

Philosophy versus Tools: You Get What You Pay For

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF STATECRAFT

Statecraft is the “doing” of strategy, the matching of ends and means.¹ With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resultant disappearance of bi-polarity in international security affairs, U.S. policy makers have struggled to find a new framework to guide them to a better understanding of the nature of today’s international relations.² The objective of this quest has been to determine how U.S. leadership and strength fits in the post-Cold War world.

If a nation’s statecraft is to be successful, implementation must be based on accurate assumptions about world interaction and the essence of politics. Providing structure to the debate over such underlying assumptions have been the concepts of Idealism and Realism. The Idealist construction views man progressing to achieve the highest good, what Plato referred to as the *Polis*. Thus, Idealism is a tendency to represent things in ideal form or to aspire toward such ideal form as things might take.³ To the contrary, as first explained by Machiavelli and later detailed by Thomas Hobbes, the Realist believes that selfishness and individualism drive man. A Realist then has a

¹ Dr. Terry L. Deibel, “Philosophies of Statecraft” (lecture presented to the National War College Class of 2000, Ft. McNair, Washington, DC, 19 August 1999).

² Ibid.

³ Paul Seabury, “Realism and Idealism,” Alexander deConde, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, Vol III (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1978), 856.

tendency to regard things as they actually are and to accept them as such.⁴ In the mind of the Realist the “state of nature” is inescapable, and society operates in constant tension to avoid a return to such a state.⁵

Since the beginning of our nation, arguments over the virtues of Idealism and Realism have often framed the discussion of selecting the most appropriate philosophy of statecraft for the Union. Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton intellectually wrestled within this framework over 200 years ago. With the echoes of their arguments still reverberating in the halls of government, it must be recognized that regardless of the philosophy of statecraft adopted, it is the nation’s investment strategy in the tools of statecraft that determines the availability of means to accomplish desired ends. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has consistently invested more in national defense than in international affairs. Statistics supporting this assertion are in the appendix.

While it is not surprising that the cost of building and maintaining the world’s predominant military force overshadows the investment made in international affairs, it is surprising how little the U.S. is willing to spend on diplomacy. Moving into the next century, policy makers will undoubtedly be constrained by this lack of investment in key diplomatic tools. It is the context of events that determines the best tool or combination of tools to be applied in statecraft. While one tool tends to predominate at a given time, this predominance must be driven by the context of the situation, not the availability of the instrument due to budgetary priorities.⁶ If the U.S. is to move away from its Cold

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Dr. Richard G. Stevens, “The Constitutional Completion of the Liberal Philosophy of Hobbes and Locke,” *The Political Science Reviewer* 17 (Fall 1987): 268-269.

⁶ Steven R. Mann, “The Interlocking Trinity,” (NWC Student Core Paper, National Defense University, 1991), 5.

War paradigm and better define its role in the post-Cold War world, it must better balance the assets it devotes to the tools of statecraft.

THE TOOLS OF STATECRAFT

Before any detailed discussion of American investment strategies in the tools of statecraft can begin, the tools themselves must be identified. However, this discussion would be premature without first identifying the overall coordinating instrument of statecraft, diplomacy.⁷ Diplomacy essentially is the attempt to “orchestrate” all the

<u>Generic Strategies</u>			
Diplomatic Persuasion	Bargaining & Incentives	Coercive Diplomacy	Military Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Diplomacy •International Organizations •International Law •Public Diplomacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Foreign Assistance •Trade Policy •Alliances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sanctions •Covert Action •Force and Diplomacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Operations other than war •Limited hostilities •Total war

Figure 1. Generic Strategies. From Dr. Terry L. Deibel, ed. *Fundamentals of Statecraft Syllabus* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1999), 24

instruments of statecraft to serve national objectives.⁸ The objective of diplomacy is the promotion of the national interest by peaceful means, these include diplomatic persuasion and positive incentives, but can also include elements of “coercive diplomacy” such as sanctions, covert

action and force. However, when diplomacy fails and violence becomes a reality, the tools of statecraft transition from those of political power to those of military or pseudo-military power.⁹ Figure 1 details all of the categorized tools of statecraft.

