

# **WHO DRIVES DEFENSE POLICY: ELITES OR PUBLIC INTEREST?**

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## Introduction

In 1992, the Pentagon, with the support of President George H. Bush, proposed to cut the B-2 bomber program from an intended seventy-five planes to a total of twenty and to defund production of two SSN-21 Seawolf attack submarines from the 1993 defense budget. The bombers had always received weak support in Congress, but the Seawolf submarines had been given full funding in previous years. The end of the Cold War suggested the onset of a longed-for peace dividend, but the country was already in a recession and Congress suddenly found it hard to swallow dramatic cutbacks in defense spending when no programs were proposed to counteract the loss of defense industry jobs. Terminating the B-2 at twenty bombers and canceling production on the Seawolf submarines would have saved \$14.5 million and \$14.1 million respectively between 1993 and 1997 (Mayer 1993, 47). However, in 1993, 200,000 jobs were expected to be lost due to defense spending cuts (Dewar 1992). When faced with such numbers, Congress appeared to have a change of heart in its stance to cut the defense budget, specifically the representatives from Connecticut and Rhode Island where the Seawolfs were built. Competition was tough. B-2 supporters condemned the Seawolf, citing it “leaked” (Dewar 1992). Trent Lott (R-Miss) complained that funding for the Seawolf would take away resources from other shipbuilding companies including one in his home state, Ingalls Shipbuilding (Mayer 1993). Ultimately, Congress agreed to the five additional B-2s (to make the total twenty), and neither chamber of Congress agreed to a full rescission of the Seawolf. The House voted to keep one Seawolf while the Senate voted to keep both. They agreed to a compromise of one and a half SSN-21 Seawolf submarines, satisfactory for all parties involved

as stated by then Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney (Mayer 1993). What use the military had for half a submarine was seemingly never asked<sup>1</sup>.

The above process highlights an important aspect of defense policy. A nation's defense policy covers a broad scope of factors. Defense policy is the set of specific strategies or plans concerning national defense forces, including weapons and military troops, and has major implications for how a state's foreign policy is conducted. This includes the policies that the military branches follow as well as environmental and energy concerns as related to military capabilities. It includes intelligence, proliferation and arms control concerns. Defense policy is one component in the national security triangle, with the economy and political power forming the second and third (Hays, Vallance, and Van Tassel 1996). Logistics and specific plans that guide a government's actions in deciding when and where to employ troops and weapons comprise defense policy. Hays, Vallance, and Van Tassel (1996) posit a model of defense policy that includes "inputs, communication channels, conversion structures, outputs, lenses, and feedback within an international environment and a domestic environment" (Hays, Vallance, and Van Tassel 1996, 9). In this manner, the creation of defense policy is a political process.

Given that the formulation of a state's defense policy is a political process, it becomes important to determine who drives defense policy. The question appears relatively simple, but falls into a fairly small intersection between the policy and international relations fields. As such, "we do not know much about how specific foreign and defense issues get onto the discretionary agenda in Congress" (Lindsay and Ripley 1992, 424). This is certainly a glaring oversight in the literature. Jacobs and Page (2005) state the difficulties of overcoming this oversight bluntly: "statistically disentangling whether public opinion and nongovernmental elites

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<sup>1</sup>In 1995, Congress finally terminated the program at a total of 3 ships.

affect policy makers, or the reverse happens—policy makers influence the preferences of others—is a daunting challenge” (Jacobs and Page 2005, 112). What literature does exist, however, taps into two broader theories: representation and elite decision-making. One camp would argue that defense policy falls into Lowi’s (1972) constituent policy, that is, a policy set in an administrative environment, where it receives little public notice, and as such, is decided by elites (Knecht and Weatherford 2006; Laurance 1976; Lieberman 1971; Mayer and Khademian 1996). The other advocates the strong influence public preferences and opinions have over Congressional budget making (Bartels 1994; Blaire 1993; Eichenberg and Stoll 2003; Jacobs and Page 2005; Russett, Hartley, and Murray 1994; Stimson 1999; Wlezien 1996, 2004). The opposing ideas stem from different literature (one mainly in international relations, the other mainly in public policy) and no researcher as yet has attempted to reconcile the two. In this sense, this paper attempts to determine which school of thought applies to defense policy.

At first glance, most would be inclined to place the issues of foreign and defense policy under the purview of elite decision-makers. Constituent policy blankets both rational actor models and bureaucratic politics in that it indicates a policy created and decided within an elite setting. This type of policy fits well with most of the foreign policy literature that concentrates on the role of the executive and/or the agencies that concern foreign affairs. Often, it is assumed that influence on defense and foreign policy matters flow from the political elites downward (Knecht and Weatherford 2006). Of course, not all scholars agree. Lieberman (1971) separates defense policy from both the traditional model of elitism (referring to the rational actor model) and a more pluralistic approach by claiming “military spending can be explained by a high level of interest on the part of one segment of American business accompanied by a relative lack of concern on the part of the other segments of industry” (Lieberman 1971, 578). Close, Bologna,



and McCormick (1990) found that foreign policy lobbyists accounted for only 10% of the interest group domain. Yet even this view, however, suggests that the public itself is disinterested as a whole. Most scholars conclude that the public has little interest and even less influence in regards to defense policy (Laurance 1976; Stimson 1999). “Voters care mostly about pocket-book issues,” suggesting the public only cares about what brings jobs and economic growth or may adversely affect their wages and taxes (Lindsay and Ripley 1992, 422).

Alternatively, there is an argument that public interests and opinions dictate defense policy through demand for more or less defense spending or other economic concerns. The most commonly asked research question in this vein revolves around whether congressmen are more likely to vote strong on defense if their district relies heavily on the defense industry for jobs and economic growth. Cobb (1976) examines exactly that and finds that the “norm of reciprocity” will continue to spur congressmen to vote for defense pork barrel projects even when they do not specifically benefit their own districts in hope that the favor will be returned. Lockwood (1985) states “even members of Congress who are hesitant about defense spending are interested in programs with economic promise for their districts” (Lockwood 1985, 274). Bartels (1991) concludes that public support for a defense buildup not only won the election for Reagan, but also that it precipitated the over 15% change in Pentagon appropriations in 1981 from the year before. Likewise, Wlezien (2004) identifies past research that indicates “policy makers respond to changing public preference over time” (Wlezien 2004, 1). Eichenberg and Stoll (2003) find support that, even when controlling for factors that may influence yearly changes in defense spending, governments do respond to public opinion on defense spending. Empirical evidence indicates public opinion in the previous year has the most influence as that coincides with the timing of Congress passing appropriations bills.

The most examined aspect of defense policy is defense appropriations, prominent because the defense budget makes up just over fifty percent of the U.S. budget's controllable expenses (Center for Defense Information). That, and the idea that policy can be manipulated and set by budgets, makes it interesting and potentially the crucial factor in forming defense policy. The budget is a valid proxy for defense policy as defense policy revolves around the capabilities and strengths of the military and other defense operations. These capabilities are determined by what equipment is available which is contracted out and built based on the money Congress appropriates for each item.

Arguably, the easiest way to measure defense policy is to use the budget. In this case, the proposed appropriations also help identify elite and public influence. Each year, the Pentagon releases a proposed budget that is approved (and potentially changed) by the Office of the President. This proposed budget is then taken into consideration when Congress is determining appropriations. This identifies a (possible) division between elite desires and public interest.

This paper seeks to provide a more clear presentation of defense policy decision-making. Is it, in fact, driven by bureaucratic elites with technical expertise? Or, instead, do Congressmen who are influenced by constituency interests set defense policy? Elites include Pentagon bureaucrats, who are justifiably technical experts<sup>2</sup> and the President in his role as Commander-in-Chief – all of whom are best equipped to understand the exact defense needs of the nation. While Congressmen themselves are considered ‘elites,’ here they are agents<sup>3</sup> for the principal –

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<sup>2</sup> As Krause (2010) notes, delegation is a desirable choice for legislatures because of the very fact that the bureaucrats have more expertise than the legislatures within that specific area. This is a main tenet of public administration.

<sup>3</sup> Principle-agent theory has been a focus of public administration academia for much of its existence. The study of legislative delegation has a debate within it regarding whether the bureaucracy or executive is the “agent” of the “principal” legislation. As Krause (2010) notes, modern delegation literature considers the executive to be the agent of Congress. Yet, principal-agent theory can be applied to any number of relations

the public – because of their responsiveness to voter desires<sup>4</sup>. In order to attempt to decipher whether elites or the public drive defense policy, the differences between the proposed budget as put forth by the Office of the President and the final congressional defense appropriations bill are examined. If Congress passes a bill that is nearly identical to the proposed budgets of the Pentagon and Office of the President, then it can be determined that elites determine defense policy. If, however, certain pet projects are maintained by Congress despite Pentagon desires to eliminate them (or cut when the Pentagon desired to keep them), very likely, public interests have a much larger influence upon defense policy than other scholars have suggested previously. More specifically, this project will look at the variance between the proposed budget (as suggested by the Pentagon and then revised by the president) and final appropriations bill in light of military procurement of whole goods such as the B-2 bomber or SSN-21 Seawolfs. It examines the total procurement dollars allotted. It then briefly examines a few particular programs over time and the dollar amounts suggested by the Pentagon and those granted by Congress. If the Pentagon recommends Ship A to be built and Congress awards appropriations for it, then elites decide defense policy. If the Pentagon rescinds (or severely cuts) Ship A and Congress maintains funding or demands more than the Pentagon desired amount of ships built, it can be determined that this is done so in an effort to appease public desire for a maintenance of the industrial base in their home districts.

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and other scholars have examined the bureaucracy as the principal, or, as used here, Congress as an agent of the public. For further development of principal-agent theory in public administration, see Wood 2010.

<sup>4</sup> The responsiveness of any given governmental institution is oft debated in the literature to varying degrees. That Congress listens to the public is an assumption I am making, but based on the works of Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1999, 2002), Stimson (1999), and much of the literature dealing with Congress in the field of public administration. It is also supported by Carter and Scott (2009) who identify Congress as the “most accessible [of] federal government institution[s]” both to the public and organized interests (Carter and Scott 2009, 12).

Determining how defense policy is created has serious implications for how a country executes its foreign policy. If military capabilities are structured to promote a full employment scheme rather than what best is needed to protect military personnel and outfit troops for war, this greatly affects the United States' stance as a military superpower. The US has the world's most powerful military and considering the amount the US spent on defense in 2009 (\$712 billion) exceeded the other top seven countries combined (total combined of \$410.8 billion), it seems unlikely even large defense budget cuts would reduce its strength (Olson 2010, Shah 2009). But when non-technical experts are choosing the weapons and equipment the military utilizes in combat, it can affect how well the troops perform and how safe they remain. It can affect the direction the military takes and the strategies it proposes. If Soviet era projects are still being built in 2010 because they were funded previously and maintain jobs in districts, such projects may be both wasteful and unnecessary. Ultimately, this may suggest America is not receiving the resources necessary to execute its defense and foreign policy properly.

The theory section covers theories pertaining to a discussion of the budget process in an attempt to better understand how variations between proposed budgets and the final Congressional bill can be examined. These theories are elite decision-making; the influence of public opinion, moods, and preferences over Congress and budget appropriations; and finally, theories of representation of the public by elites. This results in two hypotheses related to determining who drives defense policy. The methodology section describes the steps taken to test elite versus public interest decision-making. This specific subject, a comparison of Pentagon requests and congressional appropriations has yet to be done. As a result of Pentagon "black

budgets,<sup>5</sup> additional appropriations bills (such as emergency funds or continuing resolutions), and discrepancies amongst sources, what appears to be relatively simple data collection is from so. As a first foray into this specific question and data, I provide an analysis of summary statistics and patterns found within the data. Such results indicate that while Congress appropriates a relatively similar amount to that which the Pentagon asks for, quite consistently it provides less aggregate amounts, while maintaining certain projects and exceeding the total appropriations asked for by the Pentagon, as seen in the example of the B-2 Bombers and SSN-21 Seawolf submarines, indicating a far greater influence by the public than is usually considered regarding defense policy. These and other implications are suggested at the conclusion of this paper.

### **Lowi's Typology**

In understanding the creation of policy, it helps to be able to classify it somehow. Lowi's (1972) classic and influential typology features four overarching categories of policy: distributive, regulatory, redistributive, and constituent<sup>6</sup>. These typologies differentiate the form in which a policy is executed and explain the interaction between the public (the clientele of any policy), and the policymakers. Constituent policies are usually set in an administrative environment, where they receive little public notice, but affect broad groups of citizens. Such is defense policy: defense affects all citizens throughout a nation by maintaining security for all,

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<sup>5</sup> Black budgets are described by Meyers (1994) as a "fiscal illusion tactic," meant to obfuscate programs from budgetary control (Meyers 1994, 60). Such information is only available to those with high security clearance.

