on Barry and the Brookings' Institution, Congress fought off a challenge by the presidency and adapted to modern budgeting. With the passage of the Impoundment Act and a Supreme Court ruling that closed remaining loopholes, the practice has mostly gone away, leaving Congress indispensable in disposing of funds.²⁴ The Congressional Budget Act gave Congress the tools to look across the entire US government budget, including mandatory spending. While crises have often required extra measures, the congressional budgeting process has, for the last 45 years, given Congress a way to look across discretionary and mandatory spending and coordinate across its own piecemeal parts to achieve the overall goals it sets.

23 United States Senate Committee on the Budget: 1974-2006," Government Printing Office, Senate Document 109-24, 2006, p. 24-28.

24 Train vs City of New York, 1975. The Trump administration, however, in 2018 sought to use those mechanisms though the Senate rejected the proposal. Molly Reynolds, "Why Trump's move to rescind spending might find favor in the House, but not the Senate," Brookings Fixgov blog, May 8, 2018 and Matthew Daly, "Senate blocks Trump plan to cut \$15B in unused spending," Associated Press, June 20, 2018.

Conclusion

Congress's resurgence continued through the 1980s. Although initially supportive of the Reagan administration defense budget increases, Congress took it upon itself to cut the defense budget when those increases created large deficits, despite the administration's opposition.²⁵ Congress went even further with the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act of 1986, which created an entirely new structure to limit the creation of debt and reduce deficits still in use today.²⁶ Concerned with the Pentagon's mismanagement and even failure in operations, Congress directed the largest reorganization of the military of the past 60 years.²⁷ Barry himself chronicled this reassertion of congressional power in his 1988 book, *The Politics of National Security*.

The executive branch eventually reasserted itself. Scholars and pundits continue to debate whether the power balance between the executive and legislative branch will always swing like a pendulum or whether one will eventually get the upper hand.²⁸ But at one of Congress's lowest points and one of the nation's darkest hours, Barry Blechman provided the tools for Congress to assert itself in policymaking. Forty-five years later, Congress is still relying on his expertise as new threats loom and old issues return.²⁹

25 Lawrence Korb, "The Reagan Defense Budget and Program: The Buildup That Collapsed," in David Boaz, ed, *Assessing the Reagan Years*, (Cato Institute: 1988).

26 The recent limits on discretionary spending imposed by the Budget Control Act rely on the enforcement mechanism--sequester--created by Gramm-Rudman-Hollings.

27 The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, of which Barry was himself one of the fathers. James Locher, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon*, (Texas A&M Press: 2004), p. 166-171.

28 James A. Thurber, ed, *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations*, (Rowman and Littlefield: 2013), 5th Ed

29 Barry Blechman, "Protecting US Security by Minimizing the Role of Nuclear weapons: A New US Nuclear Policy," Testimony before the Strategic Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, November 3, 2015.

The Palme Commission

Anders Ferm

I owe my forty-year friendship with Barry Blechman to the Cold War. It was a dangerous time. Society lived in fear that nuclear deterrence, the fragile foundation on which the East-West military balance was built, might collapse at any moment and bring on a hot war. All it would have taken was for one side or individual – in the East or West – to make a single mistake. That alone might have upset the balance and led to a war in which nuclear weapons would almost certainly be used. That would have resulted in severe immediate consequences and would have had long-term effects that might have been too difficult to contain.

Thankfully, a group of international statesmen wanted to turn the tide and foster a new political environment. That was the beginning of the Palme Commission. The goal was to study the best ways to address the most challenging defense issues of the time and to mobilize public opinion against the "race to oblivion". That was not an easy task. In 1980, the United States was on track to elect Ronald Reagan as president, a man who had initially wanted to expand the United States' nuclear arsenal. Many people fully expected military antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States to escalate even further if Reagan was elected president, so the Palme Commission faced an uphill battle from its inception.

In short, the challenge was formidable. Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, internationally recognized as a courageous and outspoken activist for peace, democracy and human rights, was asked to organize and lead the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues with members from the East, West and the Third World. Its mission, again, was to develop ways to reverse the

arms race – in particular the nuclear arms race – and to deescalate the dangerous global tension. After consultation with his friend and colleague Bruno Kreisky, chancellor of Austria, Olof Palme accepted. Palme then requested that I, his former speechwriter and political advisor for several years, leave my job as a publisher in Stockholm to organize and lead the Secretariat of this Commission as its Secretary General. Bruno Kreisky had offered the Commission to set up its headquarters in Vienna with full diplomatic privileges, including immunity for the staff.

After some hesitation and further discussions with Olof I accepted and left Stockholm for Vienna, where I lived for two years. During this time, I worked closely with Barry, who played a critical role in the Commission's work.

Over the two-year life span of the Commission, we requested no less than 42 research papers on security and disarmament problems. These papers were submitted to the regular full meetings of the Commission. The author of the expert paper was then asked to participate in the Full Commission meeting to introduce their paper and discuss relevant findings and conclusions. This is where Barry's expertise came in.

Barry wrote three of these 42 papers. The subject and title of the first one was "If SALT fails". The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks dealt with strategic nuclear arms, meaning long-range nuclear weapons that could be launched from either the US or the Soviet Union and reach the other side. Such an attack, if it reached its target, would bring catastrophic results for the attacked in terms of human victims and material destruction.

Barry's second research paper discussed verification of arms agreements. This is a problem that is present in all disarmament negotiations and agreements. No reasonable agreement can be fostered if the parties cannot be assured that an agreement is fully observed and respected. Therefore they insist on the possibility to inspect, or "verification on demand," in order to find out if one or several of the parties is cheating. Mutual trust, coupled with verification, is an essential condition for arms agreements. This problem is what Barry studied and discussed in his second research paper and it was the subject of an interesting discussion at a Commission meeting.

His third paper, titled "If efforts to control arms fail", explained in detail to the Commission Members the potential immediate destruction and horrors of an attack, the long-term effects of a nuclear war between the West and the East, and the repercussions in the Third World of such a war. Barry's three papers were essential in enlightening the discussions between members and thus for the work of the Commission. They were useful primarily because they carefully thought through the key security challenges of the time, but also because they provided the Commission with useful policy proposals on how we could resolve those incredibly significant

dangers. Many of his concerns and proposed remedies were part of a broad strategy to deescalate and, ultimately, end the Cold War.

His contribution to the Palme Commission did not end with his papers. A final report had to be published in 1982 and was to be based on the result of the research done by the contributing experts. Barry was tasked with taking all of the 42 highly technical research papers and digesting them into a single, comprehensive volume that non-experts could understand. Turning those 42 papers into one volume and communicating those ideas in a different way was essential to the Commission's work. The result of his work was a pocket volume of 202 pages with the title "COMMON SECURITY – A PROGRAMME FOR DISARMAMENT". It was published in 1982 by PAN Books London in its series World Affairs. The report became an important document for the peace and disarmament movement and its message "Common Security" was referred to when US President Ronald Reagan and Secretary General Nikita Khrushchev met in Iceland to lay the groundwork for the détente between East and West that started the march, not to "oblivion", but to the end of the Cold War. I cannot say that Barry ended the Cold War, but his work for the Palme Commission certainly helped set the table for its conclusion.