⁷ Dr. Terry L. Deibel, ed. *Fundamentals of Statecraft Syllabus* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1999), 24.

⁸ *Ibid*, 30.

⁹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed., (New York: Kenneth Thompson, Susanna Morgenthau and Mathew Morgenthau), 33.

Can these tools be classified as Realist or Idealist?

Because of the interrelationship between all of the tools of statecraft, there is little advantage in categorizing them as either Realist or Idealist.¹⁰ To illustrate this, consider that diplomatic tools often depend on the power that is behind the diplomat. Conversely, even the strongest military must turn to diplomacy to bring war to a successful end. As Clausewitz argued, without a negotiated settlement, war is “never final.”¹¹

In 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt illustrated the futility of attempting to differentiate between Realist and Idealist tools through his negotiations with Japan and Russia. Earning him the Nobel Peace Prize, Roosevelt used diplomacy—a tool often associated with idealists—in the context of balance of power and spheres of influence, clearly the context of a Realist.¹² It is more useful then to discuss the tools of statecraft in terms of their interrelationship with one another. Dr. Joseph Nye frames this relationship in terms of hard or soft power. Nye defines hard power as “a country’s economic and military ability to buy and coerce.”¹³ Soft power, to the contrary, is “the ability to attract through cultural and ideological appeal.”¹⁴ In any given scenario, it is the proper combination of both hard and soft power that leads to successful accomplishment of the nation’s foreign policy goals. Nye’s construction makes it possible then to begin discussing how the U.S. should determine its investment strategy in all of the tools of statecraft, rather than arguing over whether power is more or less important or appropriate than diplomacy.

¹⁰ Mann, 2.

¹¹ Ibid, 3.

¹² Henry Kissinger, *Democracy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994, 42.

¹³ Joseph S. Nye, “Redefining the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (Jul/Aug 99): 22-35.

What Tools Dominate American Foreign Policy

According to a 1998 report by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the U.S. spent more money, as a percentage of GDP, on defense than it did on international affairs by a factor of eighteen. To counter any arguments that would contend that research and development and construction budgets inflate defense costs, a comparison of DoD's operations and maintenance budget to the international affairs budget reveals that Americans spent more on military operations and maintenance compared to international affairs by a factor of six that same year. Figure 2 graphically represents such comparisons from 1962 through the 2003 budget.¹⁵ The data illustrates that on average over the past 40 years, the U.S. has spent five times more on defense outlays for operations and maintenance than it did on international affairs. This investment strategy has crossed both Democratic and Republican administrations, as well as Democratic and Republican majorities in both chambers of Congress.