<sup>6</sup> *Distributive* policies grant power or privileges of some kind to a portion of the population. There is a strong likelihood for individual contact between constituents and elites. This is usually synonymous with legislative pork; at the extreme it could be construed as patronage. *Regulatory* policies impose obligations of some kind. Often, they inform the public what *not* to do, such as speed limits or police power. Such decisions are usually made on a local level and also have a high level of individual contact. Regulatory policies are the most pluralistic in nature (Cobb 1976). *Redistributive* policies impose obligations and classify. They usually feature fiscal and monetary policies, or the allotment of public goods.

yet the beneficiaries of defense are far greater than those involved (i.e. soldiers, contractors). Zimmerman (1973) labels this category *protection-interaction* and equates it with Allison's (1971) Model 1<sup>7</sup>. The idea that the decision maker is separated from outside influences such as the public is in line with Lowi's constituent policy classification. Constituent policies are often dominated by elites, but can involve "mass movements and interest groups" which may indicate that Lieberman's (1971) conclusion – that one segment of the business sector is heavily involved and influential in military spending – can be applied to defense policy specifically and perhaps constituent policies in general (Heckathorn and Maser 1990, 1117). Lowi himself never classifies defense or foreign policy. However, the usual interpretation of defense policy as policy uninfluenced by the public at large and the limited accountability or knowledge of the process by the public would lead to its classification under constituency policy (Knecht and Weatherford 2006; Laurance 1976; Lieberman 1971; Mayer and Khademian 1996). The results deduced within this thesis may not necessarily be generalizable for all policy types, though, they may reflect the process for all constituent policies. Provided public interest holds a greater sway, this could potentially redefine Lowi's typology by demonstrating that policies decided behind closed doors by experts are in fact influenced by public desires, if not direct public influence.

### **Aspects of Budget Politics**

Most of the literature on defense policy can be categorized one of three ways. The first involves the economics of defense. Does the defense industry aid or hinder gross domestic product? Do congressmen dole out defense contracts to maintain jobs in their districts? Does the general economy rely on defense jobs? The defense budget features prominently. The

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<sup>7</sup> Allison's Model 1 features a rational actor, typically a single decision-maker, influenced only by preferences. While not wholly aligned with the strict definition of constituent policy which includes an elite setting rather than a single decision-maker, it does demonstrate the lack of influence the public (presumably) has over the creation and execution of the policy.

second area has a focus on public opinion, public interest, and interest groups. In general, it looks at the electorate and defense policy. The third is that of the role of various aspects of government, most specifically, the executive, Congress, and the bureaucracy. Research here usually involves how much of a role Congress plays, the battles between the executive and legislative branches, and controlling the bureaucracy. This paper incorporates all three of these fundamental observations about defense policy in its analysis of whether elites or the public interest drives defense policy. Literature from the policy field will typically examine the economic and public opinion arguments concerning defense policy, while international relations literature examines the role of the executive branch and whether there is an economic effect.

As stated previously, in this paper, Congress acts as the agent for the public interest that will dictate desired levels of spending (such as an increase or decrease in defense spending), exert a demand for economic growth, or maintenance of employment levels. Congress has the ability and the authority to make adjustments on the defense budget as proposed by the Pentagon and the president. Of course, previous theories regarding budgets suggested that the bureaucracy maintained a monopoly over the budget as Congress was “deemed completely uninformed about bureaucratic activities” (Wood 2010, 188). Niskanen (1971, 1975) was a strong proponent of this principle-agent theory in which bureaucracies tried to maximize their total budget. Migue and Belanger (1975) updated this to suggest bureaucrats seek to maximize their *discretionary* budgets. Finally, Wildavsky (1964) emphasizes another approach that believes the legislature is an active participant both with the bureaucracy and the executive. It is Wildavsky’s proposition, combined with the power the Constitution grants Congress over the “purse strings,” that is the driving interpretation of budgets in this thesis<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> For a richer analysis of budget theories, see Wood 2010.

Within the policy realm, it is well known that the budget is a way for any branch to execute power over the others. The President oversees many agencies contained within the executive branch over which he has budgetary discretion. The executive branch has incredible discretion in regards to the defense budget that it does not share with other agencies. Krause (2010) even suggests that, regardless of the type of policy, “Congress gladly cedes discretion to executive budgetary preferences so long as the executive request does not exceeded legislative appropriations” (Krause 2010, 527). Likewise, since Congress holds the purse strings, an agency can appeal to legislators to give them more appropriations if the president is unwilling to do so. Congress can cut budgets as well, which is an effective way of informing the agency their services are unwanted, unnecessary, or inefficient. Budgets help shape policy by deciding what parts of an agency or program are important to the administration in power (Kanter 1979).

An extensively studied theory within the policy literature suggests that budgets typically do not move much from one year to the next (Davis, Dempster, and Wildavsky 1966; Wildavsky 1964). Incrementalism as a theory relies on bounded rationality and a reliance upon the political processes and while the eventual outcome may be large budget changes, the interaction between actors remains consistent, stable. This incrementalism allows for tinkering on the margins, but unless legislation passes which cuts an entire program or creates a new agency, the money inflow is not much different. Agencies typically ask for more than they think they need and usually get less than that, but more than the year before. Budgeting is broken into two processes: macro and micro. Macrobudgeting focuses on setting an aggregate goal and fitting individual programs to those broad goals/constraints while microbudgeting emphasizes fitting resources to individual agencies and programs within departments (Meyers 1994). At any given time, these paradigms



may exert themselves within the government together, separate, or subject to the will of those crafting specific budgets.

However, the very nature of defense spending is different from other types of spending (Domke 1992; Fordham 2003; Mintz and Stevenson 1995). The amount of people living within the US does not affect the cost of defense as it does welfare or Medicare. The defense budget cannot depend on the usual agency assumption of equaling the previous year's budget plus a little more. Wars, procurement cost overruns, and the saliency of defense all preclude a simple incrementalism, as does as agency competitiveness. Domke (1984) demonstrated that the service budgets change significantly, especially under the first year of a new president. It seems that more than mere agency momentum determines the defense budget. This difference may stem from its constituent policy classification, the fact that public does not have a say. It may come from actual defense needs, which fluctuate depending on world events and US military objectives. Or it may be so because Congress uses it as an employment service and reelection strategy.

### *The Budget Process*

Wildavsky (1992) states that “the budget reflects conflicts over whose preferences shall prevail,” and in this sense, the budget is inherently a political process (Wildavsky 1992, 597). It is often used to control bureaucracies and alter their behavior as well as indicating policy preferences of legislators (Wood 210).

The “conception of the Secretary of Defense as the initiator and architect of defense policy” is a remnant of the McNamara PPBS system<sup>9</sup> (Kanter 1979, 80). The budgeting

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<sup>9</sup> The Planning-Programming-Budgeting System was created by McNamara in an effort to overcome the problems inherent in the Five Year Defense Program (FYDP) which was in operation under Eisenhower. It was designed to solve policy differences amongst the branches and civilians in the Pentagon before setting

structure, as designed by McNamara, begun under Kennedy and expanded under Johnson, was intended to keep defense policy within the hands of the technical elites (and presumably, the president). Both the executive and the legislative branches have used the budget as a tool for policymaking. Congress has the formal authority over the budget, given by the Constitution. However, since 1921, the President has been able to suggest his own defense budget. The Pentagon proposes its own budget as well which, unlike other agencies, is only loosely based on Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recommendations and is later reconciled with the federal budget; this demonstrates the rather lax position Congress takes initially regarding the defense budget. Certainly, there is consultation through the legislative affairs office of the Pentagon, but Congress mainly deals with the defense budget at the final stage of the budget process.

The Department of Defense's (DOD) budget agency is nearly as large as the OMB itself (Domke 1992). In this sense, it may be said that the executive branch has *functional* authority over the defense budget, that is, authority that is derived from expertise. There are few congressional committees which focus on DOD related issues (noted exceptions including Senate and House Armed Services committees). Additionally, Congress is typically excluded from planning for military operations and strategy. Such activities fall under the purview of the DOD and the President.

The process of creating the defense budget falls into several stages: spring review, requests put forth by the service branches, the submission of the Pentagon budget to the OMB,

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budget estimates, as well as an initial effort to use performance indicators to dictate resource allocation. "The transformation of the October-to-January budget review into a bookkeeping exercise symbolized the changes which were to be wrought by PPBS. Under McNamara's leadership, there were to be no predetermined budget limits, decisions were to be made about defense programs rather than budgets, and the budget season was to be a technical review exercise rather than a crash effort to reduce spending" (Kanter 1979, 61).

followed by the President's request to Congress, and finally, the Congressional appropriations bill. The budget itself is broken into five categories towards which funding is awarded: military personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement, research and development, and military construction (Domke 1992). Different departments fall under these categories, and each of the armed forces branches are slotted within all five; that is, the Navy is assigned monies under operations, procurement, R&D, and construction/housing projects, rather than a total sum for the Navy. This process allows for clear evaluation and specificity in awarding appropriations. The budget as put forth by the Pentagon and the president will clearly outline all aspects of operations and procurement, etc., and the needed (desired) dollar amount. Congress must approve each of these items in its appropriations bill. It is at this point where Congress can change the amount by adding in or taking away funding as it sees fit. This paper examines those differences as seen between the president's proposal and the final Congressional appropriations bill.

### *Elite Decision-Making*

Zegart (2010), in examining national security bureaucracies, points out that in such agencies "bureaucrats are *the*<sup>10</sup> key players and battle over agency structure inside the executive branch, far away from the Capitol" (Zegart 2010, 212). She links this to the attributes of the national security policy domain: secrecy is vital, executive authority is greater, there are fewer and weaker interest groups<sup>11</sup>, and an overlap and competitiveness amongst agencies that is greater than those agencies involved in domestic policies.

The influence the president has over the budget can be seen by the differences between the budget under President Eisenhower and under President Kennedy. Eisenhower maintained strict budget ceilings on all the service branches. He seemingly cared more about how much was

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<sup>10</sup> Emphasis mine.

<sup>11</sup> Reflecting Lieberman (1971).

spent rather than what it was spent on (Kanter 1979). Kennedy, however, instigated a restructuring of defense budget making through Secretary of Defense McNamara who designed the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS), which touted “no predetermined ceilings on defense spending,” and encouraged the rhetoric that decisions were about programs and not budgets (Kanter 1979, 60). This new management of the budget allowed the Secretary of Defense to hold a never before seen amount of control and influence over the creation of defense policy.

The theory behind constituent policies blankets both rational actor models and bureaucratic politics<sup>12</sup> in that it indicates a policy created and decided within an elite setting. This type of policy fits well with most of the foreign policy literature that concentrates on the role of the executive and/or the agencies that concern foreign affairs. Elite decision making theories would suggest that such elites presumably exercise their technical expertise to their discretion, fully cognizant of the theory that the “attentive public” encompasses only about 10% of the mass population and that voters vote with their “pocketbooks,” rather than substantial foreign policy tenets they want upheld. This, along with the concentration of budget power within the DOD itself leads to the following hypothesis:

*Elite Hypothesis: The Congressional appropriations bill will not deviate significantly from the budget proposed by the Pentagon and the president.*

*Significant* is not specifically defined due to the ambiguous nature of appropriations. Certainly, one million dollars is not a large given the scope of \$600 billion budgets. But a difference of three billion between procurement budgets may be deemed significant. The analysis will clearly suggest where appropriated dollars differ “significantly”.

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<sup>12</sup> Allison (1971).

## *Congress as the Agent of the Public*

As seen in the example of the 1993 fiscal year budget fight over the B-2s and Seawolfs, Congress worries about the impact of defense project cuts on their home district or on jobs and the economy in general. Congressmen as a result adhere to their own technical expertise; that of creating and aiding technical and economic growth, rather than allowing the technocrats full control over the budget. The Defense Department thus becomes an avenue to creating jobs or providing pork to home districts. The Pentagon is the government's largest employer (Fordham 2003). Yet, Mintz and Stevenson (1995) in examining whether defense/military spending has a positive or negative impact on the economy, find that while many studies conclude a positive impact such as Benoit (1973) and Kennedy (1983), no decisive verdict is possible based on the literature. Too many other scholars have successfully argued that defense spending hurts the economy by taking funding away from civilian projects. Ultimately, "the impact of military spending on growth is largely insignificant" (Mintz and Stevenson 1995, 300). According to these authors, there is no economic argument for defense spending. That does not stop the assumption within government that there is an effect, though. Kapstein (1993) states "the United States protects a large number of domestic industries allegedly for reasons of national security" (Kapstein 1993, 218). Congress often allocates money in an effort to keep a company, an entire industry afloat; this is, of course, not particular to the defense budget.