Goldwater-Nichols Act

By: R. Taj Moore

Historical Context

At the end of World War II, President Harry S. Truman wanted to unify the armed services under a single, civilian principal.¹ There were at least two objectives: to improve the comprehensiveness and coherence of military policy advice provided to the President and to make military spending more efficient. In 1947, President Truman signed the National Security Act, which led to the creation of the National Military Establishment, later renamed the Department of Defense.² Nominally, the services now operated under one roof. Practically, the services, still recognized as cabinet-level departments, retained their independence.³ As a result, in 1949, Congress amended the National Security Act in order to solidify the Defense Secretary's authority over the branches.⁴

Since its creation in 1947, the Department of Defense (DOD) has undergone two significant legislative reorganizations. President Dwight D. Eisenhower initiated the first in 1958. Like President Truman, President Eisenhower wanted to improve the military advice provided to the President through three means: strengthening the

1 Alonzo Hamby, *Harry S. Truman: Foreign Affairs*, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA – MILLER CENTER, available at <https://millercenter.org/president/truman/foreign-affairs>.

2 See National Security Act of 1947.

3 U.S. Department of Defense Website, available at <https://archive.defense.gov/about/>.

4 Central Intelligence Agency, News and Information, available at <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/national-security-act-of-1947.html>.

Defense Secretary's power over defense activities; granting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff more control over the Joint Staff; and clarifying the responsibilities of the uniformed military services and combatant commands.⁵ Congress significantly diluted President Eisenhower's recommendations, but progress was made toward those goals.

Over time, and as the United States military's needs changed, it became clear to the public, Congress, and many national security leaders that the defense structure was not serving the nation's defense objectives well. The Mayaguez incident in 1975, the failed Desert One rescue mission in 1980, challenges during a rescue operation in Grenada in 1983, and the terrorist bombing of a Marine barrack in Beirut in 1983 all resulted from structural deficiencies in the Defense Department and broader national-security apparatus.⁶

Enter Barry Blechman. To help answer the call, Barry and William "Bill" Lynn III created a research group to study the Defense Department and to develop proposals to create a more effective defense structure. Their work began at the Roosevelt Center but moved to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), where they ultimately won support for and established the Defense Organization Project (DOP).⁷ Barry was in charge of coordinating the DOP for CSIS. Bill served as its Executive Director.

Defense Organization Project

Barry had found a home for the DOP study at CSIS with funding from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. But the project encountered opposition from the start. Institutional resistance within DOD, in particular the Navy, presented existential threats to the mission.⁸ Barry and Bill knew from the beginning that in order to achieve any meaningful reforms, not only would they have to make practical recommendations that would not overwhelm the Department, but they would have to build a bipartisan coalition of reform-minded experts to lend credibility to their work. Barry and Bill recruited President Eisenhower's National Security Advisor General Andrew Goodpaster to co-chair the committee, along with former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and Mr. Philip Odeen, a former defense official and well-known defense businessman. With this leadership, they were then able to recruit former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General David C. Jones and other high-ranking military officers. This cast was sufficient to protect the DOP from external

5 Barry M. Blechman and William J. Lynn, *Toward a More Effective Defense*, Report of the Steering Committee, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (Ballinger Publishing Co. 1985).

6 Kathleen J. McInnis, *Goldwater-Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress*, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (June 2, 2016), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44474.pdf>.

7 Barry M. Blechman and William J. Lynn, *Toward a More Effective Defense*, Preface, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (Ballinger Publishing Co. 1985); Interview with William J. Lynn III on May 16, 2019.

8 Interview with William J. Lynn III on May 16, 2019.

pressure to discontinue its work.

The DOP's star-studded steering committee started by identifying three key structural problems, all of which, to varying degrees, track issues that President Eisenhower sought to address in 1958. Specifically, the steering committee highlighted: the defense structure's inability to provide prompt and comprehensive military advice to the President, Congress, and Defense Secretary regarding the planning and allocation of defense resources; its lack of emphasis on programmatic outputs; and a number of inefficient defense-management processes that hampered the ability of talented leaders to dedicate time to oversight and strategic policy decisions.⁹ Through a series of meetings of four working groups, as well as meetings of the full committee, and several rounds of drafting and consensus building, Barry and Bill were able to produce a report that most members of the steering committee were willing to endorse.

The DOP report made several detailed recommendations, but chief among them, and arguably most enduring, was the proposal that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman serve as the principal military advisor to the President and Defense Secretary. The goals behind this recommendation were to improve the joint military operation's ability to provide cross-service advice to civilian leadership, to contribute to and develop strategic objectives that leveraged the nation's military capabilities, and to plan and conduct combined-arms military operations effectively.¹⁰

In order to position the JCS Chairman as principal military advisor to the President and Defense Secretary, the DOP report proposed several specific reforms, but three stand out: amending the National Security Act to make the Chairman of the JCS the primary military advisor to the President, Defense secretary, and the National Security Council; requiring that the Joint Staff report to the Chairman and not the JCS as a unit; and creating the Vice Chairman position. The service chiefs would continue to provide advice to the Secretary and President, but the JCS Chairman would serve as the mouthpiece for integrated, comprehensive military counsel. This proposal would permit the Chairman of the JCS to provide advice to civilian leadership whether or not there was unanimous service approval for a particular position. The idea here is clear: with no individual service portfolio, the Chairman is best suited to provide strategic military advice to civilian leaders. With a staff and deputy, the Chairman could develop comprehensive policies and recommendations that reconciled the needs and interests of the various services.

Coordinating this study and producing a report endorsed by six Secretaries of

9 Barry M. Blechman and William J. Lynn, *Toward a More Effective Defense*, Report of the Steering Committee, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (Ballinger Publishing Co. 1985).

10 Report of the Steering Committee, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (Ballinger Publishing Co. 1985).

Defense was an enormous accomplishment for Barry and Bill. But with his work not yet done, Barry set about translating the DOP's ideas into reality.

Making It Law

Barry and Bill headed to the Hill for support. Key to getting the ball rolling was Arch Barrett, a senior aide to Representative Bill Nichols of Alabama. Barrett's engagement and early support proved crucial to winning over Representative Nichols and to building a consensus on the recommendations Barry had orchestrated at CSIS. From there Barry made the case to several influential leaders in the House. Notably, his team secured support from Representative Les Aspin, Representative Samuel Stratton of New York, and a young Representative from Georgia, Newt Gingrich.¹¹

On the Senate side, Barry helped to secure early backing from Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas and Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia. Senator Nunn's support was critical because he persuaded Senator Barry Goldwater that the proposed reorganization was a worthy endeavor. With backing from Congress and authoritative testimony from General David Jones, Barry and Bill had managed to cultivate enough enthusiasm to achieve what not long ago had simply been yet another Washington white paper on reforming the defense organization.

In October 1986, many of the DOP's proposals were codified into law when President Ronald Reagan signed the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which remains the only significant legislative reform of the Defense Department's structure and procedures since 1958.