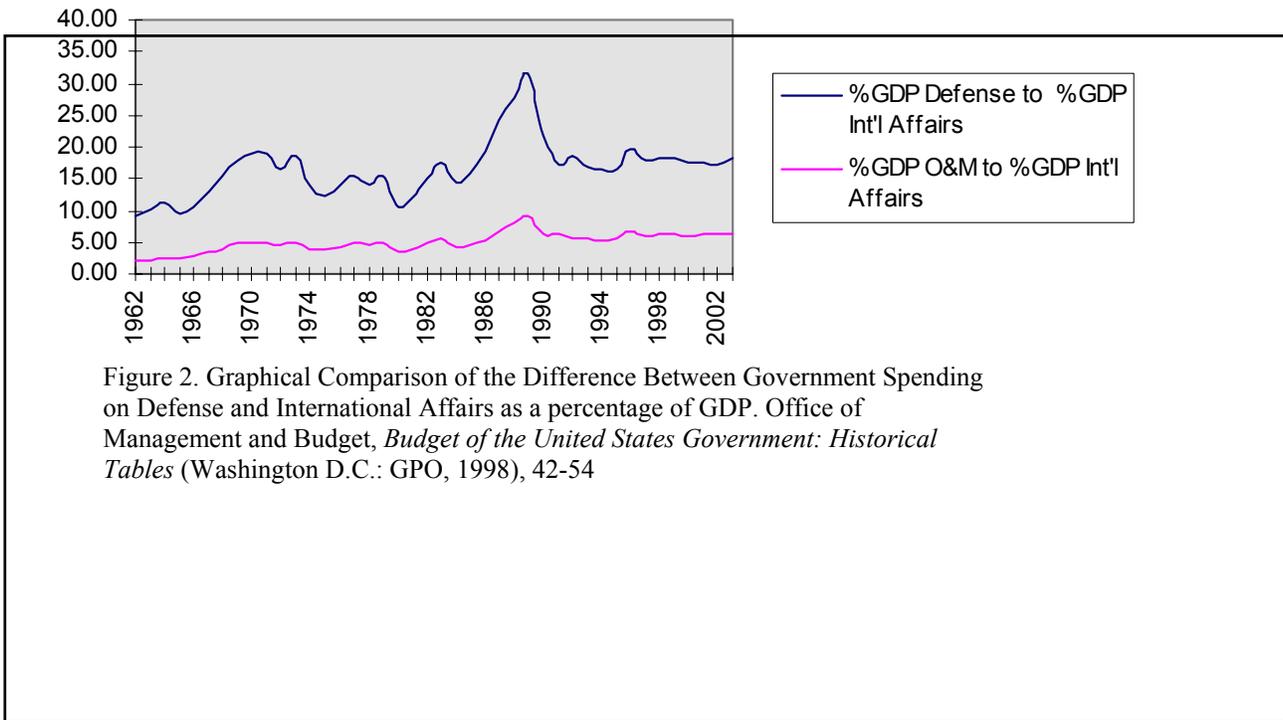
This disparity in the defense and international affairs budgets has not gone unnoticed in national security policy circles. In 1997, Hans Binnendijk wrote in *The National Interest* that the international affairs budget in constant dollars decreased 34 percent between 1987 and 1997, including a decrease of 14 percent between 1996 and 1997. Citing international security assistance statistics, Binnendijk noted that over the same decade security assistance had dropped 74 percent. Moreover, he contended, if security assistance to Israel, Egypt, and Turkey were discounted, the U.S. has basically

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1998), 42-54.

stopped using security assistance as a tool of statecraft.¹⁶ Lee Hamilton told the Center for Strategic Studies in Washington in 1998 that cuts in the international affairs budget by Congress has undermined the U.S. ability to conduct even the most basic functions of diplomacy.¹⁷

COMPARISON OF DEFENSE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SPENDING



¹⁶ Hans Binnendijk. "Tin Cup Diplomacy," *National Interest* 49 (Fall 1997): 88.

¹⁷ Lee H. Hamilton, "The Role of Congress in U.S. Foreign Policy," a speech presented to the Center for Strategic and International Studies on 19 November 1998, (<http://www.csis.org/html/sp98hamilton.html>).

The lack of investment in international affairs has also begun to affect the ability of the U.S. to influence events and to practice preventive diplomacy, according to Binnendijk. Funds are insufficient to permit travel of foreign service officers outside capital cities, and with the cuts to embassy staffs, Binnendijk warns that the U.S. runs the risk of developing diplomatic Alzheimer's disease from lack of presence in the host country.¹⁸

¹⁸ Binnendijk3.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

The focus of investments on defense-related, or hard power, tools supports the contention that the U.S. continues to rely on a strategy oriented on power rather than ideas. Whether as a result of successful containment, a successful grand strategy of preponderance, or an unintentional turn of events, it is undeniable that America today is a hegemonic power.¹⁹ The relative stability in the post-Cold War environment is tied to how the U.S. has conducted international affairs since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As John Ikenberry wrote in January's issue of *Current History*, institutions and democracy make the United States less threatening to other countries and reduce the political implications of its hegemony.²⁰

U.S. dominance in the case of NATO's operations in Kosovo, however, may be changing this perception. In Cologne on 15 June, the leaders of the European Union affirmed with urgency the creation of a separate military force capable of acting without the U.S. and without the approval of NATO. As Henry Kissinger observed in the *Washington Post* two months later, the sole European motive for developing a capacity to act autonomously is to escape American tutelage and increase European bargaining power.²¹

History tells us that every past hegemonic power has driven other countries to either individually, or through alliances, counterbalance the leading power's primacy in

¹⁹ Christopher Layne, "Rethinking American Grand Strategy: Hegemony or Balance of Power in the Twenty-first Century," *World Policy Journal* 15 (Summer 1998) : 8-28.

