Military should plan for future

By Leo E. Everett

Policy decisions concerning military spending are too often based on past needs rather than on future contingencies, according to Thomas C. Schelling, who is Louis N. Linator Professor of Political Economy at Harvard University.

A major recommendation of the Committee on Economic Development's report, "Conser-

vational Decision-Making for National Security," is that in "all matters of strategic military spending, the government ought to look at least ten years ahead and justify the use of the weapon," Schelling told an MIT audience Tuesday.

"There is an insistence that the military expenditures must be able to deter the Soviet blue from major military action, and Schelling is arguing that "in three or four centuries has the world been so stagnant, as uniform form, as it has been for the last 50 years. To a first approximation, the Truman Doctrine remains the driving force in our strategy.

"Unresponsiveness to present or future conditions, according to Schelling, is seen in the arguments in favor of the Trident submarine, a planned submarine which can fire missiles from great distances. Testimony given before a Congressional committee did not include any discussion of a realignment of power in the Mid-East or a change in the United States' relations with China, and, in fact, seemed to give no better reason than that nobody working for General Eisenhower could think of a better system to fit his needs."

Schelling's belief that weapons must be justified for long-term use stems from the notion that "while technology is progressing rapidly, most expensive weapons systems last extraordinarily long." Because the greatest expenditure is in a segment, in most cases a large, durable float is built. In procuring new systems, you shouldn't show that you can solve yesterday's problems. You must try to show what justification exists for keeping them in the year 2000."

"Although he concurred that planning for the future is a difficult process, Schelling sus-
gested several ways in which progress could be made. First, it would require the inclination of Congressional leaders, as well as "the willingness to hire proper technical staff to play a stricter, more critical role" in making predictions. Schelling also expressed the hope that Congress could encourage more openness concerning dissidence and alternative ideas within the military.

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