Conclusion

Time has proven the success of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms: the Defense Secretary and President receive higher quality advice from senior military leaders, and military operations have become more effective. Those improvements have more deeply cemented the norm of civilian control over the military into the American tradition. There will always be room for debate on whether the Goldwater-Nichols Act could have gone further, and on whether it should be updated to meet contemporary needs. But there can be no debate that the Act enormously advanced Defense Department operations and, as a consequence, national-security policy.

Barry's work orchestrating the DOP study – and then winning over Congressional leadership to implement the DOP's reforms – is a landmark achievement. It exemplifies his lifelong commitment to meet big challenges with big ideas, then finding pragmatic ways to make those ideas a reality.

¹¹ Interview with William J. Lynn III on May 16, 2019.

Nuclear Superiority Then and Now

Robert Powell

Ronald Reagan came to Washington in January 1981 to be inaugurated as the 40th president of the United States. No one knew it then, but the last cycle of the Cold War was about to begin. Tensions between the United States and Soviet Union had been rising since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. Tensions continued to escalate as the Reagan administration pursued a conventional and strategic military build-up and occasionally spoke of “rolling back” the Soviet Union.

And then it all changed – as if history were reading the script that George Kennan had written forty years earlier in his long telegram and subsequent “X” article.¹ Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of an imploding Soviet Union in March 1985. Twenty months later Reagan and Gorbachev were discussing the elimination of nuclear weapons in Reykjavik. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed little more than a year after that. Standing in Red Square a few months later, Reagan declared that the term “evil empire” belonged to “another era.” Then, the Soviet Union was gone, disintegrating in 1991 in the aftermath of a failed coup.²

Two days before President Reagan was inaugurated, I came to Washington to be Barry Blechman’s research assistant at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. I stayed for eight months, including a summer stint as Barry’s house sitter, before heading off to Cambridge to do an M.Phil. in International Relations where I wrote a thesis on

1 Kennan, George F. (X). 1947. “The Sources of Soviet Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs* 25(4): 566-582.

2 Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3rd ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2003), provides an overview of developments during this period.

nuclear deterrence theory that grew out of what I had learned while working with Barry.

Nuclear deterrence theory is fundamentally about how intense crises between nuclear-armed states play out. The overriding question is: How does the existence of nuclear weapons affect the strategic environment in which severe political conflicts of interest unfold? Because, thankfully, we have only had a handful of these crises, it is very hard to bring compelling empirical evidence to bear on many important questions. One does what one can with the available evidence. But one always has to be modest about what can be inferred from it. It was with that in mind that Barry and I turned to the role of nuclear threats in ending the Korean War.³

During the 1970s there had been a rising chorus of concern that the growing Soviet nuclear arsenal gave it some sort of meaningful nuclear superiority over the United States. Increasing Soviet missile throw-weight and MIRVing was thought by some to pose a looming threat to the survivability of the US Minuteman force of ICBMs.⁴ This vulnerability, it was argued, translated into a meaningful Soviet superiority, a view that was captured in the provocatively titled “Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Can Fight and Win a Nuclear War.”⁵ In brief, concerns about US strategic inferiority dominated nuclear policy discussions in the late 1970s and early 1980s and set the scene for the Reagan Administration’s strategic modernization program.

It also set the stage for Barry’s and my work on the Korean nuclear threats. A priori, the Korean War case seems pretty strongly biased toward finding that nuclear superiority does matter, or at least that it did in that case. The United States had fought a very bloody war, committing over 500,000 troops and suffering over 30,000 killed. It had pretty clearly demonstrated a high level of resolve, and it had nuclear superiority. If nuclear superiority did not seem to matter here, it would suggest that it would not matter once the United States and Soviet Union acquired robust survivable strategic forces as they did in the years after the Korean War and as they had when Barry and I worked together.

What we found was that hindsight had given the atomic threat a much more prominent role in President Eisenhower’s strategy to end the war than it actually played at the time...

“[But whether] a success or failure in 1953, these threats have little, if anything, to do with the usefulness of nuclear superiority in the present era. In the 1980s, when both

3 Barry M. Blechman and Robert Powell, “What in the Name of God is Strategic Superiority?” *Political Science Quarterly*, 97(Winter, 1982-1983), 589-602. The title is actually a quotation from a 1974 comment from then secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

4 Freedman (2003), 368-78.

5 Richard Pipes, *Commentary* 64(1) (July 1977). See also Paul Nitze, “Deterring Our Deterrent,” *Foreign Policy* 25 (Winter 1976-77).

sides have nuclear capabilities secure enough to withstand a first strike and devastate the opposing society in retaliation, the central question is whether policymakers might somehow find themselves in a position whereby beginning a course of action possibly leading to mutual destruction, but saving one side from certain defeat, might become the least unattractive alternative. This alternative did not exist in Korea; the Soviets' choice was concession at the negotiating table or daring the fortunes of war.”⁶

Thirty-five years later the dynamics of nuclear crisis escalation and how, if at all, escalation is affected by the nuclear balance – or even what the nuclear balance means – remain important and open questions at the heart of ongoing debates. Indeed, to those with long memories, it often seems like *déjà vu* all over again.

The recent discussion of a bloody-nose strike against North Korea makes the point. As first reported in the Daily Telegraph, “America is drawing up plans for a “bloody nose” military attack on North Korea to stop its nuclear weapons programme, The Telegraph understands. The White House has “dramatically” stepped up preparation for a military solution in recent months amid fears diplomacy is not working, well-placed sources said. One option is destroying a launch site before it is used by the regime for a new missile test. Stockpiles of weapons could also be targeted. The hope is that military force would show Kim Jong-un that America is “serious” about stopping further nuclear development and trigger negotiations.”⁷

The contrast here is with a larger, preventive strike. The value of a bloody-nose attack is the coercive signal it might send. The attack itself is not intended to have any meaningful effect on an adversary's military capability. Schelling explained the basic logic more than fifty years ago: “Coercion depends more on the threat of what is to come than on the damage already done.”⁸

A “bloody-nose” strike attack might convince Kim Jong-un to be more forthcoming. But there is no *a priori* reason to believe that he would not respond with his own bloody-nose counterstrike, i.e., with an attack he hopes is sufficiently severe to signal his resolve and that he is not ready to agree to terms, but not so severe that it leads to a much larger and punitive US strike. And so escalation could go. The general open question, as Barry recently posed in the context of US-Russia relations, is “why would the war end after an exchange of 20 weapons?”⁹ While the stakes are

6 Blechman and Powell (1982-83), 602.

7 Ben Riley-Smith, “US making plans for ‘bloody nose’ military attack on North Korea,” Daily Telegraph, December 20, 2017. For additional background, see David Nakamura and Greg Jaffe, “The White House’s ‘bloody nose’ strategy on North Korea sounds Trumpian. So why do his aides hate it?” The Washington Post, February 26, 2018. The administration denied ever contemplating such a strike.

8 Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 172.

9 Barry Blechman, “Protecting US Security by Stretching and Reducing the Planned Nuclear Modernization Program.” Presentation to the Strategic Deterrent Coalition Symposium, June 21, 2016, p. 2.

not as high between the US and North Korea as they were between the US and Soviet Union during the Cold War, a major war would be terribly costly. Somehow the idea that North Korea would simply come to terms because of the overwhelming US conventional and nuclear superiority appears ultimately not to have seemed very convincing either to those inside or outside the administration.