²⁰ G. John Ikenberry, "America's Liberal Hegemony," *Current History* 98 (January 1999): 26.

²¹ Henry Kissinger, "The End of NATO as We Know It?," *Washington Post*, 15 August 1999, Sec B, p. 7.

international affairs. As Christopher Layne wrote in the Summer 1998 issue of *World Policy Journal*, “there is absolutely no compelling reason to believe that the United States today will be exempt from this process.”²² Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. defense spending has fallen by about 40 percent.²³ However, because of its worldwide responsibilities, America continues to spend five times more on defense than Russia, six times more than Japan and Germany, and possibly as much as eight times more than China.²⁴ Taking into account this disparity between the costs of global and regional security obligations, the U.S. continues to focus five times the assets on defensive operations and maintenance than on international affairs. By maintaining its current paucity of funding for international affairs, the likelihood increases that foreign fear of U.S. dominance will drive the emergence of serious contenders to U.S. hegemony.

Regardless, “hegemony has never been a winning strategy in modern international politics.”²⁵ With this eventuality in mind, U.S. investment in the tools of statecraft must be balanced to meet the demands of the Twenty-first Century. Rather than avoiding a multipolar world, the U.S. should invest in both the hard and soft power tools to ensure U.S. influence in such a world.²⁶ America must reengage itself in diplomacy on a grand scale. But this reengagement needn’t be at the expense of defense. In fact, Japan’s recent experience in diplomatic futility demonstrated by its failure to prevent nuclear proliferation in South Asia is a good example. Despite

²² Layne, 8-28.

²³ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Crisis in U.S. Defense Spending: A Reality Check*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1999), 2.

²⁴ Walt, 172.

²⁵ Layne, 8-28.

²⁶ Richard Haas, “What to do with American Primacy,” *Foreign Affairs* 78 (Sep/Oct 1999): 37-49.

significant economic assistance, strong diplomacy coupled with weak hard-power capabilities failed to yield desired results.²⁷

In the case of hard-power tools, U.S. investments in defense must be increased in order to repair the damage inflicted on equipment and personnel as a result of the high operational tempo of the late-1990s. However, as John Hillen argues in the July-August issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the allocation priorities of these increased investments need to be changed. Instead of investing in heavy tanks and stealthier, faster, more precise aircraft, the military needs to invest in the technologies that will meet the new threats of intrastate conflict, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation.²⁸

²⁷ Yoichi Funabashi, "Tokyo's Depression Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 77 (Nov/Dec 1998): 26-36.

²⁸ John Hillen, "Defense's Death Spiral," *Foreign Affairs* 78 (Jul/Aug 1999): 2-7.

A CALL TO DIPLOMATIC RECOMMITMENT

From a budgetary aspect, it is undeniable that the U. S. has been using a Realist-oriented philosophy of statecraft since the conclusion of World War II. With investment in hard power tools at a rate three to eight times that of the other leading powers in the world, America has sought to ensure its hegemony in the post-Cold War environment. Washington, however, has been severely under-investing in international affairs for decades. As a result, American power is increasingly being seen as a threat to the national sovereignty and prosperity of even friends and allies. This fear undermines the trust of our friends and strengthens the resolve of our enemies.

The American debate over philosophies of statecraft, ongoing since Hamilton and Jefferson, will continue. However, the critical question is whether the current imbalance between investments in defense and international affairs will continue as well. Balanced handling of all of the tools of statecraft will provide the U.S. the best chance to maintain its influence in the international environment of the Twenty-first Century. If America chooses to not heed the warnings history provides to countries instituting hegemonic policies, then the U.S. risks repeating the mistakes of former hegemonies...