L.A. Dexter (1965) put it thus: "...instances where Congress has *appeared* to concern itself with over-all military policy seem generally to fall into one of the following categories: (1) Those where Congress feels it is able to judge between clamoring claimants...[and,] (2) Where Congressmen are concerned with some local situation, usually an employment situation" (Dexter 1965, 95). This further justifies the notion that, even if Congress does not always act to override

Pentagon proposals, they certainly feel they can and do sometimes, often for economic purposes. Krause (2010) declares that the legislature “enjoys the upper hand” in executive-legislative budget relations (Krause 2010, 527). This is reiterated by Kapstein (1993) who states that politicians want to know how spending priorities affect their home districts and states before deciding. Ultimately, this political and economical context is how decisions are made – even regarding defense policy. There is near explicit evidence of Congress treating defense as a jobs program found in the Defense Production Act and “in 1982...funding was proposed for job training and business subsidy programs in the guise of ‘revitalizing the defense industrial base of the United States’,” as articulated by Meyers (1994). Carter and Scott (2009) find in their case studies of congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs that often, constituency interests motivate them. They cite instances of strong voting blocs that motivate votes on international affairs (such as trade deals). More pertinent, however, is their noting of Representative Curt Weldon and his consistent support for the V-22 Osprey aircraft<sup>13</sup> which was motivated by constituent economic interests. Meyers (1994) also points out that “parasites” may be attached to budgets, things that have little or nothing to do with the goal or operation of the agency to whose budget it is attached<sup>14</sup>. Thus it can be determined that if Congress continues to fund projects that are expected to be removed from the budget by the Pentagon, they are doing it for economic or pork-barrel reasons as they do not have the expertise to make such judgments for the military.

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<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, funding for the Bell-Boeing aircraft began in 1983, yet it was not used in training until 2000 and not used in the field until 2007. The V-22 took approximately 24 years to be put into operation.

<sup>14</sup> Meyers outlines the evolution of entrenchment into the defense budget that the Coast Guard had, which began in the Treasury Department under Alexander Hamilton, moved into the Transportation Department, and is funded, often, by the DOD budget. This illustrates not only parasites of the defense budget specifically, but speaks to the larger complications of agency budgets and the US federal budget. As some aspects of other agencies may be funded by the DOD, so may defense-related items be funded under other budgets, purposively or incidentally.

Public Interest Hypothesis: *Congress will significantly change the proposed Pentagon budget in a manner that maintains pork barrel projects for home districts that the Pentagon believes should be cut.*

*Public interest* here, speaks to the interests of a Congressman's constituent public. It can be said that the president, elected by the nation, represents the public as a whole and thus their interests. Given this, the assumption can be made that the president will pursue the nation's interests by preparing a defense policy that best protects the nation. When the public demands a better economy, the president has many means to affect this, not simply through maintaining defense projects in a few districts. However, congressmen have a direct influence over money that flows from the defense budget into their districts and less over the economy as a whole. Thus, Congress may seek to maintain pork barrel defense projects to support their local economies and constituents, their specific public. This hypothesis may more aptly termed the "local interest hypothesis" but with the understanding that a congressman is acting in his or her specific public's interest, it remains identified as "public interest".

## **Methods**

This study examines twenty-one years worth of Pentagon proposed budgets and Congressional appropriations bills in an attempt to determine whether elites or the public interest drives defense policy. The unit of analysis is the budget year and examines both the proposed Pentagon budget and the Congressional appropriations bill. The data that are examined consist of Pentagon proposed budgets and the corresponding final defense appropriations bill approved by Congress from 1990 to 2010. Twenty years approximates the end of the Cold War. Scholars have suggested that during the period of the Cold War, Congress let the budget pass as received because of the worry about Soviet defense buildups (Dexter 1965). In an attempt to control for

Cold War influences, as well as limited data, only budgets proposed and passed since then are included in this analysis.

### *Measurement*

There are five aspects to each defense budget (military personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement, research and development, and military construction), and yet, this paper concentrates on only procurement for simplicity. Areas like construction will have multiple aspects to each “project” that are separated out in the defense budget<sup>15</sup>. While building a nuclear submarine involves many things including the people and tools to make it, Congress appropriates one amount per year for that budget item. This money is then divided up by the Pentagon for the parts and labor that is needed. Additionally, procurement employs American citizens and takes place on domestic soil. This is important to the congressman trying to bring home pork for his district. Most military construction projects take place across seas where the funds do not affect a congressman’s constituents. Other areas, such as personnel are not as likely to be affected by Congress. Congress may decide issues of how much veterans are paid on behalf of constituents, but it does not funnel money into the district. For these reasons, large-scale procurement projects are those used for analysis.

The initial step in analyzing the data is a complete content analysis of a total of forty budget documents. This will identify the exact amount each service branch is allotted, how long any individual project is funded for (between 1990 and 2010), as well as overall budget totals. Once this is completed, it creates a pooled time-series dataset arranged by the budgetary fiscal year.

### *Variables*

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<sup>15</sup> Typically, the Pentagon allocates funds based on location, covert operations (listed as unknown location), and housing. This is further specified for each branch.



Two economic factors are examined along with the procurement totals. Given that Congress, and even the executive branch, may use the defense budget as a means to encourage economic growth or to maintain employment, it is crucial for this to be addressed. *Economic growth* will be measured as the percent change in GDP from the previous year, numbers taken from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Additionally, each year will reflect a variable coded for *recession*, as taken from the National Bureau of Economic Research's Official Business Cycle data. This will be a 0 or 1 value with 1 being the occurrence of a recession in that year.

Politics play a role in the budget-making process, as has been discussed previously. Thus, variables for the party of the president and the party of both houses of Congress will help to control the effect of partisan politics. The party of both houses is included as both the House and Senate appropriations committees must pass the same bill before it arrives for the President's signature and will control for a split Congress. This is measured as the percent legislative seats controlled by the Republican Party for both the House and Senate, and coded as a 1 for Republican control of the executive. The intuition with this is that the conservatives are considered to be tougher on defense and thus would advocate more monies. Given the nature of bills being required to pass both houses, a variable for *consensus* government was created, determining whether the House and Senate were both controlled by the same party. If the percent of Republican control were either above or below 50% in the House and Senate, a 1 was given to the *consensus* variable.

International conflicts are expected to have an effect on the defense budget. As seen by any number of requests for emergency funding in light of disasters, attacks, or in regards to wars,

appropriations take into consideration what have immediately preceded the passage of the bill<sup>16</sup>. Thus, it can be expected that in the following year's proposed defense budget after the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, money was increased to aide counterterrorism across the globe. Included then, as controls, are the United States' involvement in MIDs and involvement in wars. These data were gathered from the Correlates of War dataset, as created by Ghson, Palmer, and Bremer (2004), and used those measurements for each type of dispute. The specific data used was interstate wars. To be involved in a war, a state must contribute 1,000 battle troops or suffer 100 battle deaths as a result of the conflict. COW provides start and end dates where the end date is the year sustained combat ended or when the country fell below the battle death threshold. Based on this coding, although the United States has been at "war" since 2001 almost continuously, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have not met the coding rules the entire time. Of course, common sense and the mentality of the government of the US indicate that certainly, ongoing conflict has continued since 2001 and implications can derived beyond the COW data itself. MIDs, or militarized interstate disputes, are coded on the dyadic level of states and measures threats of violence to fully-fledged wars against governments, property, territory, or official representatives of a state. The MID variable used in this paper is the number of MIDs, of any level (i.e. level of violence), in a given year. MIDs include wars, and so the two shall be examined separately in order to avoid any possible colinearity. MIDs and war involvement are both lagged, as budgets are determined the year before. While emergency funding and additional monies may be given in light of military involvement, this paper examines the initial defense budgets, those without additional funding requests attached in an effort to determine the

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<sup>16</sup> This is additionally supported by Durant and Resh (2010) who state "perceptions of crisis offer presidents and their appointees a broad range of actions to take, as Americans tend to tolerate expenditures and experiments better and have more patience with them in these situations" (Durant and Resh 2010, 547).

influence elites or the public have over defense spending, precluding a sudden swift response to an attack, for example.

Additionally, any attack against the US by a foreign source of terrorism will be controlled for<sup>17</sup>. Not only does this include the September 11 attack, but also terrorist attempts against a U.S. embassy or other U.S.-recognized target. This is measured by the number of attacks in a given year, with all 9/11 attacks measured as one event.

Finally, citizen responsiveness should be measured. Following Eichenberg and Stoll's (2003) lead, this is operationalized from surveys conducted by the General Social Survey (GSS) which asks yearly "Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on armaments and defense?" As suggested, only those who answer "too little" or "too much" are included in the measure of support for differing levels of defense spending. Eichenberg and Stoll (2003) measure responsiveness as<sup>18</sup>:

$$\text{Net support} = \% \text{ too little} / (\% \text{ too little} + \% \text{ too much}) * 100$$

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<sup>17</sup> This information was taken from the Global Terrorism Database and infoplease database. The event was noted only if it was indicated positively that it was an attack by a foreign source. Thus, "unknown" perpetrators were ignored. Foreign sources only were chosen in an attempt to separate out domestic terrorism that is typically responded to by domestic agencies, rather than the military – though certainly some FBI funds are included in the Defense budget. In choosing the target, I used only "government (general)," "government (diplomatic)," and military as these seemed the most likely to incur a military response.

<sup>18</sup> In calculating the variable, I had originally intended to use Eichenberg and Stoll's data, adding on for years they did not use. However, upon examination, I found a discrepancy in 1998. They use the GSS data and while all years prior to 1998 matched with my own calculations, that year did not. As they do not provide the base numbers for their calculation, I calculated the totals from the GSS data myself and then applied their initial method, which considered only those who responded "too little" and "too much" as important in obtaining the percent. For example, although there were a total of 2832 respondents in 1998, I used only the 241 who answered too little and 417 who answered too much, giving a total of 658 respondents. From there, I used the net support equation as given. This became  $.366 / (.366 + .6337) = .367$ , or 36.7% of those who responded desire to change the amount of money given to defense spending. For more on the calculations, see Eichenberg and Stoll (2003).

The GSS does not survey every year, however. Thus, for years in between, I averaged the support in the year prior and after to allow what is, hopefully, the most accurate estimate of public support during those times.

### Data Issues

Despite the seeming ease of obtaining government data, finding Congressional defense appropriations bills were more difficult than expected. The source used to obtain these documents, Thomas, sponsored by the Library of Congress had information only going back to 1990. Pentagon numbers were found in the FY 2012 Pentagon budget, dating back to 1948. Because of this, no regression with legitimate results was possible, especially given the limitations of the MID and COW datasets. In the future, finding Congressional appropriations bills back to 1970, at least, would be advisable in order to perform causal tests. Such tests are suggested in the conclusions section.