Barry has remained a steady, thoughtful voice on nuclear policy over many years. This is clearly evidenced in his 2016 conclusion to his analysis of the nuclear modernization program:

“With the important exception of deterring nuclear attacks on the U.S. and its allies, nuclear weapons cannot achieve the U.S. security objectives; our dominant conventional forces, along with other instruments of power, are far more important. The U.S. interest lies in minimizing the importance of nuclear weapons, not playing the Russians’ desperate game of stressing them. After 70 years of indulging fantasies of what nuclear weapons can do, it is high time to acknowledge that they do very little and adapt U.S. nuclear policy, strategy, and forces to those facts.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Barry Blechman (2016), p. 4.

Pragmatic Idealism in Consulting

Steve Irwin

On a spring day in 1985, I rode my bike to Stanford's Galvez House for a seminar on arms control. I became interested in national security issues as I studied in Berlin; it was around the same time the US deployed Pershing II and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM) in Europe. As a result, I spent the rest of my time in college focused on US-Soviet relations and nuclear weapons policy – the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) soon became my second home.

As was often the case in Chip Blacker's seminar, our class was slated to have a guest speaker join us that spring day. While most of our visiting lecturers were academics from the Center, this time we were to hear from a Washington insider who was deeply involved in the arms control community. Over the course of the hour we learned about his time in office, his experience negotiating with the Soviets, and the bureaucratic complexities of arms control. By the end, Barry Blechman had become emblematic for me of a world I hoped to join, one in which people did not just study security issues purely as an academic exercise, but one in which they actively engaged with them in order to shape pragmatic US national security policies. I did not know it then, but about a year before Barry visited my Stanford seminar, he had founded Defense Forecasts, Inc., later known as DFI International, the firm that would give birth to Avascent, the company I now lead as president.

Four years later in the early fall of 1989, I found myself sitting in Barry's office at Johns Hopkins discussing a possible research assistant position supporting an initiative he was launching to reexamine burden-sharing in the transatlantic relationship. He offered me the job, and thus began our three-decade long professional relationship

and personal friendship—first at Johns Hopkins, then at The Stimson Center, and eventually at DFI International.

Barry's decision to found DFI is one of the many ways he has come to represent every aspect of national-security policymaking and thinking during his career. After having spent time at think tanks, universities, and in government, he used his expertise to influence both public sector and private players working in the defense and national security arena. His application of the same level of rigor, creativity, and thoughtfulness he relied on in his academic and policy work to client challenges reflected his enduring commitment to making a valuable, practical contribution to addressing complex challenges. In many ways, it represented the same pragmatic idealism I first saw when he visited my Stanford seminar – a commitment to realizing change through all potential avenues. Consulting served as an effective method of doing just that, and I was fortunate to learn from him in this context.

From the beginning, DFI served both government and corporate clients. Government clients were already served by numerous firms, providing everything from staff augmentation to technical analyses. For these clients, however, DFI distinguished itself by focusing on intellectually sophisticated analyses of critical national security challenges. Early work included studies of alternative political/military futures for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (J-5) and work for the Office of Net Assessment on possible paths to the outbreak of war with the Soviet Union. In the years that followed, DFI's government work was distinctive for its creativity, analytical techniques, and alignment with critical national security concerns. Its work encompasses support for a succession of Quadrennial Defense Reviews (QDRs), the monitoring of online Jihadist networks, drawing lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, laying the foundation for the US security policy in Africa, and spreading lessons learned for America's First Responders. Under Barry's leadership, the DFI Government Services team set the standard for helping clients address some of their toughest challenges.

Prior to DFI's founding, large aerospace and defense firms and financial investors typically had few options for obtaining insight and advice regarding these complex sectors. On the one hand, they could rely on large, traditional management consulting firms that had broad commercial experience but little grasp of the complexities of the national security environment. Alternatively, they could turn to retired government or military officials for guidance, who often had deep expertise but relatively little grasp of key business concerns. In founding DFI, Barry helped create an entirely new type of firm, one that combined deep sector expertise with rigorous analysis and a pragmatic focus on business outcomes.

While the quality and rigor of the work always took center stage at DFI, Barry's more profound contribution was the example he set as a professional and mentor. The values I learned working alongside Barry have had a lasting impact on my career and

outlook. Even more significantly, they deeply pervaded the organizations he founded, including the one I am now fortunate to lead. As I remind my colleagues at Avascent, we owe a continuing debt to Barry for his deep commitment to rigorous analysis, his faith in the abilities of even the most junior staff, his openness, his (tempered) optimism, and his humanity. He did not have to spend much time pontificating on these ideals but instead modeled them throughout each day.

Given Barry's intellect and intense work ethic, working for him could be intimidating. The first time he turned back a draft to me covered with edits, I realized that I would have to improve my writing and thinking quickly if I hoped to hold my own. He would ask pointed questions on assumptions and methodology, express dismay over slow or uneven progress, and intervene if he felt things were veering off course. The phrase, "I thought we'd be further along than this" triggered a particular dread. I eventually developed a rule of thumb for gauging whether I was on the right track: if he came into my office with edits, he was pleased. If he called me into his office but came around the desk to go through them, he was still generally satisfied. If he stayed on his side of the desk, then there was trouble. And, if he asked for the file, it meant that I would have been better off not submitting anything to him at all.

Yet, Barry was never one only to be demanding. He always provided feedback and guidance, helping me understand not only what needed to be changed but also why. He was willing to dig into the details of an issue to help work through a particular question. As a result, virtually every interaction during those early years provided the opportunity to learn and Barry was always willing to invest the time to teach. It was a spirit of mentorship that I have found quite rare, especially in Washington.

While Barry may have always had definite ideas about what he wanted, he never insisted that his was the only voice that mattered. He consistently demonstrated a willingness to listen and provide even the most junior of staff the opportunity to contribute. He co-authored books and articles with people not long out of school while giving others the chance to publish independently. He did this not out of some sense of charity or obligation, but rather a sincere belief that people around him were (or could be) fully formed individuals who had something useful to say.

Most significantly, Barry had the intellectual integrity to reconsider his own views and approach when offered a compelling alternative. Of course, early in my career, it was sometimes hard to fathom that Barry might not have all the answers. A transformational moment for me occurred when Brett Lambert and I worked all night trying to apply a methodology Barry had suggested to project future demand for satellites. By dawn, we had concluded that Barry's approach would not work and had developed an alternative. With trepidation, we met with him the next morning, highlighted the issues we found and the adjustments we thought appropriate. He asked some thoughtful questions and probed our logic, but quickly supported our approach. I realized then that Barry was

most interested in what worked, not who came up with the idea.

At the same time, I learned that rigor, excellence, and professionalism at work did not need to stifle one's humanity or sincere warmth for those with whom you spent your days. I came to value the camaraderie his openness and lack of pretense engendered. Whether sharing a drink after work or celebrating with him at the annual holiday party, I always had the sense that he was there not out of compulsion, but from a genuine enjoyment of being with those around him. Even more impressively, he continually renewed his ties, maintaining the friendships he forged early in his career while successively developing new generations of relationships.