APPENDIX

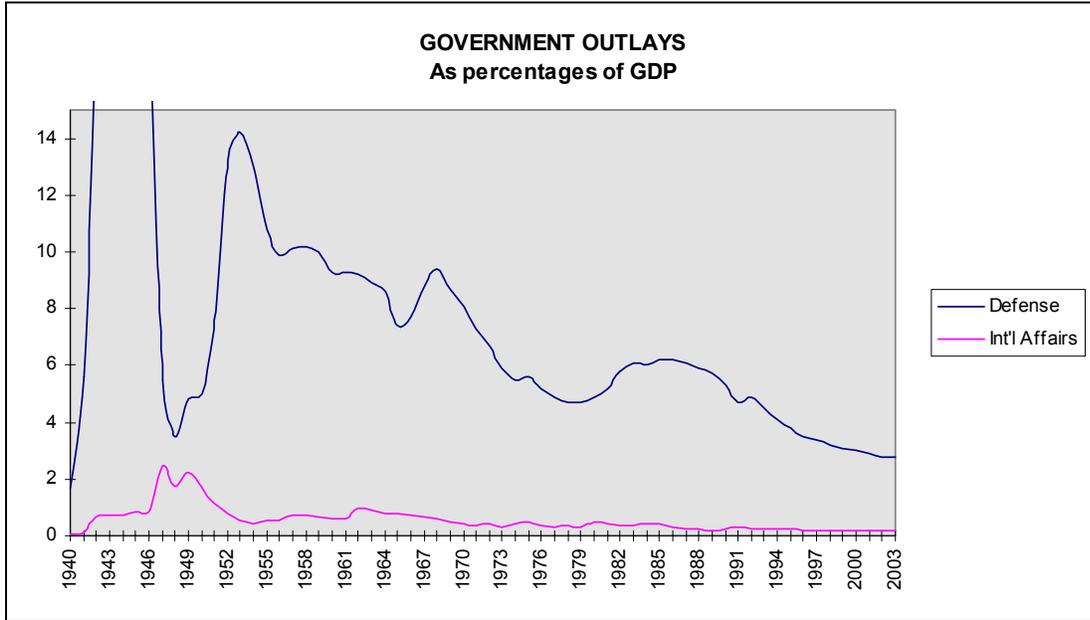


Figure 3. Graphical Comparison of Government Spending on Defense and International Affairs as a percentage of GDP. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1998), 42-54

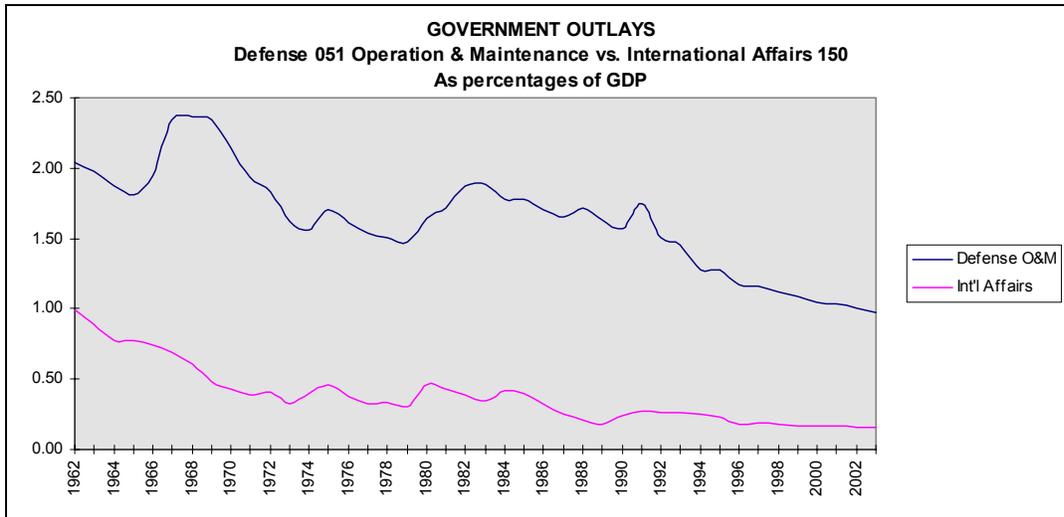


Figure 4. Graphical Comparison of DoD Operations and Maintenance spending versus International Affairs as a percentage of GDP. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1998), 42-54

