Ford administrations to the effect of Stuart Symington, whose presence gave Foreign Relations Committee members the “tremendous advantage of... having knowledge of what was going on in Armed Services.”\textsuperscript{23} The final senator in American history to sit simultaneously on both national security committees, the Missouri Democrat arrived in the upper chamber after serving as the first secretary of the Air Force; his continued sympathies led critics to label him the “Senator from the Air Force.”\textsuperscript{24} He achieved national prominence during the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954, when partisan Democrats hailed his willingness to take on McCarthy, who in turn ridiculed him as “Sanctimonious Stu.”\textsuperscript{25} A traditional Cold War liberal for his early tenure in the upper chamber, Symington embraced an alternative national security philosophy in the late 1960s, and thereafter developed into the legislature’s most effective opponent of military spending. The Missouri senator also chaired the Cold War Congress’ most significant subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, which investigated U.S. commitments in Thailand, Spain, and Laos. As Henry Kissinger informed President Nixon at the time, the subcommittee “obtained from DOD, State, and field missions a vast amount of highly sensitive information,” mostly of “the type that has never been given to the legislative branch in previous administrations.”\textsuperscript{26}

In these efforts, Symington transformed the congressional role in Cold War foreign policy. In 1967 hearings on foreign arms sales, he offered a concrete demonstration of the link between military aid and foreign policy. In the 1968-1969 battle against the anti-ballistic missile (ABM), the first full-fledged congressional challenge to a Pentagon weapons system, he showed that dissenters needed detailed technical knowledge of military matters if they hoped to prevail in debates on national security issues. In his inquiry into executive agreements with Spain, he uncovered how overseas bases, frequently obtained without congressional approval, brought with them broader diplomatic requirements. And in the Laotian hearings, he offered a glimpse at how secrecy could obscure not only national security material but also covert wars that were occurring without legislative sanction.

Behind all of these efforts stood a willingness to challenge executive supremacy when considering national security matters, a dramatic shift from the legislative environment of the 1950s and 1960s. The Cold War climate had not only subjected those who voted against defense spending to charges of being soft on Communism, but also the spreading of weapons contracts around the country transformed defense into an economic as well as a

\textsuperscript{23} U.S. Senate, Rules Committee, Hearings, Committee System Reorganization Amendments of 1977, 95\textsuperscript{th} Congress, 1\textsuperscript{st} session, p. 114 (18 Jan. 1977).
\textsuperscript{24} Washington Post, 3 April 1969.
\textsuperscript{26} Henry Kissinger to Richard Nixon, 1 Oct. 1969, Box 20, White House Central File, Richard Nixon Presidential Materials Project, National Archives, II.