For me, his generosity of spirit is connected inextricably to his optimism and idealism. While he would sometimes quip that "in Washington, you can never be too cynical," his actions, attitude, and commitment to contributing to a better world belie this pretended pessimism. His long engagement on issues of critical national importance demonstrates his profound commitment to public service and global security. At the same time, he has worked, at Stimson, DFI and elsewhere, to improve the organizations he leads and enable them to fulfill their missions and support the aspirations of those who work there.

At Avascent, we have embraced a core set of values, collaboration and camaraderie, rigor, initiative, service and professionalism. We seek to lead and manage the firm to reinforce these values both in word and deed. And, each year, we welcome new hires with a conversation about how these values define us as an organization and give meaning to who we are. During those discussions, I take particular care to remind them to whom we owe those essential qualities.

Policy Entrepreneurship

Michael Krepon

Barry says his facility with numbers, spreadsheets, and budgets comes from his Mother. God bless her. These skills were essential in founding and growing the Stimson Center because my skills with digits were lacking. Barry brought much else to the table in Stimson's creation, including a notable track record of programming on national security issues and ties to funders.

Prior to Stimson's creation, Barry was working out of his house on Swann Street and I was working at the Carnegie Endowment. We had a taste of what a great non-governmental organization could be with the Roosevelt Center. That ended abruptly at the outset of the Reagan administration when the philanthropist behind its creation decided he wanted something completely different—an outside-the-beltway oriented activism instead of an inside-the-beltway effort aimed at bipartisan initiatives to deal constructively with national security and domestic issues.

After we scattered because of the Roosevelt Center's reorientation, Barry's skills were on display in pulling together Senators Sam Nunn and John Warner to co-chair a working group on the establishment of nuclear risk reduction centers in the United States and the Soviet Union. The working group included such notables as Brent Scowcroft, Alexander George, Joe Nye, and Michael Nacht. I helped write the report. Its analysis and recommendations received bipartisan support. Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to pursue this idea at the 1985 Geneva Summit. Centers were established in 1987.

Another extraordinary project that resulted from Barry's tenacity and policy

entrepreneurship during his pre-Stimson years – also conceived at the Roosevelt Center and then pursued in affiliation with the Center for Strategic and International Studies – was an initiative to break down stove piping within the Pentagon and to foster “jointness” among the services. After raising the money for this project, he recruited a large working group co-chaired by General Andrew Goodpaster, Phil Odeen and Mel Laird. Working group members included General David Jones, the newly retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, plus other retired military, civilian budget experts, including Alice Rivlin, members of Congress, including chair and ranking members of the Armed Services Committees (Sam Nunn, John Warner, Les Aspin, and Bill Nichols), as well as Newt Gingrich. How Barry pulled this off remains a mystery to me.

Aspin turned the group’s report into legislation in the House. The report also influenced the bill that emerged from the Senate. When the Navy and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger tried to kill the legislation, Barry arranged for meetings with Congressmen and Senators to explain why these reforms were necessary. The decisive meeting was with Nichols, a senior-ranking Southern “bull” on the House Armed Services Committee. The legislation, which was named after Senator Barry Goldwater and him, became public law in 1986.

Toward the end of Reagan’s second term, with Barry’s accomplishments serving as a springboard, we were ready to create a new “hands on” think tank that would focus on pragmatic steps toward ideal outcomes. We wanted our Center to be the home for outstanding policy-oriented research, to serve as a base for challenging fieldwork, and to become a place where policy entrepreneurs could turn good ideas into reality.

We looked for a name for our Center that would reflect our “how do we get from here to there,” nonpartisan approach. We landed on Henry L. Stimson, who combined pragmatism and vision working for every president but one between Taft and Truman. After serving as Taft’s Secretary of War, he enlisted to fight in World War I. Then came a series of high-level appointments in Asia and Latin America. He negotiated the London Naval Treaty as Herbert Hoover’s Secretary of State and then returned to the War Department to help FDR’s management of a prospective world war and oversee the creation of the atomic bomb. After World War II’s end, Stimson sought international control of atomic energy, not wanting anyone else to be in his position, authorizing the battlefield use of nuclear weapons.

As the Stimsons were childless, Barry and I sought permission from McGeorge Bundy, who helped Stimson write his autobiography, and Peter Kaminer, Stimson’s law clerk who rose to become the Managing Partner of the New York law firm of Winthrop Stimson to allow us to use the Stimson name. Once granted, we asked funders who were supporting Barry’s work at Swann Street and my work at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace -- principally the Carnegie Corporation of New

York, the Ford Foundation, and the Ploughshares Fund -- if they would continue to do so at a brand-new NGO. They agreed. In 1989, we swallowed hard, signed a lease for seven rooms and put out the Stimson Center's shingle on Dupont Circle.

Barry did more than build the Stimson Center. He also built a for-profit business, Defense Forecasts, Incorporated (DFI). Flying the swan logo, DFI grew faster than Stimson and soon needed its own office space. Barry's skills at institution-building and finding young talent were two keys to his success. He kept a clean desk, which seemed at complete odds with his productivity. Nearby were updated pictures of his daughters and Kitty, a portrait of James Forrestal, and a bronze shoe. Why Forrestal? Perhaps because he symbolized the frustrations of riding herd over the military services while serving as the nation's first Secretary of Defense. Much of Barry's work at Stimson on defense issues focused on bringing coherence and cost-effectiveness to national defense policies. As for the bronze shoe, it was a gift from Linc Bloomfield when Barry passed the baton of becoming Stimson's Chairman. Linc's gesture symbolized that Barry's shoes would be hard to fill.

As Stimson's Chairman of the Board, Barry not only oversaw the business side, but also kept his hand in programming. He continued to use the labor-intensive but rewarding model – now far too rare – of pulling together bipartisan heavyweights to advance sensible outcomes.

Five of his projects have had special import. Stimson was created at a time when the world was in flux and when new initiatives had a chance to gain ground. Barry conceived a project to help persuade the George H. W. Bush Administration to remove tactical nuclear weapons from surface combatants and submarines. It was subsequently implemented as a coordinated effort with President Mikhail Gorbachev to remove the least secure nuclear weapons from active duty status. Barry was also heavily involved in Stimson's early work to strengthen UN peacekeeping operations, an ongoing set of programs greatly advanced by Bill Durch, Tori Holt, and Aditi Garur. In addition, Barry convened one of his patented group of "big foos," led by General Goodpaster and Paul Nitze, to outline a phased approach to eliminating nuclear weapons as political and military conditions permitted. The goal of abolition continues to motivate Barry as much as it did the Stimson Center's namesake.

A fourth important initiative was his work at Stimson to develop an effective military strategy and a less engorged defense budget to implement it. A fifth, with powerful backing from Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Frank Carlucci and Leon Panetta, among others, produced a report that urged action to upgrade the woeful condition of the State Department's funding and information technology.

There has been regrettable backsliding on these programming accomplishments. Times are tough, and Stimson's agenda is always a work in progress. Barry continues

to work on a broad canvass of issues. He has also returned to the Board, where he provides crucial assistance in recruitment, financial oversight, and support. It is also gratifying to see him work on a new take on his seminal *Force Without War* book.