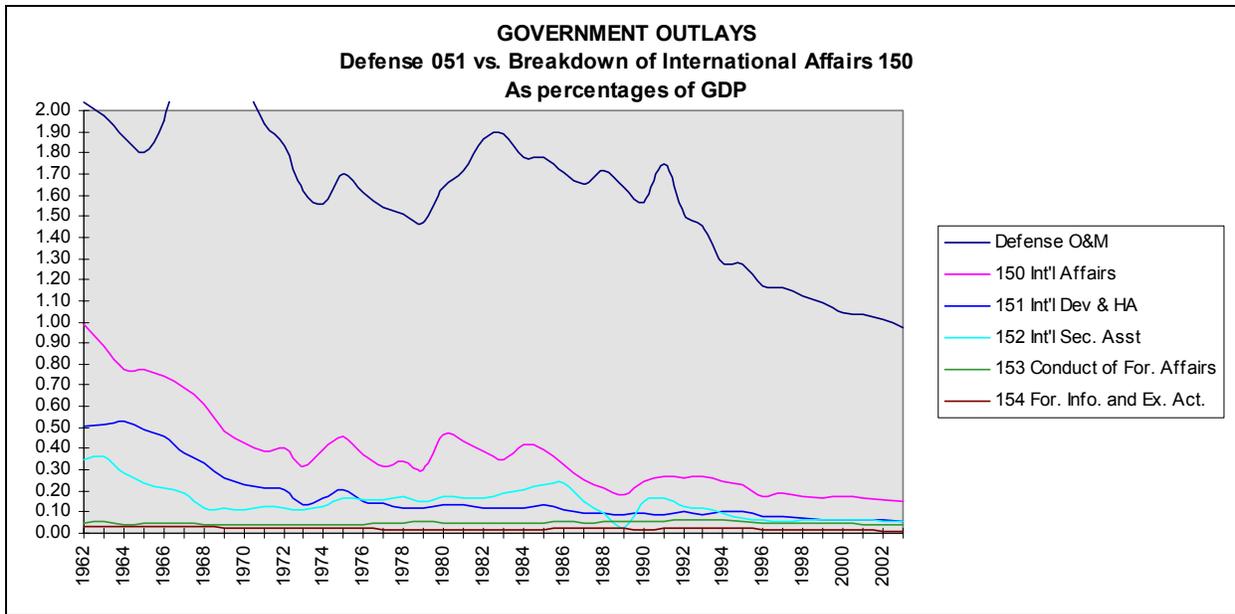


Figure 5. Graphical Comparison of DoD Operations and Maintenance spending versus International Affairs functions as a percentage of GDP. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1998), 42-54

