This work focuses on the efforts of Senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson to stop U.S.-Soviet détente. Arms control, human rights, and national security policy are discussed in this work. Détente, or relaxation of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, aimed to link reductions in Soviet military action with progress in the area of arms control and cultural exchanges. Jackson opposed U.S.-Soviet détente because he thought that it would embolden the Soviets militarily and allow the U.S.S.R to gain an advantage in the nuclear arms race.

Jackson was also concerned with human rights and the character of the Soviet regime. He worked to change Soviet behavior in this area as well. He worked to publicize the cases of Soviet and Eastern European dissidents who struggled for political and religious freedom behind the Iron Curtain. This was in contrast to the Nixon and Ford administrations, who deemphasized human rights in pursuing détente. This study explores the interconnection between these issues and Jackson’s struggle to strengthen American defenses against Soviet expansionism.