### Analysis

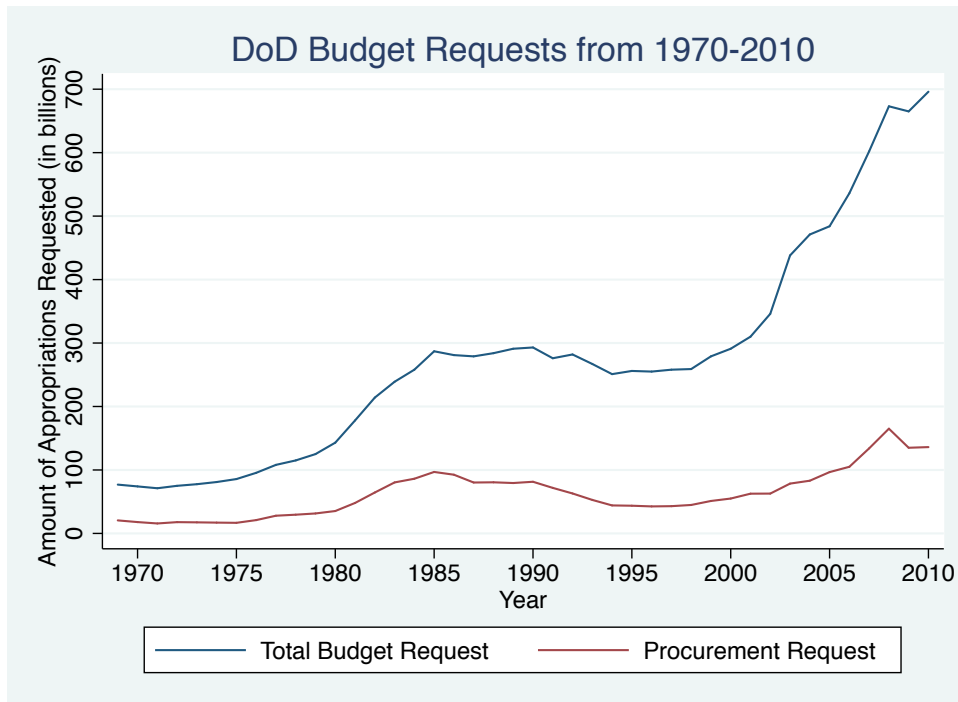
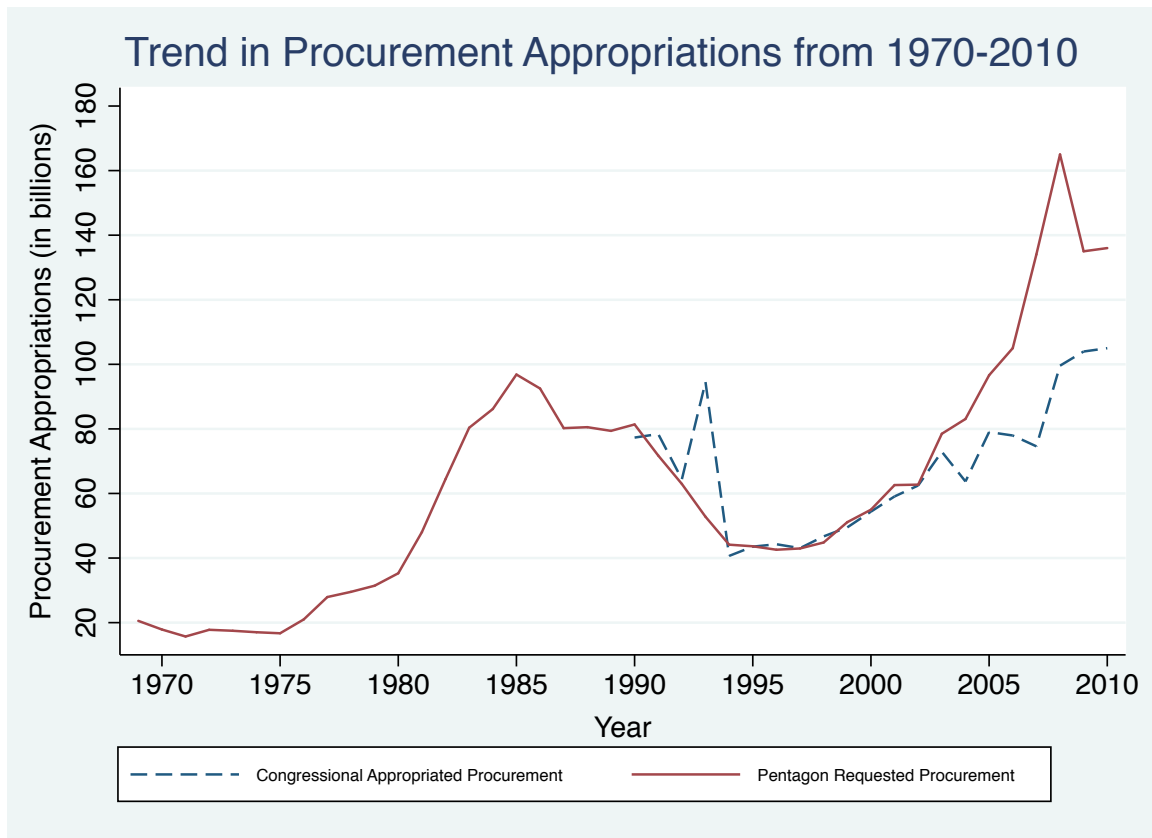


Figure 1.

Procurement requests and appropriations are the main variable of interest here.

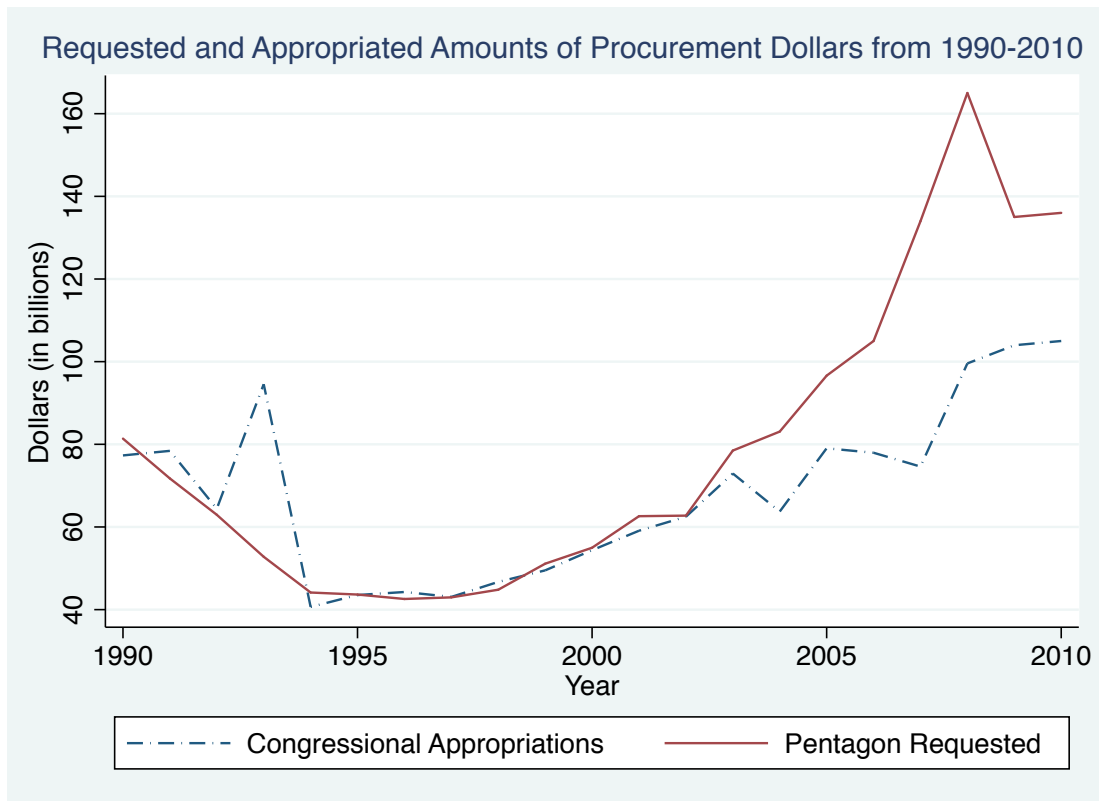
Examining a brief view of the trends for the difference between Pentagon procurement requests and total budget requests highlights the importance of procurement over time. While the amount almost consistently rises, over time, the difference between procurement totals and the total budget becomes wider. This is likely due to increased operational costs and the money it takes to pay troops, as well as a large amount of military construction occurring during the Iraq war. Procurement remains very important, but as a percent of the total, its funding is less than other aspects of the defense budget.



**Figure 2.**

Figure 2 indicates the trend of procurement requests from the Pentagon and the monies Congress appropriated the Department of Defense from 1970 through 2010. Congressional data

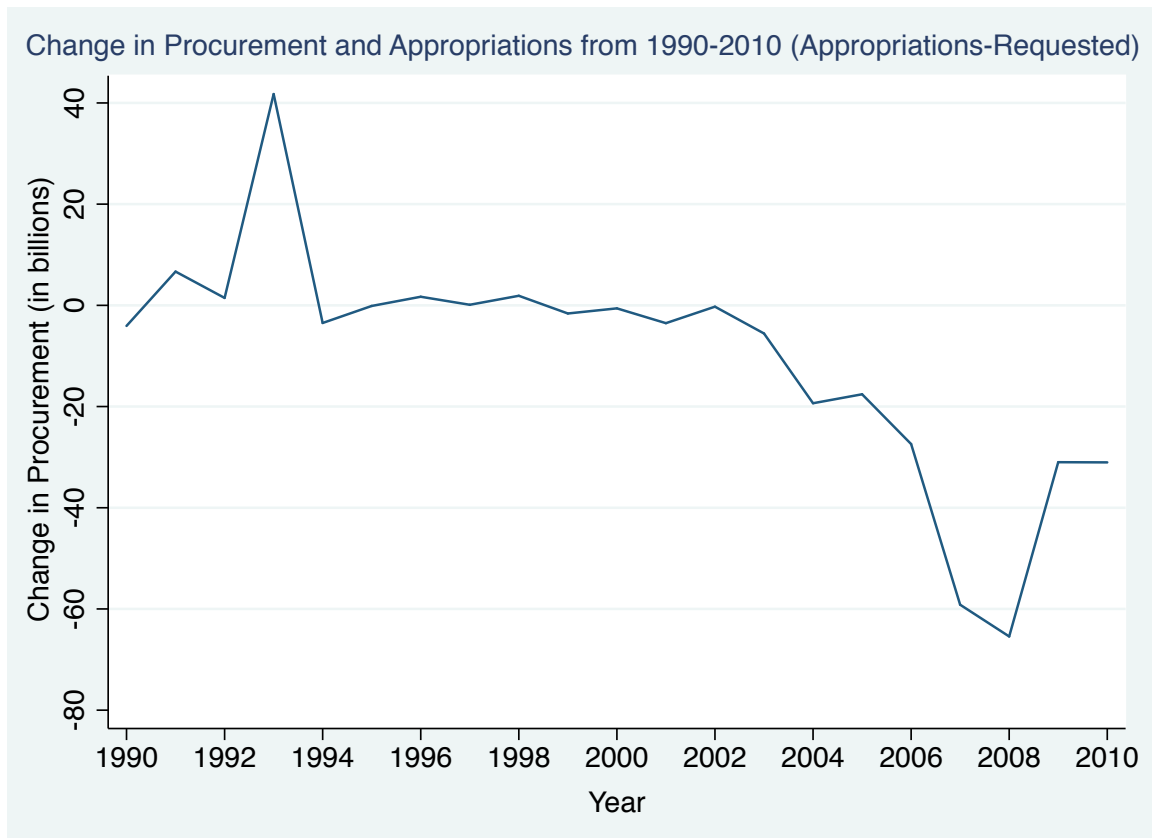
begins at 1990. From this, a noticeable jump is seen in 1985 when the Pentagon requested a total procurement amount of \$96,842,000,000. From 1990 until 1997, a decline in the amount requested by the Pentagon is noted, likely as a result of the “peace dividend”. Yet, in the early 1990’s, there is a significant jump in the money Congress appropriated to the Pentagon for procurement. While only speculation is possible, this may be as a result of the “catching up” to the peace dividend. As demonstrated by the battle over the Seawolfs and B-2 bombers, Congress worried about cutting defense too much. They may have increased their appropriations for that year in an effort to maintain balance shortly after the end of the Cold War and a pulling back of troops. Likewise, it may have been that, while creating that year’s budget, Congress had to fund an over-cost program. Given that the next year Congressional appropriations drop dramatically, this datum point seems an aberration. From then on, both requests and appropriations rise until they peak in 2008, with Pentagon procurements requests falling dramatically while Congressional appropriations began to close the gap between the request amount and monies appropriated.



**Figure 3.**

This is more clearly noticeable in Figure 3, which examines the time period restricted to the years of both Pentagon and Congressional data. In this figure, it is easy to see that from 1990 through about 2003, Congressional appropriations fairly kept pace with Pentagon requests. While never exact, the lines show a fall in the amount requested and given through a gentle rise until 2003 (with the exception of 1993). This is where a marked difference is noted. Perhaps most importantly, only in six years of the twenty-year period did the amount appropriated by Congress in procurement exceed the amount requested by the Pentagon. These years are 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, and 1998 with a positive change of \$6.73 billion, \$1.46 billion, \$42 billion, \$17 billion, \$1.1 billion, and \$18 billion respectively. Given that \$42 billion more than asked for is a fairly significant difference, this may be a hold over from the Cold War, or, as two years before it shows Congress giving about \$40 billion *less* than asked for, it may have been out of

fear of the peace dividend, demonstrating that Congress does desire to maintain defense spending to keep constituencies happy.

