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The authors also predict that the politics of abortion will involve more and more citizens, with coalitions forming on both sides. For example, fundamentalist church leaders, particularly in the South, have become a new and dynamic factor in the predominantly Roman Catholic pro-life movement.

The abortion controversy is not going to subside quickly, say Nicholson and Stewart. Like school desegregation, the abortion rights issue is too fundamental to be resolved by a single Court decision.

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*The Enigma
of Ultra*

“The Historical Impact of Revealing the Ultra Secret” by Harold C. Deutsch, in *Parameters* (vol. 7, no. 3), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 17013.

Publication of *The Ultra Secret* by Group Captain F. W. Winterbotham in 1974 stunned historians by revealing the extent to which the Western Allies had enjoyed access to the most secret communications of the German High Command during World War II. The revelations, says Deutsch, a political scientist at the U.S. Army War College, seemed to demand “immediate and wholesale revision” of historians’ assumptions about the factors that determined the course and outcome of the struggle.

However, assessing the importance of Ultra (code name for the entire British effort of deciphering, evaluating, and exploiting the German radio traffic) is not easy. With the notable exception of the 1944 landing in Normandy (where Ultra allowed Allied officers to listen in on high-level German debates on where the invasion should be expected) it was probably only at the middle stage of the war (Summer 1940 to Summer 1943) that Ultra’s role was decisive.

During the 1940 Battle of Britain, Ultra often supplied information (confirmed by radar) about the targets and approach routes of German bombers. It also told London when Hitler abandoned his invasion plans, permitting Churchill to send reinforcements to the Middle East. In the spring of 1941, during the Battle of the Atlantic, the British captured code books, wireless logs, and a German “Enigma” decoding machine that permitted them to destroy the Germans’ system of supply ships for their U-boats and, for a two-month period, to reroute some 50 convoys to escape submarine attack. In North Africa, Ultra provided details of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel’s plans and allowed Allied aircraft to destroy many of his vital supplies.

But as Deutsch points out, when one side is clearly weaker, the best intelligence cannot turn the tide. The Allies knew all the essentials of the German order of battle during the disastrous campaign in Norway

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(April 1940), but it was of little help to them. And the Allies won the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944) without preliminary warnings from Ultra, which had been frustrated by Hitler's decision to maintain tight radio silence prior to the German surprise attack.

Laser, Laser in the Sky

"Strategic and Arms Control Implications of Laser Weapons" by Barry J. Smernoff, in *Air University Review* (Jan./Feb. 1978), Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

The United States and Russia are both spending heavily to develop laser weapons capable of destroying military targets by means of a high energy beam of electromagnetic radiation. The reason is obvious, says Smernoff, a researcher at the Hudson Institute: "Laser weapon technology has the potential to revolutionize the art of warfare during the next quarter-century."

The ultimate laser weapon system could fire a beam of energy from the ground thousands of miles into space with enough power to destroy enemy satellites and ballistic missiles, as well as bombers and cruise missiles. An intermediate weapon might be an airborne laser designed to shoot down enemy planes, satellites, and ballistic missiles launched from submarines (which are most vulnerable during the early minutes of flight).

Should Russia and the United States both develop laser antisatellite weapons, there would be a temptation for each to strike first, knowing that both sides depend on reconnaissance satellites for early warning of impending missile attack.

Experts believe that U.S. development of a high energy laser weapon able to protect our own satellites while capable of eliminating both enemy satellites and incoming ballistic missiles would represent a

*Future conflicts
may find laser-armed
killer satellites
roaming outer space.*

