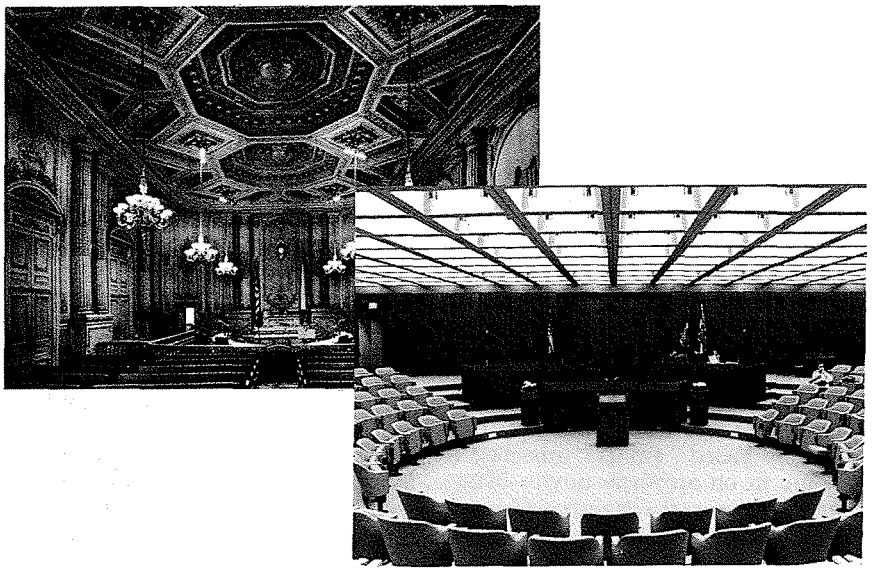


San Francisco's Board of Supervisors convenes in a majestic chamber (left) completed in 1915. By contrast, the contemporary layout of "the pit," as locals call it, where the Fort Worth, Texas, City Council meets, fosters the impression of informal contact between citizen and legislator.

studio" that extends the intimacy to the community at large.

Overall, says Goodsell, the new council chambers suggest that citizens and their representatives are equals, "mutually engaged in the work of government." He worries, though, that while the new designs reflect (and perhaps contribute to) openness in city government, they may also foster a false sense of intimacy and informality that will erode local government authority.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Making the Bomb Obsolete

"Reagan vs. the Scientists: Why the President is Right About Missile Defense" by Robert Jastrow, in *Commentary* (Jan. 1984), 165 East 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

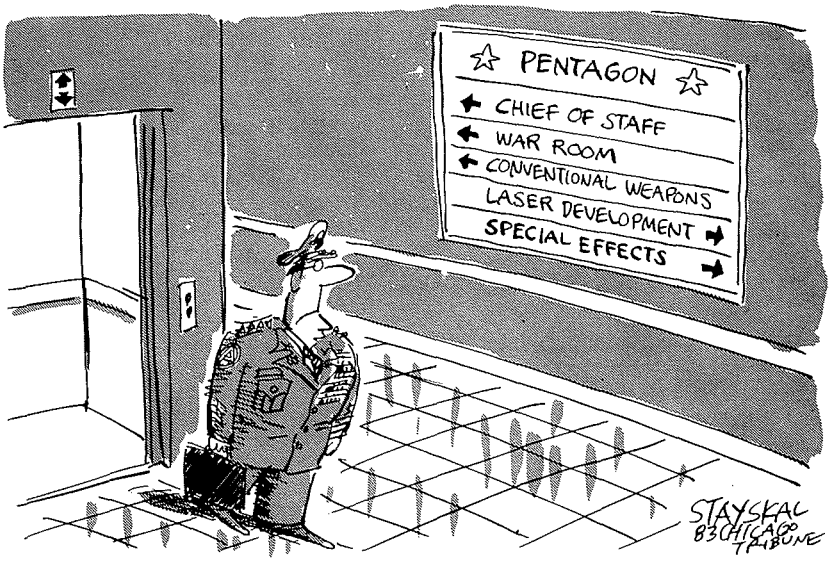
Hoots of derision from scientists, journalists, and Washington politicians greeted President Reagan's March 1983 call for a Space Age defense against Soviet nuclear attack.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

But Jastrow, former director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Institute for Space Studies, thinks that the President's so-called Star Wars idea has merit.