Barry's good works nurture him as he nurtures others. He has mentored well over a hundred people now working on national security and defense issues. The Stimson Center is a testament to Barry's good works. He has been instrumental in the Center's growth and vitality. Without him, the Stimson Center would not exist.

An Iconoclastic National Security Thinker-Activist

Alan Platt

On the occasion of Barry Blechman's 75th birthday, a small celebratory dinner was held in Georgetown in the Spring of 2018. Several guests, ranging from their twenties to their seventies, provided a few spontaneous remarks about Barry. The consistency of people's comments, regardless of their age or how long they had known him, was striking. He was uniformly described as highly intelligent, forward-thinking, pragmatic, balanced, unassuming, and helpful to young people. Perhaps most emphasized was his interest in achieving actual results, not just interesting thoughts, and his unimpeachable intellectual integrity. These remarks were as likely to have been made at a comparable dinner forty years ago as in 2018. They capture the essence of Barry Blechman's style and personality.

I personally got to know Barry during the early 1970s when he was a Fellow at the Brookings Institution and helped to lead Brookings' Defense Analysis Group. This group made a highly useful contribution each year to Brookings' then annual volume on the annual federal budget. The group, at the same time, worked on a number of other national security projects and products, including "Force Without War," a landmark book that Barry co-authored with Steve Kaplan. This work continues to be of high value to government and nongovernmental specialists who are currently examining the ways nations can enhance their influence on the world scene.

In 1974, Congress enacted the Congress Budget Control and Enhancement Act, which created separate Senate and House Budget Committees and brought the Congressional Budget Office into being. At the time, I was Legislative Assistant for Foreign and Defense Policy to Senator Edmund Muskie (D. Maine), a key author of this

legislation who, in 1975, became the first chair of the Senate Budget Committee. When it came to organizing and staffing these new budget institutions, Muskie and his staff looked to Brookings, among other institutions, for guidance and potential help. There were some discussions with Barry about joining this new budget effort on Capitol Hill but they ultimately came to naught. Alice Rivlin, a leader of the Economics Group at Brookings, became the first head of the Congressional Budget Office in 1975.

In 1976, presidential candidate Jimmy Carter periodically talked about the need to limit the transfer of ever more destructive arms to the developing world. Barry emerged as an important advisor to the Carter campaign on this national security issue, among several others. When Carter was elected, Barry was asked to become one of the four assistant directors of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), a quasi-independent agency, now defunct, whose director reported directly to the President and the Secretary of State. Barry was more than ten years younger than any of the other top leaders at ACDA and ended up playing a key role on a wide range of foreign policy issues during his four years there. Given that ACDA at the time was relatively small -- there were roughly 200 employees -- most senior officials got involved in a variety of national security-arms control issues, from strategic arms limitation to possible limits on conventional forces in Europe to biological weapons issues to confidence-building measures. Barry's particular responsibilities focused on weapons evaluation and control and arms transfers. His approach then -- as it would be today -- involved looking for innovative ways to enhance US security interests -- both by spending more money on arms critical to furthering US interests (e.g., stealth weaponry's big boost during the Carter years) and simultaneously seeking ways to enhance US security interests through verifiable negotiated arms control agreements.

As the lead ACDA official dealing with arms transfers, Barry focused much of his time on this set of issues. On some proposed arms sales, ACDA recommended that the Administration go forward with the proposed transfer, especially on a range of sales to key friendly countries in the Middle East. On several other State-Defense recommended sales, Barry worked closely and successfully with the White House to block new fighter jet sales to high tension areas, including Iran, Pakistan, and Taiwan, among other places.

At the same time, Barry played a key role in the inter-agency process, helping the Administration develop a comprehensive, multilateral approach to global arms transfer issues. This effort led the Carter Administration to engage the Soviet Union in a new set of arms control talks, the Conventional Arms Transfer Talks (CAT). Barry was the Vice Chair of the US delegation and recruited a number of young US officials to serve as part of the US team to gain experience through these new arms control negotiations (Les Gelb, the Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs, chaired the US delegation.) Four rounds of talks were held with the Soviets over a 12-month period. Ultimately, these talks were suspended without meaningful concrete success. Among

other roadblocks, the Soviets were most interested in restricting US arms transfers to key American allies in Europe as well as to Israel. These were non-starters for the American delegation.

Overall, Barry's contributions to the field of US national security policy will and should be remembered not only for the sophisticated thinking embodied in his written works but also for his willingness to bring forward-looking, new ideas to the field, and to help train a new generation of national security thinkers. His time at Brookings and in the Carter Administration demonstrates this well. Perhaps most importantly, his efforts to go beyond pure intellectual efforts in order to achieve actual results on a bipartisan basis led him to play a key role in spawning a series of new institutional intellectual-activist efforts, including the Brookings Defense Analysis Group; the Conventional Arms Transfer Talks; the Henry Stimson Center, which he co-founded with Michael Krepon; and Defense Forecasts Inc. It is unquestionable that Barry has left a lasting mark on national security thinking as an iconoclastic national security thinker-activist.

The Best Cup of Coffee

Fred Whitridge

As opposed to many writing here I have a relatively short couple-of-decades viewpoint on the astonishing career of Barry Blechman. I may have a more uniquely corporate vs. think tank, academic, and government vantage point as well. Suffice to say, I've seen Barry in a variety of foxholes and trenches and have always been impressed with his humor, honesty, and hard work even in some dicey situations.

I was introduced to Barry and a little firm called DFI in the late 80's. A business school classmate knew I was attempting the acquisition of some small aerospace suppliers and said I needed help on due diligence. This was of course greeted with snorts of indignance since I had a multi billion dollar industrial player behind me and the former head of Pratt and Whitney manufacturing at my elbow and on my board of directors. What could this guy Blechman possibly add to that yeasty mix?

Plenty as it turned out. It quickly became apparent that we were better informed than most of the target aerospace companies and even better informed than some of their customers. We began to regularly hear the Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid refrain of, "Who are those guys?" Barry and the DFI staff had a polite response for me, "Those questions of yours are good and here are those answers. But here are the questions you should have been asking and the answers to those." Often this involved arcane references to weird things like the Quadrennial Defense Review. Sometimes they involved titillating bits of information that this congress person on this committee was sleeping with someone and therefore this program would never get funded. Sometimes the right question was how much the armed services hated a program. Sometimes it was how many employees might this add to a voting district.

I quickly learned to ask, “What questions should I have been asking that I haven’t?” A great lesson, gently but effectively taught by Barry and the staff of DFI.

The end of this chapter in my window on a great career was when we actually acquired a company doing forged turbine blading for aero engines and land turbines and I put Barry on the board. “This is a consultant’s worst nightmare,” he said. “To make projections and then actually have to live with them.”

Turnabout was fair play apparently. Even though I’d left my aerospace acquiring industrial employer Barry said he was putting together a formal board of directors of DFI and he wanted me on it. This was terrifying for a lowly MBA with little Washington experience. It was General this, Admiral that, CIA alumnae, and me. But it was also vintage Blechman putting together and listening to the advice of a diverse group who didn’t always agree and who didn’t shrink from grabbing the podium to give Barry their particular favorite piece of advice, always forcefully delivered, whether correct or not.