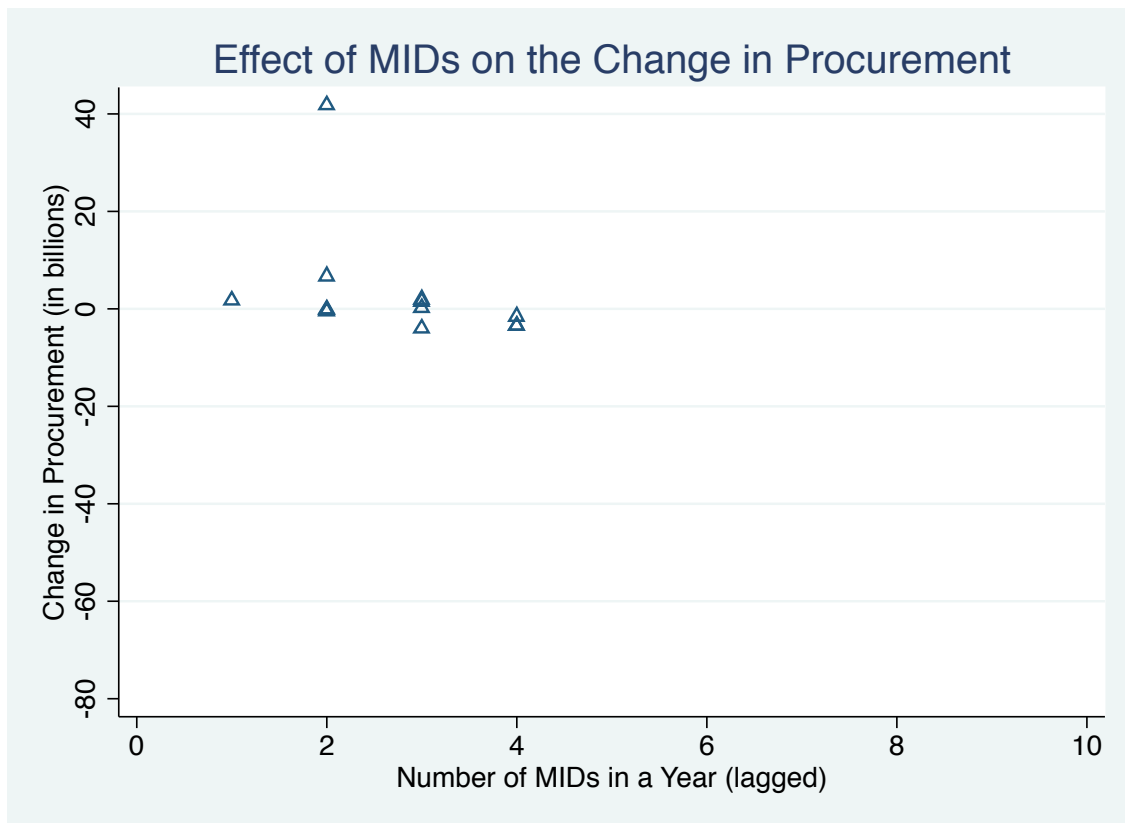


**Figure 4.**

Figure 4 shows the difference in funds appropriated from those requested by the Pentagon. Beginning in 2003, there is a steep decline until 2008 when Congress provided nearly \$65 billion less in procurement than the Pentagon asked for. 2009 saw a steep jump again where, while still giving approximately \$31 billion less than asked for, Congress significantly closed the gap between request and appropriated monies. It is plausible to consider that 2008 was an election year in which Democrats swept all three aspects of government. This may have made compromise easier, or it may be that similar ideology not only drove alignment of interests in military funding, but also in the goals such money would fund.



In looking further in time, Pentagon procurement requests swing wildly from just over \$15 billion (in 1970) to \$165 billion (2008) with a mean of \$62.6 billion. Examining the last twenty years only, the mean is \$78.64 billion. Congressional appropriations lag nearly \$10 billion less than that in the same period<sup>19</sup>. Overall, Congress gave, on average, approximately \$10 billion *less* a year than asked for in the period<sup>20</sup>. Yet during this time, economic growth was good; on average, there was a 2.5% increase, and throughout this time, government was typically a consensus government, with both the House and Senate having the same party majorities. The discrepancies are, as yet, unclear.

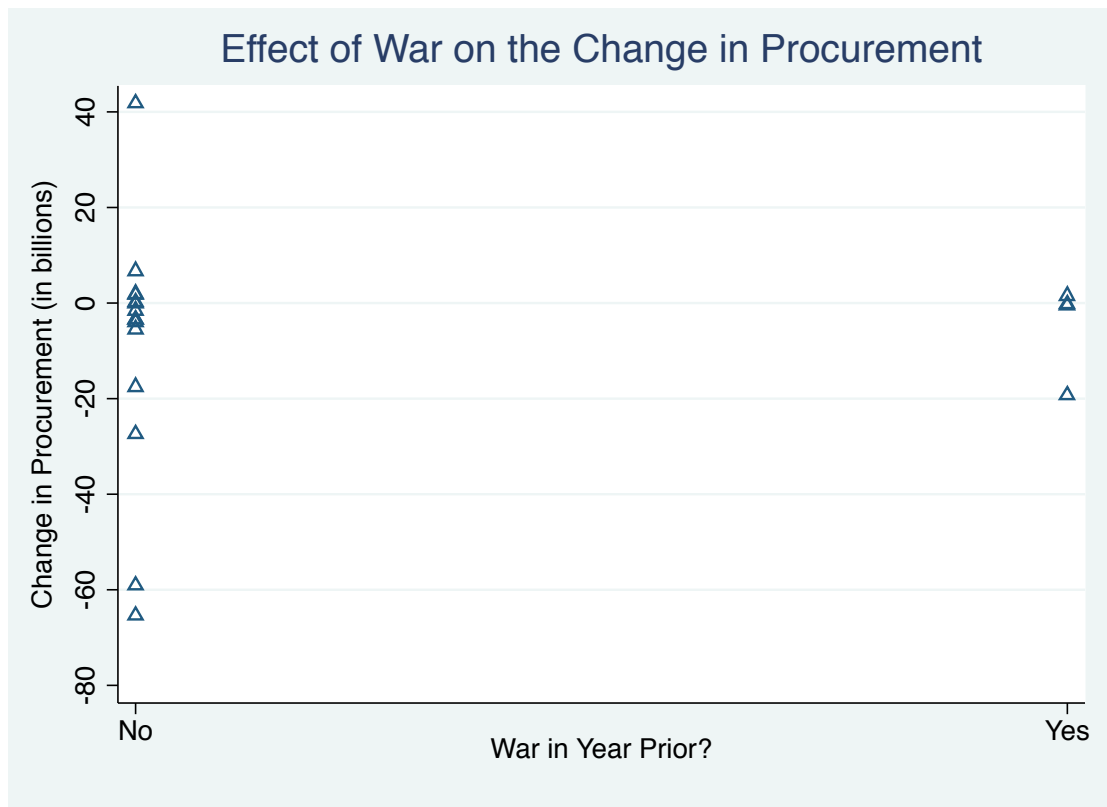


**Figure 5.**

<sup>19</sup> A mean of \$68.3 billion.

<sup>20</sup> The change in procurement mean is -\$10.3 billion. Calculated by taking congressional appropriations less the Pentagon requests, then those totals were averaged. This is heavily driven by 1993, however. If dropping that year as a potential outlier, the average is \$12.9 billion.

This figure features a comparison of the number of MIDs in a given year and the change in the amount of procurement requested and given. Figure 5 compares MIDs and Pentagon procurement requests from 19170 through 2001<sup>21</sup>. There is very little pattern here. It can be noted that most years had a 2 or 3 MIDs and that, in those years, the change in procurement levels was very little, with Congress giving close to what the Pentagon requested. Only one year did 2 MIDs in the year before give an abundance of Congressional appropriations of \$42 billion (1993). Based on the small amount of years with MID data, it seems MIDs have little effect on procurement funds.



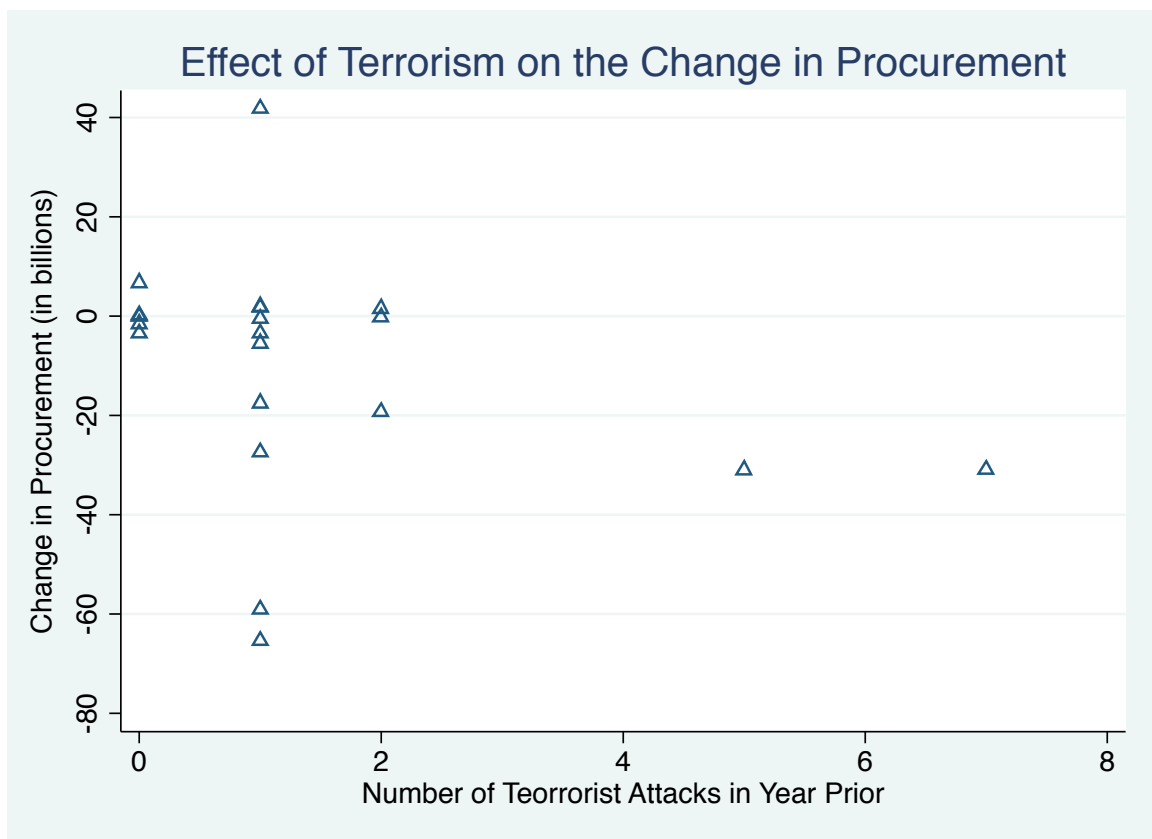
**Figure 6.**

Likewise, the occurrence of a war in the previous year does not seem a solid indicator, either. Years with no wars shown both the highest and least amount appropriated by Congress.

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<sup>21</sup> COW's MID data currently only goes through 2001.

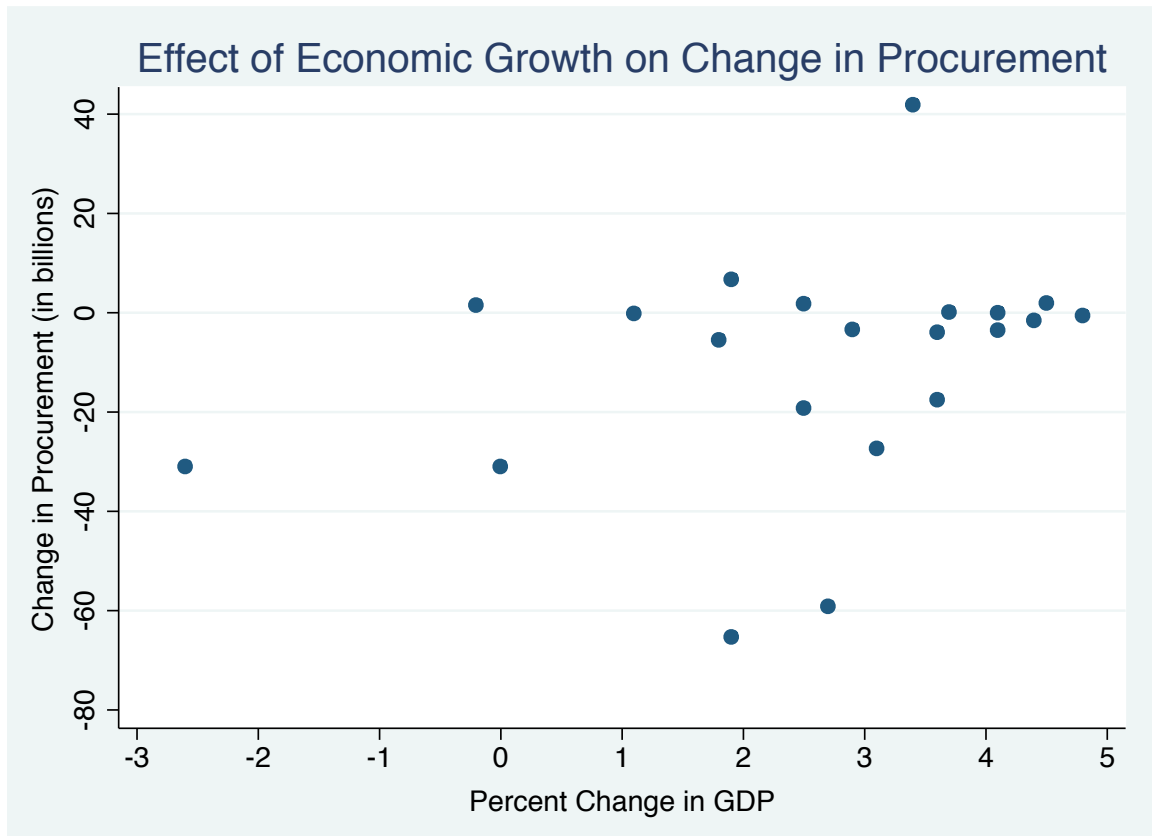
Even knowing that continuous conflict occurred during this time, this does not seem to account for any specific pattern within the data. In fact, the average amount appropriated in non-war years was \$2 billion less, while in war years, Congress gave on average \$4 billion less. This seems contradictory and is no doubt explained by the vast range of change in appropriations given in non war years (from over \$60 billion less to more than \$40 billion over) versus the rather smaller range of \$20 billion less to nearly no difference between the Pentagon and Congress bills in procurement funding. While certainly military spending over all may have been higher when considering emergency fund and continuing additional war funding, the base budgets seem little affected by war.