A defense against Soviet missiles is needed, he argues, because the U.S. strategic "triad" is no longer a reliable deterrent: In a Soviet surprise attack, most land-based U.S. missiles and most B-52 bombers would be destroyed, leaving only the 34 nuclear-armed Trident submarines. Trident missiles, however, are too inaccurate to use against "hardened" military targets. And strikes against Soviet cities would provoke retaliation in kind. Surrender might be the only logical choice for U.S. leaders. (The same fear of retaliation against civilian targets, Jastrow adds, would stop Moscow from bombing U.S. cities, even in a surprise attack.)

Because neither side will put its cities at risk, an antimissile defense would have to protect only vital military bases, not the entire nation. The technology to begin such a "point defense" is inexpensive and available now, according to Jastrow. The first element would be ground-based "smart" missiles, using advanced microcomputers to home in on airborne Soviet ICBMs. More complex is President Reagan's proposed space-based antimissile laser. Despite the ridicule heaped on the idea by some civilian specialists, White House science and defense advisers believe that space stations armed with lasers



Exotic technology, including lasers and possibly particle beams, is required for President Reagan's proposed space-based antimissile defense. He is asking Congress for $1.7 billion in "Star Wars" research for 1985.

could be in orbit within 10 years, though at great cost.

Such weapons are banned by the 1972 ABM (antiballistic missile) treaty. But Jastrow contends that Moscow has repeatedly violated the pact. Last summer, for example, U.S. spy satellites discovered a sophisticated radar complex located near the Soviets' Siberian ICBM fields. The only possible use for the radar is to direct antimissile rockets. Other evidence suggests that Moscow has tested such ABMs.

Jastrow envisions a three-tier defense of lasers and "mini-missiles." If each layer had a 10-percent "leakage rate," only one Soviet warhead in 1,000 would reach its military target—not enough to disarm U.S. forces. (The Soviets now have 4,560 nuclear warheads.) Handing over the technology to the Soviets would give both sides a secure defense—and little practical use for their vast atomic arsenals.

Nuclear weapons will never disappear entirely, in Jastrow's view. But he believes that virtually impregnable defenses may eventually bring a day when nuclear weapons are outmoded and are taken off the firing line to be stockpiled against an unlikely suicide attack.

How to Ban the Bomb

"Reflections (Nuclear Arms)" by Jonathan Schell, in *The New Yorker* (Jan. 2 & 9, 1984), 25 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Jonathan Schell's best-selling critique of the arms race, *The Fate of the Earth* (1982), made him a hero of the antinuclear movement. Yet, as both Schell's friends and foes observed, the *New Yorker* writer did not offer any way out of the world's nuclear predicament.

This is Schell's answer. Two standard antinuclear goals—unilateral disarmament and world government—he dismisses as impractical and possibly dangerous. But he contends that a third often denigrated alternative, an agreement among the world's nuclear powers to abolish nuclear weapons, could work.

The usual objection to complete disarmament is that while atomic weapons can be destroyed, the knowledge of how to build them cannot. Eventually, the temptation for one nation to rearm in secret to blackmail or conquer its rivals would be overwhelming.

But Schell proposes to use that imperishable knowledge to establish "weaponless deterrence." While each nation would disarm (in stages), each would retain just enough laboratories, factories, and other facilities to enable it to build new warheads within a few weeks. (Missiles and bombers would not be banned.) The *capacity* of their rivals to rebuild nuclear weapons, Schell argues, "would deter nations from rebuilding them and then using them, just as in our present, nuclear-armed world possession of the weapons themselves deters nations from using them."

As insurance against cheating, Schell would require regular inspections of all weapons production sites. Far more important, all nations would be permitted to build unlimited antinuclear defenses (including the space-based antimissile lasers President Reagan proposed in his