Somewhere along this path Barry decided that he’d done defense consulting quite long enough, thank you very much. He had attained the ripe age of the early 60’s and it was time to sell the company. And he asked me to help. Way down that path we ended up in a small conference room at the Stimson Center over on Dupont Circle with the eventual acquirer and his rather trying corporate finance fellow. “We need to take a break and talk and walk around the block,” I said to this small assemblage. “Why did we need to put the meeting on hold?” asked Barry once we had left the room. “No particular reason, just a feeling,” I answered. We walked around the block, got a cup of coffee. When we returned to the room, the bidding price had gone up by a middling seven figure sum. “That was the best cup of coffee I’ve ever had,” said Barry. He was learning the arcane art of corporate finance, adding to his knowledge arsenal, and appeared to be enjoying both the coffee and a new trade.

With DFI sold I briefly was out of regular touch with Barry. But then, predictably, the phone rang. “You’re interested in nuclear disarmament. You are joining Global Zero. You and your wife are coming to Paris. You will help me raise money for research.” How could anyone say no to a concise come on like that?

And thus began my indoctrination into one of Barry’s real passions, the world of non-profits doing way out of the box thinking on difficult subjects. I had served my apprenticeship on nuclear disarmament and was now sucked into the vortex of his academic, government, consulting, and corporate careers manifested in the Stimson Center. And this phase was not just thinking and writing and discussing exactly. For that wouldn’t scratch Barry’s particular itch in this area. It needed to be thinking, writing and discussing that actually leads to positive change in a given area. This chapter has seen a financial rough patch at Stimson, now blessedly in the rear view mirror smudged with Barry’s fingerprints that put this behind us. While Stimson is Barry and Michael’s baby,

Reflections on a National Security Life

he's endured office moves, leadership change, board reconstitution, re-focus of work efforts, and a whole lot of change. A proud Barry is always there putting his shoulder to the wheel when asked, stepping back when he'd sometimes rather not, and providing his great guidance, humor, honesty, and hard work.

I look forward to my next chapter(s) on the career of Barry M. Blechman but I can't imagine what those will be.

Nuclear Facts

Alex Bollfrass

Readers of Barry Blechman's recent work on nuclear weapons might think of him exclusively as a devoted advocate of their elimination. But Barry wasn't always against the Bomb.

In over four decades of writing about nuclear weapons, Barry continuously calibrated his recommendations for managing nuclear risks in response to changing strategic circumstances and contemporary security threats. When nuclear weapons contributed to deterring the Soviet Union, he advocated for pragmatic risk reduction measures. The moment nuclear weapons became more of a security liability than assets, he set out to work for their elimination.

Balanced arsenals and budgets

In the 1970s, Barry first made himself heard as a pragmatic voice on arms control, writing about its strategic and budgetary dimensions. In his 1976 *Controlling the Defense Budget*, he argued that strategic parity with the Soviets could help achieve more extensive arms limitations and reasonable reductions in military forces. He believed it would be “foolhardy” to spend less on defense but “to spend more, wastefully, could prove to be equally dangerous in the end.”¹

Through the close of the Cold War, Barry saw nuclear arms as blunt instruments to dissuade the Soviets from acting against the core interests of the United States and its

1 Blechman, Barry M., and Edward R. Fried. 1976. “Controlling the Defense Budget,” *Foreign Affairs* 54: 233-249.

allies, for whose sake a no-first use pledge Barry deemed unwise.

Contrary to prevalent academic theories and policymakers' intuitions, he thought nuclear weapons unsuited for sending subtle signals, an analytical conclusion distilled from his fine-combed analyses of nuclear-inflected crises from Korea to the Middle East. In 1979, for instance, he cautioned that the "more U.S. decision makers turn to nuclear forces... the more quickly the special message now associated with nuclear weapons might erode."² Despite his focus on the budget and detailed knowledge of US and Soviet arsenals, Barry resisted reducing strategy to simple arithmetic.

Barry responded to the end of détente with the argument that even the most modest initiatives to reduce the risk of US-Soviet war were worth pursuing. Strategic superiority—measured in warheads—was a pointless aim, he argued, as US-Soviet tensions continued to build. One of his 1983 risk reduction proposals was a central European nuclear-weapon-free zone:

"It would remove these weapons from the chaos of warfare, at least in the early days. It would give leaders on both sides a most precious commodity: time. It would allow more careful and considered analysis of the tactical military situation and the possibility of persevering through the continued use of conventional forces only."³

The warning was prescient. Barry's proposal might have reduced the kinds of nuclear scares that menaced US-Soviet relations, like that surrounding the Able Archer NATO exercise a mere seven months after Barry promoted the idea.

A nuclear peace dividend?

In the 1990s, even as most weapons remained in place, nuclear danger receded from the political consciousness. Barry, however, continued his nuclear threats vigil. He identified the emergence of new nuclear-armed states as the primary security challenge of the post-bipolar world. The Clinton Administration's nuclear planning that continued along Cold War patterns might, he warned, encourage other governments to arm themselves.

By 2000, his critique of American strategic drift sharpened: "Current US nuclear weapons policies respond to threats that have evaporated."⁴ The lack of appreciation for a changed threat environment in the strategic conversation led Barry to believe that entrenched thinking about nuclear weapons had to be re-

2 Blechman Barry M., and Stephen S. Kaplan. 1979. "U.S. Military Forces as a Political Instrument Since World War II," *Political Science Quarterly*. 94 (2): 193-209

3 Blechman Barry M., and Mark R. Moore. 1983. "A Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Europe," *Scientific American*. 248 (4): 37-43

4 Blechman Barry M., and Leo S. Mackay Jr. 2000. "Weapons of Mass Destruction: A New Paradigm for a New Century," The Henry L. Stimson Center. Occasional Paper #40

examined before American policy could be re-built for the new century.. In 2005, he diagnosed a mythology surrounding nuclear weapons, reminding us that they are not “magic talisman.”⁵ Bereft of metaphysical qualities, they are dangerous artefacts of antiquated strategic assumptions.

The disarmament moment

Global Zero launched in December 2008 with the mission of mediating between disarmament-friendly elites and a public that had last mobilized en masse against nuclear weapons in the 1980s. Barry was more than present at the creation. It is at this point that I had the good fortune to begin my walk-on part as his Stimson researcher. We embarked on a research program to complement Global Zero’s high-level and grassroots campaigning.

Our efforts produced two books on overcoming the obstacles to a world without nuclear weapons. The first, *Elements of a Nuclear Disarmament Treaty*, assessed the technical dimension of the problem, finding that the verification technologies and governance procedures are available to ensure a secure and stable world free of nuclear weapons.

Surveying our contributors’ collective findings, Barry stressed the risks of inaction:

“The choice is not between a secure status quo and an uncertain disarmed world. On the contrary, it is between the current world of rising nuclear dangers and an international system that has become more secure by divesting itself of all nuclear weapons.”⁶

In combination with our second book, *National Perspectives*, the research showed that the limiting factor to nuclear disarmament is not technical but political.

Stumbling over New START

There was cause for optimism that those political factors could be overcome. A new generation of leaders was entering office and seemed willing to invest political courage in a major disarmament effort.