**Figure 7.**

*Terrorism* does not appear to indicate a pattern. Figure 7 examines the number of terrorism attacks in the year previously on the change in procurement. Many years are clustered

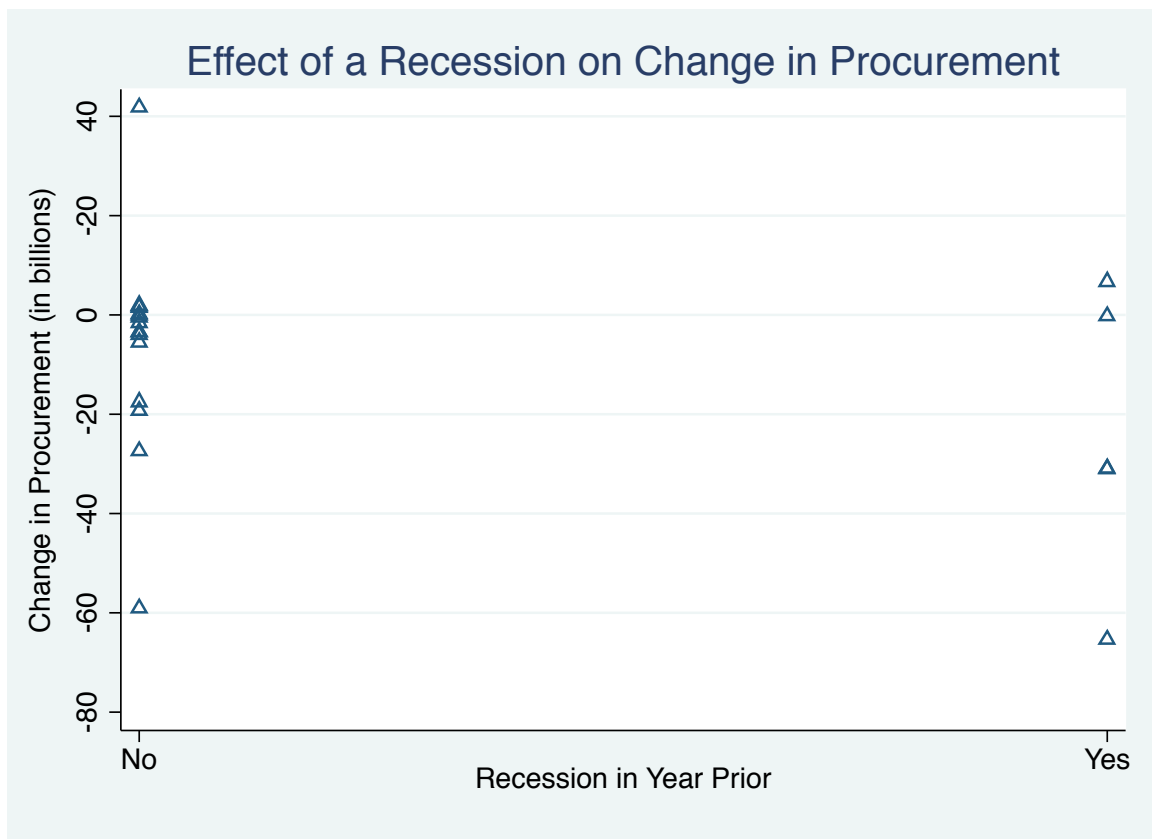
around giving similar amounts as asked for, with relatively few terrorism acts (0-2). Yet, years in which higher attacks occurred previously to the budget year, Congress gave less money, though not to the extreme. Again, as with wars, with one terrorism attack in the year before, it is shown that both the highest amount and lowest amounts appropriated by Congress were given. This seems to suggest terrorism does not have much, if any, effect on the change in procurement.



**Figure 8.**

Comparing the *economic growth* (measured as the percent change in gross domestic product and lagged) and the difference in procurement funds may prove fruitful. While economic growth does not appear to have an effect on the total amounts requested – that is, even when growth falls, larger amounts of money are still requested and given to the DOD on the whole – it does appear that, in general, as the economy rises, there is less of a difference between the amount requested by the Pentagon and those given by Congress. There was positive growth

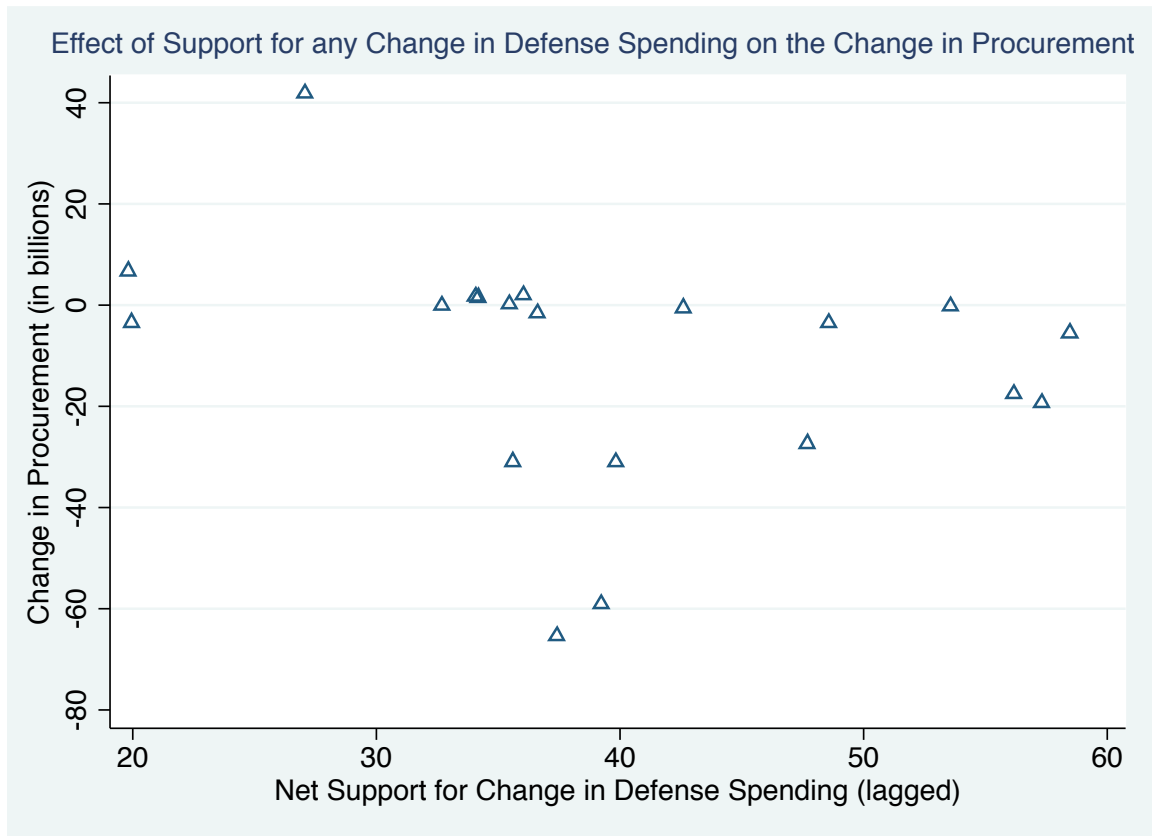
in the year where Congress gave \$42 billion above the requested amount and in a year when growth was below -2%, there Congress gave about \$30 billion less than the asked for amount. While some of the lower procurement requests and appropriations may be accounted for by time – the 1990’s featuring solid economic growth and, perhaps, a peace dividend – 2009 had -2.6% growth and still in 2010, the requested and appropriated funds were significantly larger than years past. Over time, it appears, that defense spending requests and appropriations grew, even as the economy began to shrink.



**Figure 9.**

This is reflected when examining *recession* as well. This figure features the effect of recession on the change in procurement levels between congressional and Pentagon budgets. The figure seems to indicate that during recession years, Congress did give less money than asked for to the Pentagon in rather significant amounts. This is further supported by averaging

the changes in procurement in years with recession and those without. Recession years featured \$24 billion less in funds than asked for, while years without recessions had an average of \$238 million more. It seems likely that Congress gave less funding to the Pentagon in years of recession than the amount asked for, yet still, over time, the appropriations grew, despite economic hardship in America.



**Figure 10.**

Net support offers small support for an effect. While the year which had the highest amount of support for a change in defense spending (2002) saw in the next year an increase in procurement requests and appropriations, it is not the year which saw the highest total requested and appropriated. It seems that the year in which the least amount of the public desired a change in defense spending produced the lowest request and appropriation of funding. In years where a large amount of the public desired change, change happened, but for higher amounts the next

year. While this could be linked to an increased desire in spending by the public, the GSS data indicated more people wished for spending to be *cut* back, rather than that too little was being spent. Greater support for changing defense spending coincides with less of a difference between the two budgets, except two years when there is a small desire for change associated with less differences between the Congress budget and the Pentagon's request for procurement. However, examining the total budget (both request and appropriated) that is continuously rising, it is clear that while support may affect procurement levels, it does not have an overall effect on the total budget.