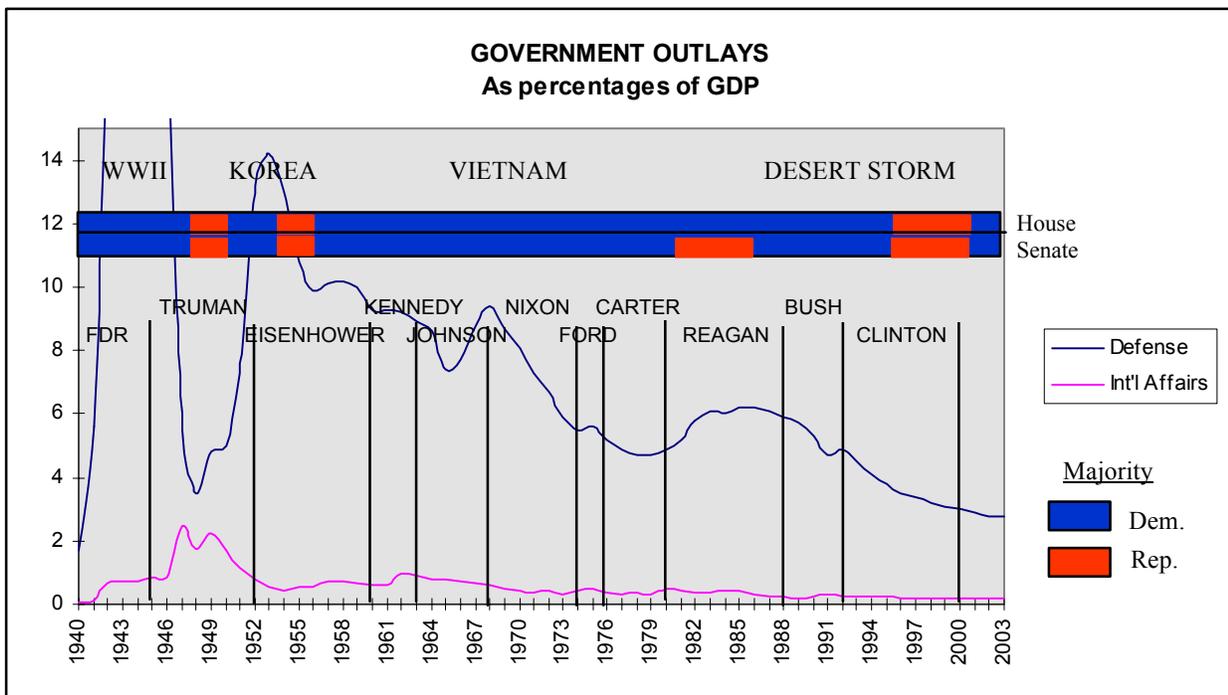


Figure 6. Graphical Comparison of Defense Spending versus International Affairs in Executive Branch and Legislative Branch Context as a percentage of GDP. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1998), 42-54

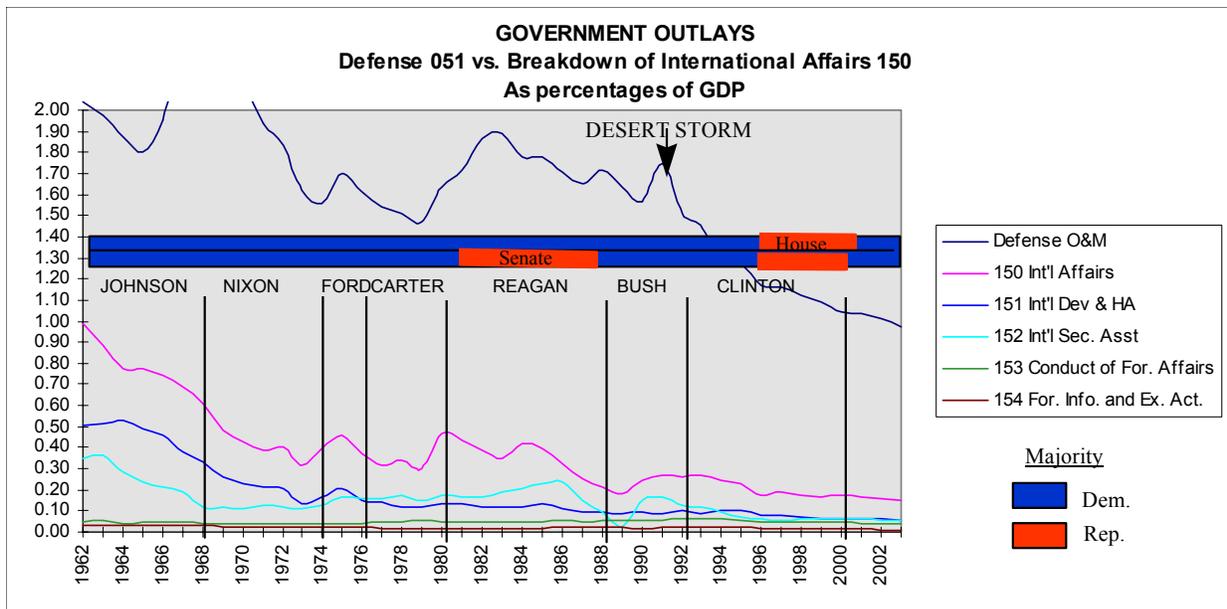


Figure 7. Graphical Comparison of defense spending versus international Affairs Functions in Executive and Legislative Branch context as a percentage of GDP. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1998), 42-54.

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