In April 2009, newly inaugurated President Obama informed his Prague audience that he had come to “state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” The White House designed the Prague Speech for the American political and governmental elite. But the message did not arrive. Political advisors saw all risk and no gain in the president’s

5 Blechman Barry M. 2005. “Post-Nuclear Strategy,” Center for the National Interest. 80: 86-92

6 Blechman, B.M., 2015. Why we need to eliminate nuclear weapons—and how to do it. *Elements of a nuclear disarmament treaty*, p.21.

naïve-sounding disarmament position. Support in the cabinet was sparse, too.

Nor did Moscow share the zero vision. The START treaty, the only remaining agreement to provide verification of Russian nuclear activities, was due to expire. After the negotiating teams had overcome severe disagreements about American missile defense plans, President Obama and his Russian counterpart signed the new agreement, known as New START. To convince the Senate that this treaty was in the US national interest, the Obama Administration built a \$187 billion budget for the indefinite maintenance of US nuclear arsenal. Promoted by the president as a stepping-stone toward disarmament, New START instead became a stumbling block.

With a dissipating optimism over the possibility of major progress on the elimination of nuclear weapons, Barry did not hesitate to probe for incremental fixes, calling the old band back together and enlisting me to explore the possibility of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in northern Europe, updating his crisis-stability enhancement proposals from his time on the Palme Commission. Even today, Barry is probing the nuclear problem for solutions.

Changing facts

An important economist is said to have rebutted a charge of intellectual inconsistency with the question, “When facts change, I change my mind. What do you do?” In over four decades of writing about and shaping nuclear policy, we have seen that when the nuclear facts changed, Barry’s mind changed with them.

In the existential Cold War standoff, Barry expressed support for sober nuclear policies tailored to deter the Soviet threat. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Barry’s strategic thinking responded to the changed strategic circumstances, reevaluating the foundations of the relationship between global security and nuclear weapons.

Barry now claims to be heading toward a well-earned retirement. Nuclear threats, however, are not retiring from the world we live in. As nuclear facts change, we can count on Barry to change his mind with them, pointing out risks and opportunities the rest of us have missed.

Force Without War

Melanie W. Sisson

I was not among the graduate students that Barry jokes had his early and influential book, *Force without War*, “inflicted upon them.” Indeed, I wasn’t aware of the book until after (!) I had applied for a job at the Stimson Center to curate its successor volume. In my defense, the job posting was vague and made no mention of *Force without War*, which, now knowing Barry, makes sense. As many of the other contributors here make amply clear, Barry has amassed a record of remarkable accomplishments, and yet he is unassuming about it all.

This is not artificial humility, or cagey humble-braggery. Barry takes great pride in his work, in his career, and in the Stimson Center. He in no way deflects, denies, or discounts any of it. But neither does he invite unnecessary adulation or ego-feeding. Largely, I think, because he is so sharp in intellect and of such gifted analytic ability, he has great respect for quality, takes pleasure in seeing it in others’ work, and is very discerning. The bar is high; one ought not arrive to Barry with half-baked logic or unsubstantiated arguments. And yet despite very often being the most expert expert in the room, Barry invariably enters with curiosity and an eagerness to learn from others.

So too is Barry the best kind of mentor, which is to say, he is the kind that doesn’t know that he is one. He is instead the kind that simply values and produces excellence, behaves with decency, is attentive to the needs of his team, and treats all people with kindness, respect, and regard, looking to them to participate at their level of ability regardless of their title. Barry doesn’t co-opt ideas as his own, doesn’t present others’ accomplishments as his, and he doesn’t talk over people or ignore them. Speaking as a mid-career woman in a still very male-dominated industry, this matters. A lot.

Barry's primary means of influencing his colleagues, young and impressionable or older and established, is simply in the doing. He unintentionally offers lessons on the day-to-day of professional life – often showing in the way he treats people, in his drafting of an elegant outreach email, in the sharing of his thinking, and in the craftsmanship of his writing. It is sometimes difficult for me to remember that this quiet and steady presence has for fifty years moved the needle in such a combative town.

In addition to being the best editor one can get for free, Barry also is a reliable foodie. He has trustworthy restaurant recommendations, but if you can manage to get him to cook for you, jump at the chance. He is good counsel, quick to laugh, and once had a bookie. This is all I know so far about the bookie, though I intend to learn more. He also keeps trying to persuade me that putting olives in my martinis is inefficient for its displacement of too much gin, and that I really ought to convert to a twist. I remain unconvinced and look forward to continuing the debate.

Editors' Note

The two of us were lucky to work with Barry more recently than many of the writers. He was the best mentor imaginable.

For those without the privilege of working with Barry as closely as we have, we wanted to share a glimpse of what we have experienced by seeking to attract new appreciation of him and the contributions he has made to the field during his five-decade career in national security. In the process, we discovered much Barry's modesty had concealed from us.

We are grateful to the various contributors. Foremost the authors for taking the time to record their memories. Additionally, this collection would not exist without:

- Kitty Yancey's clandestine coordination;
- Brian Finlay's guidance and blessing;
- Russell Rumbaugh's concept; and
- able research and editing from the Political Violence Lab's Jack Jacobs.

The assembled observations make no claim of capturing every aspect of Barry's national security life. Time and space are limits. However, the worst omission would be a failure to reflect that Barry is a good and decent man. To capture his style and spirit, we asked people who have worked with Barry over the years for their recollections. One reflected on his sportsmanship in Stimson's modest sporting history:

"I will always respect the hell out of Barry for helping us keep the Stimson softball team together. Even when we were the worst softball team in all of DC, he'd come out and play. It's one thing for young staff to debase themselves losing by 20 runs to Public Citizen, but it's quite another for a successful, respected scholar to do so. It meant a lot to us to have a co-founder playing with us."

His personal handball career was more promising:

“I will always love that he played handball and those folks seemed to be his people. He’d sometimes leave work at 5 PM (early in DC) to meet his handball friends at the YMCA. When the DC YMCA closed, he drove to Virginia (!) to keep playing.”

Another recalled that Barry’s elevated taste in suits and cars masked his nonconformity and his never treating others as means to an end. Both of us served as Barry’s RA, which is why this description of how he treated junior staff resonates:

“When I started at Stimson, I was at the very beginning of my career. I was trying to figure out who I wanted to be professionally, and I wasn’t very sure of myself. One thing that I always appreciated is that Barry always listened to my ideas. Sometimes they weren’t thought out enough, or the right option for the research, but he always listened to them and acted as though he found them valuable. To have someone as senior as Barry really consider my ideas and talk them through with me helped me believe that I had something valuable to contribute, and that I shouldn’t be afraid of doing that. Also that sometimes thinking outside the box, even if it wasn’t the right idea for the current project, had value and could lead to other new ideas.”

Most tellingly for those of us who have worked in the service industry, he is a “good tipper,” recalls another former colleague.

Shining from behind the lines on Congressional and arms control expertise is one unifying conclusion: Barry’s legacy is not the leading think tank he founded, it is not his orchestration of a study that led to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and it is not any particular essay or paper he authored. Barry’s legacy is the large number of people he has worked with and mentored over his long career—a collection of individuals who continue to work to improve defense and national security policy and the world in general.

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