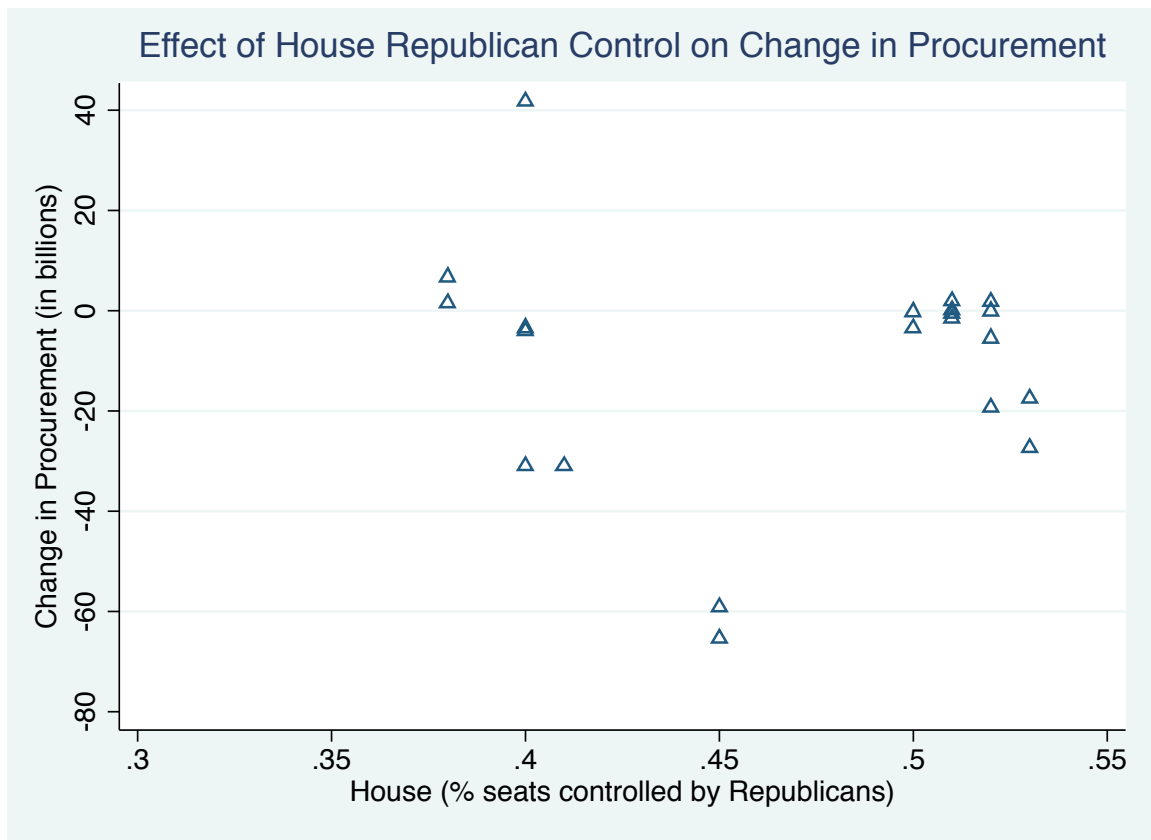
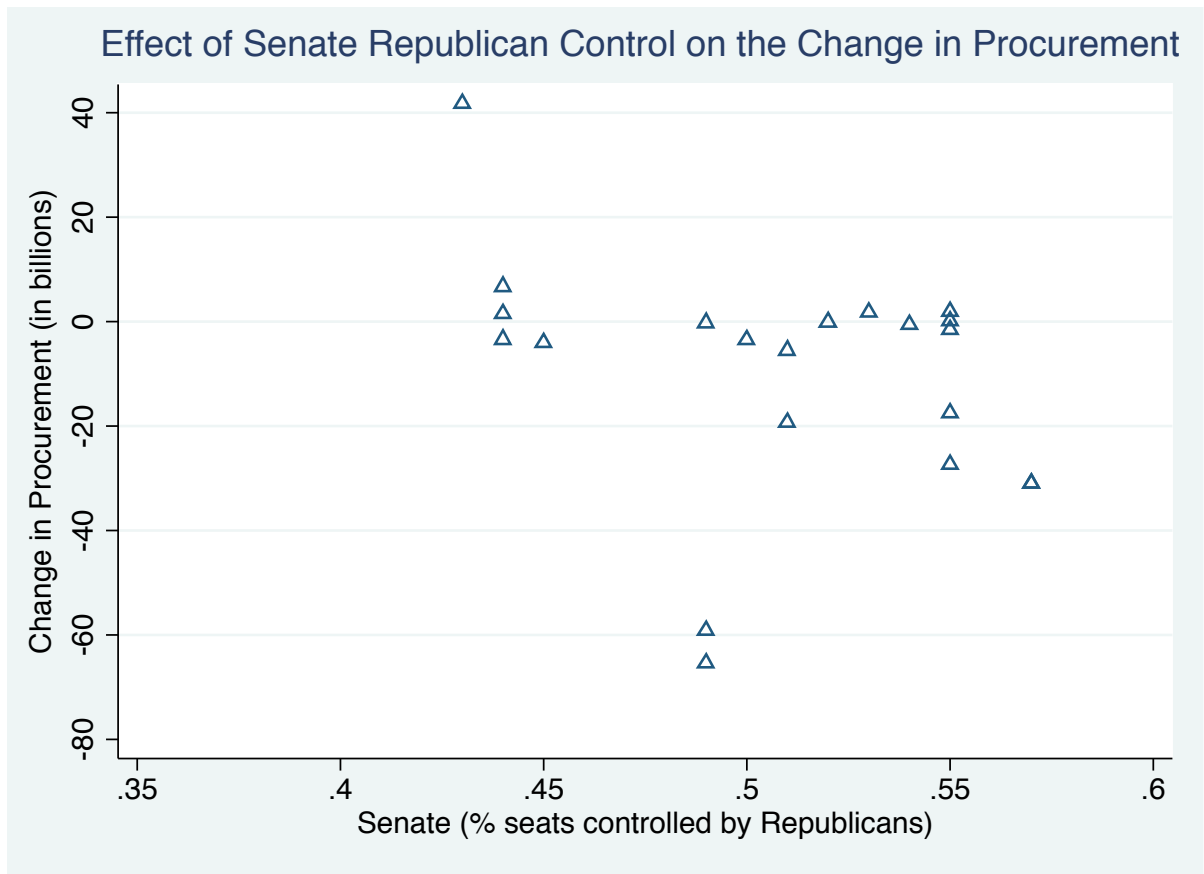


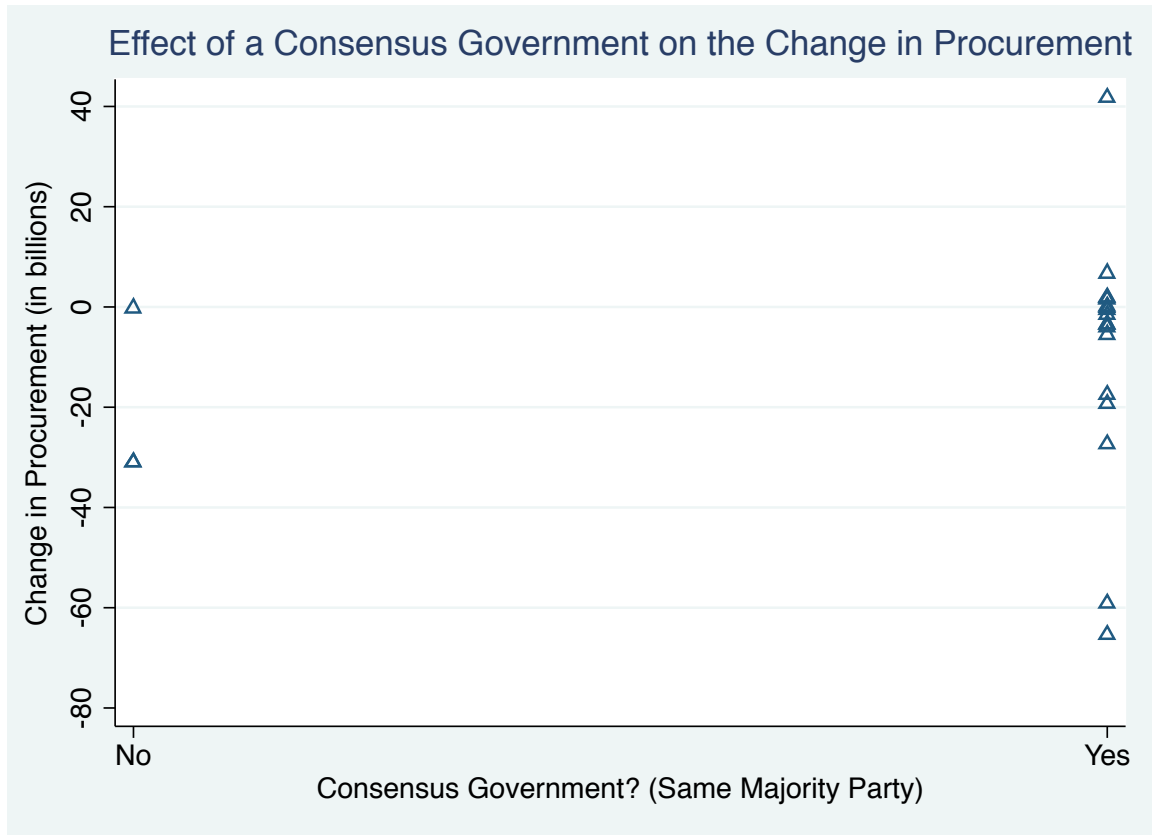
Figure 11.



**Figure 12.**

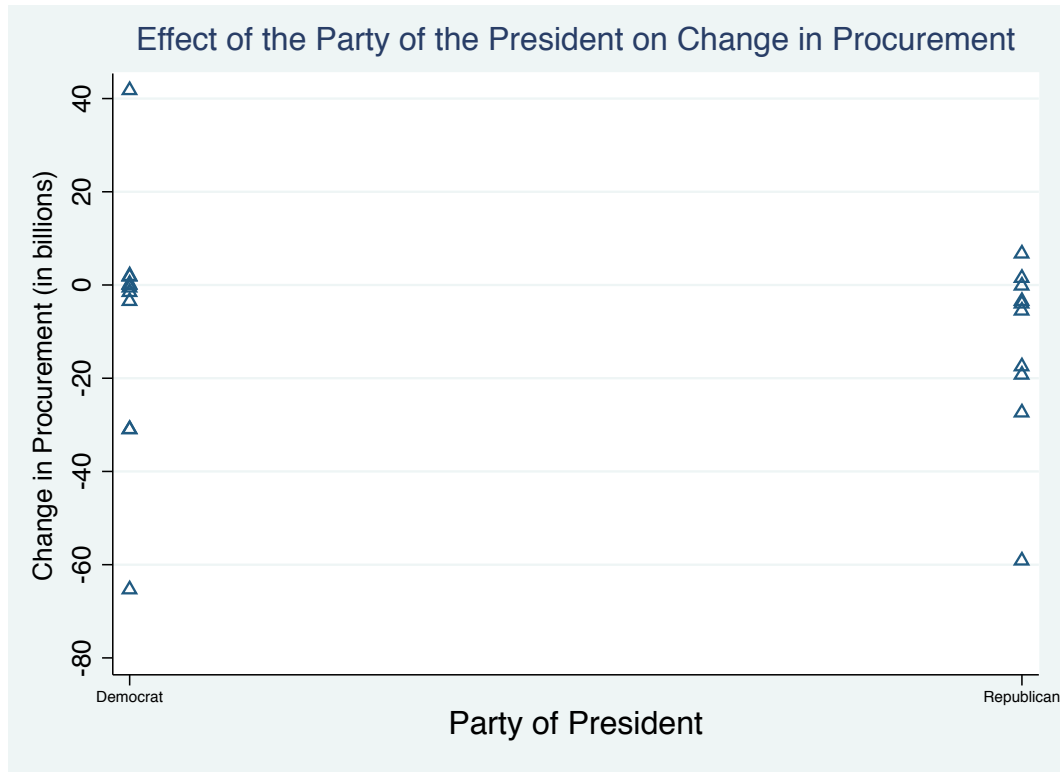
These two figures indicate that in years where Republicans held a majority, Congressional appropriations were more likely to follow Pentagon requests closer. The extremes of both highs and lows in congressional appropriations happened under Democrat control, though this is not to suggest Democrats solely swayed the budget further away from Pentagon requests. A year in which \$20 billion less was given, the Republicans had a superior majority within the Senate and House.





**Figure 13.**

Examining the effect of consensus on the change in procurement indicates little. Only two years did not have a consensus government and neither year featured an extreme, indicating, perhaps, that partisanship and gridlock do not influence the difference in procurement levels.



**Figure 14.**

As with the House and Senate, the extremes in the difference Congress appropriated versus the Pentagon asked-for happened under Democratic control. While many years also under Democrat presidential rule featured little significant difference in the two budgets, it may be that Democrats have an effect on the difference, or it may simply be other factors that occur during Democratic tenure that affects the difference. Larger conclusions cannot be drawn as the patterns are not clear and consistent.

Examining Aspects of Requested and Appropriated Defense Funds from 1990-2010

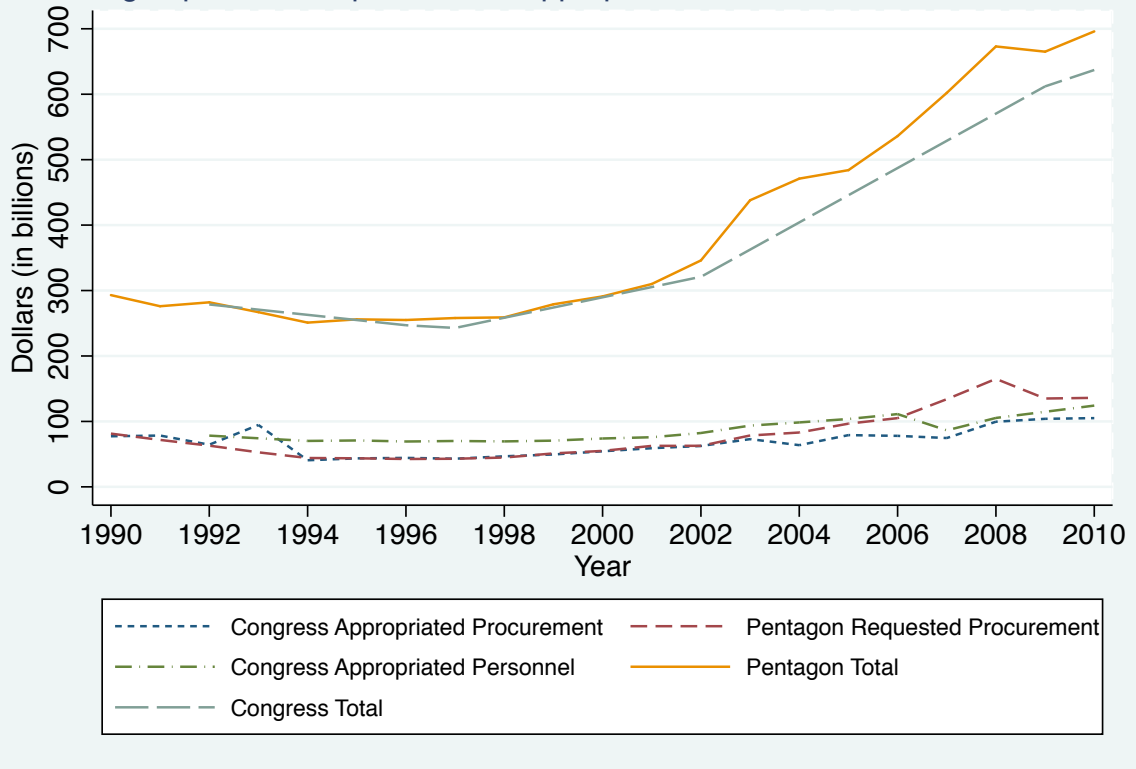
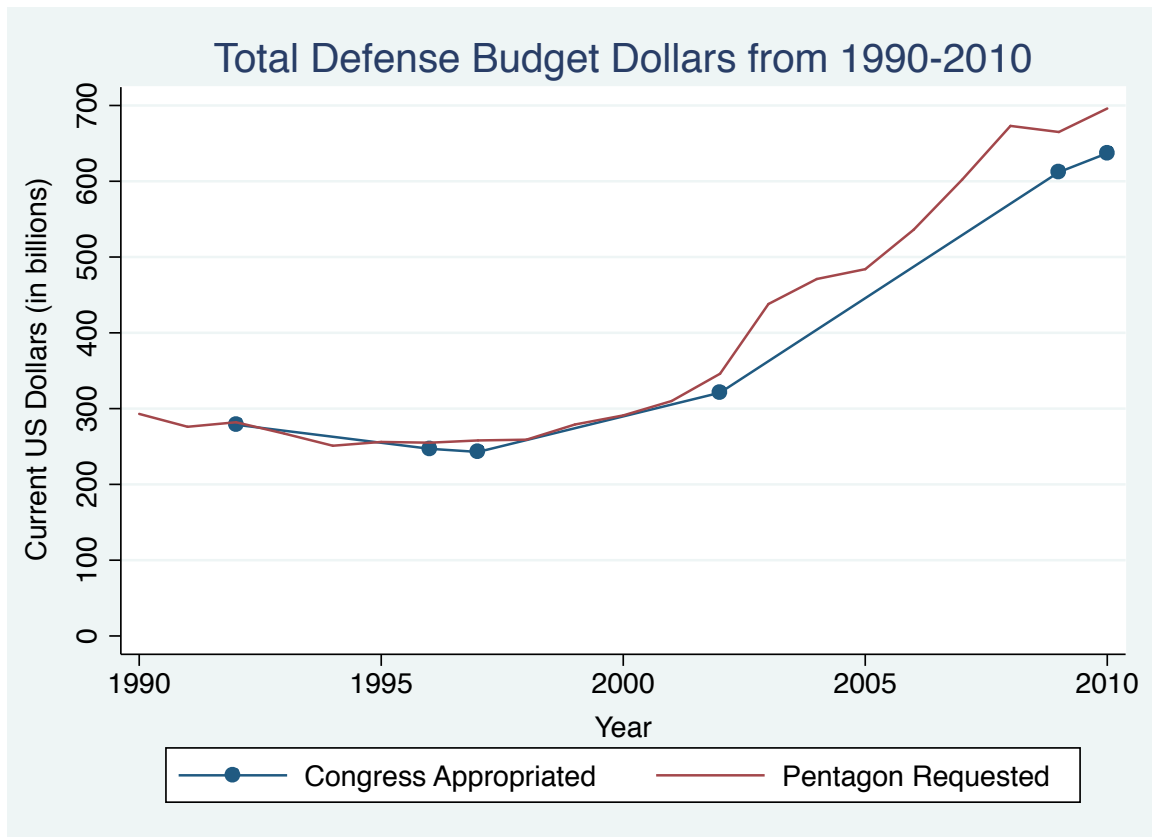


Figure 15.

This figure is included to demonstrate differences in the funding of procurement and another element of the defense budget. Specifically, it examines the amount Congress has appropriated for personnel over the 1992-2010 period. Unlike procurement which has fluctuated over time, in contrast to the amount requested and irrelevant of, personnel appropriations are fairly steady, rising slightly over time, until a rather sharp dip in 2007 and then rising again at what appears to be a sharper rate. This suggests there is a difference in how procurement is funded from the other four parts of the defense budget. Even in 2007, personnel monies are higher than procurement dollar. This enforces the theory that Congress feels it can affect procurement greater than other aspects of the defense budget, whether for their own district gains or different reasons, however, cannot be determined.



**Figure 16.**

This final figure simply outlines, for the data available, the difference between the total amount requested by the Pentagon and the total Congress appropriated. It appears that for the 1990's and through the early 2000's Congress kept pace with the Pentagon, even if it did not with procurement. Then, in 2003, the Pentagon began requesting ever larger amounts to fund the budget, and while appropriations rise, there is a growing gap between the two.

### **Conclusions**

Given these analyses, what we see the most is neither the elite or public interest hypothesis. Rather, on average, Congress gives less money than the Pentagon asks for (seen in Figure 3). There is a nearly a ten year period where the Congressional appropriations bill does not differ significantly from the Pentagon requested. But only six years of the twenty-one are years where Congress gave more than the total amount asked asked for by the Pentagon. Thus,

we can identify that Congress has far more influence over defense policy than is usually assumed of in the International Relations literature. Despite the tight control over the defense agencies and technical expertise, the president and the Pentagon lose some of their power over the military when it comes to appropriations. It may be that the president sets specific strategies, but ultimately, based on the empirical data, it seems Congress and its control of the purse strings is the deciding factor. But it is not through granting larger sums of monies that Congress maintains control. Instead, it is by cutting back the money the Pentagon requests. This suggests, perhaps, a deficit hawkishness on the part of Congress. Interestingly, though, over time, the procurement and total appropriations rise along with Pentagon requests, even when Congress does not keep pace. This suggests one of two things. Either Congress is only able to control procurement costs while other costs such as soldier pay and basic operations continue to rise, or incrementalism is a far stronger force than other IR scholars have believed. The Pentagon may in fact deliberately ask for so much more money each year because they know Congress will at times drastically cut the amount they give. In this manner, the amount the Pentagon gets over time rises, even when cuts are made within a single year to the funds the Pentagon feels it needs. It is also quite probable that through emergency funding and continuing resolutions that the Pentagon ultimately gets the money they feel they need. After all, despite the War Powers Act of 1973, Congress has yet to challenge a president over getting involved in an international conflict and it is not in Congress' best interests to stop funding troops or the military in general in the middle of a conflict. To separate out incrementalism from deficit hawks would require further data, as previously noted. But either way, the data did not show trends hypothesized.

Yet, anecdotal evidence still continues to suggest that Congress maintains defense pork projects. This is seen with the B-2 bomber and Seawolf programs. There are also recent

instances involving the F-35 second engine and an Air Force tanker where costs have exceeded those previously given (Bennett 2011a, 2011b). The F-35 second engine has been a large issue between Congress and the Pentagon. The Pentagon asked to cancel the program under President George W. Bush and continued to do so under President Obama. In 2010, the Pentagon asked again, but the House voted to keep the program. Shortly after the new congress was elected, the Tea Party movement was able to vote the second engine down, against Speaker Boehner and other Republicans wishes. Proponents of the second engine suggest specifically that it will be good for “generating the good-paying jobs that can jumpstart our economy” (Buffenbarger 2011). While senators including John McCain are objecting to such cost overruns and stating that the DOD should not pay the contractors for the overrun, rarely has Congress or the Pentagon refused to pay their military contractors. Certainly, Congress continues to move separate from technical elites. Senator McCain may be upset at cost overruns and the Pentagon wished to cut the engine, yet the House moved forward with it (Bennett 2011b, Tiron 2010). Whether an example of lobbying, common sense, or public demand, is still unclear<sup>22</sup>. Congress attempts to “rein in” the Pentagon by limiting the appropriations given on the base budget, certainly in the area of procurement. This suggests either that Congress attempts to send a message to the Pentagon by slashing the funds it asks for, or that the creation of the defense appropriations bill in Congress is crafted so as to attempt to lessen the budget. Deficit hawks may have control of the base budget while lobbyists and constituencies are more able to exert pressure for continuing

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<sup>22</sup> It was later cut by the House in February, 2011. Despite this, GE planned to continue to support its case for a second engine. It is noted that this cut was a loss to Speaker Boehner whose district maintains many GE engine jobs (Dimascio 2011).

resolutions or to shift funds from other accounts to continue to support programs and procurement items<sup>23</sup>.

During the late George W. Bush years, the difference between approved appropriations and Pentagon requests for procurement rose dramatically with the peak in the 2008 budget. This may stem from war weariness or the anticipation of an economic downfall; the difference then was perhaps preempted by a Democratic sweep in the 2008 election that aligned all parties, lessening the divide between procurement requests and appropriations. Whether that trend continues is yet to be seen.

Raw numbers data suggests that Congress acts as a deficit hawk, limiting the amount of appropriations to less, sometimes significantly less (i.e. nearly \$65 billion less in 2008), than that asked for by the Pentagon. Yet analyses of different programs, even on a cursory level indicate that pet projects are maintained. This poses further questions related to the scope of this paper including, who drives budget creation? From the current data, it seems deficit hawks set the base budget, while lobbyists and congressional pork dictate procurement programs, allowing for continuing resolutions and the transfer of funds from other areas to maintain certain procurement items. This indicates that the public can expect more halves of submarines as long as it keeps them employed. Congressmen are not willing to give up funding and projects for their home districts easily. Recent concerns over the deficit ceiling and the United States' debts highlight the use of the budget as a tool to control spending. If the money is not allotted, presumably, it is not given<sup>24</sup>. The term 'deficit hawks' has been prevalent since the Cold War. As has been indicated, budget making is political process and the budget itself is a tool in that process. Thus,

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<sup>23</sup> Such is the case of the F-35 when the Pentagon recently asked Congress to shift \$264 million from various accounts to pay for the cost overruns (Bennett 2011c)

<sup>24</sup> Certainly, this is not always the case, as noted earlier in the mention of continuing appropriations and emergency funding bills.

Congress may in fact cut back the amount of appropriations as asked for by the Pentagon, in an effort to return to balanced budgets or lessen federal spending<sup>25</sup>.

What does this mean for defense policymaking, specifically? Congressmen in top ranking positions of the Armed Forces committee and other defense-related committees have admitted they do not understand what the armed forces need logistically (Dexter 1965). The fact that non-experts are guiding policy through a chokehold on appropriations has serious implications for the soldiers at home and for defense capabilities. It has been indicated that the public does have an influence on policy through the budget, if not through support for defense spending then in terms of employment demands, even in the realm of defense. However, the feedback congressmen receive is almost solely based on issues of the level of spending and other economic concerns, rather than substantive issues. This suggests that the Pentagon does not receive the funding for projects it may need to defend the United States to the best of its ability. Certainly, the Pentagon may make mistakes; a second engine may be a good idea for the F-35. But the elites who know and work in defense should be the ones to decide that, ideally, not congressmen trying to maintain funding for their district.

Along with the conclusion that deficit hawks determine budget levels, the data seem to perpetuate the idea of incrementalism within defense budget making. Previously considered to be created differently, it seems that no matter the events (MIDs, war, terrorism) and with limited effect economically (economic growth, recession), each year the Pentagon asks for more and receives more, though Congress may not give them that full amount requested. As seen in Figure 3, of course, there was a dip in the requested amount of procurement funds by the Pentagon. Yet, while procurement may have dipped, the over all budget (seen in Figure 1)

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<sup>25</sup> This is suggested by Bennett (2011a, 2011b) in reference to the F-35.



indicates the total budget continued to rise. This further indicates a sense of incrementalism within defense budget making. Over time, the defense budget continues to rise despite all indicators that it should fall (i.e. lack of attacks, shrinking of the economy).

Certainly, the scope of this project is limited. Further research needs to be done, running a pooled time-series regression, perhaps even a simultaneous model in an effort to identify which way the causal arrow flows between elites and the public. To do so requires a much larger dataset beyond 1990. Finding such data is an arduous task, but one worth doing, if it is available. At such a point, a dummy for the Cold War would need to be considered as it is often believed that Congress gave the executive branch free reign during that period and certainly, defense expanded greatly under Kennedy and Johnson, and further.

Finally, this had profound implications for Lowi's (1972) policy typology. It suggests that an aspect of policy – classified as constituent – previously thought to not allow public participation, or even that the public was interested in the policy, is in fact, designed to support the opinions of the public. Based on this, one could suggest defense policy does not fall into the classification of constituent policy. Congress, it seems, treats defense policy as a distributive policy – that is, they seek to dole out projects in an effort to distribute the wealth that stems from the defense industry and Defense Department. Likewise, it may also indicate that the typology is antiquated and that the public, in this age of twenty-four hour news and information at the tips of its fingers is now able to be and is in fact, involved, albeit through an agent, in all types of policies conducted by the government. At the moment, this study only examines defense policy. Defense policy may simply be a constituent policy aberration. An examination of other forms of constituent policy is needed before this statement is generalizable. Nonetheless, certainly in the

realm of defense policy, these results show a very different picture from what IR scholars believe to be the case.

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