

**Automated Versus Hand-Coding Methods:
Identifying Policy Argumentation in Parliamentary Speeches**

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Abstract

Political texts offer valuable insights into policy reasoning. But to know that a politician has taken a particular policy position tells us relatively little, in itself, as to the rationale for doing so. Does someone oppose liberal immigration policies because of budget concerns, or security ones, or of a generic dislike of foreigners? Is a bombing campaign a way of demonstrating toughness, eliminating terrorist training facilities, or supporting a regional ally? To answer questions of this sort, one needs to identify the arguments employed in a particular text. This paper proposes a methodology for identifying interconnected arguments (through “reasons” and “reasoning chains”) in parliamentary speeches, then considers how that method can be scaled up. Unfortunately, automated techniques of textual analysis do not permit reliable identification of major classes of policy arguments. By contrast, a variation of crowdsourcing offers the possibility of using our proposed methodology on a larger scale.

To a significant degree, parliamentary speeches are exercises in policy argumentation. Although legislators make various sorts of addresses—from campaign stump speeches to eulogies, celebrations, and requisitories—it is when they are speaking on the assembly floor, in favor of or against a particular piece of legislation, that they produce arguments to justify their vote. Those arguments, of course, may be shot full of non sequiturs, or fantasies, or ad hominem attacks, or gaps in logic; but they are the rationale used by speakers to account publicly for the position they take on the legislation. As such, if we wish to study issue coalitions (particularly recurring ones) or the ideological distance between the opposing sides on specific pieces of legislation, it is helpful to look at parliamentary speeches, as those speeches can shed light on the similarities and differences between the policy argumentation of different speakers.¹

This paper addresses the specific question of how to extract policy argumentation from parliamentary speeches. We begin with an overview of policy argumentation, defining our key concepts of reasons and reasoning chains, along with the various ways in which the latter are composed. For reasons to be used in a speech, they have to be distinguished from each other, a point that raises the issue of just how granular or, conversely, how abstract, reasons are. Our position is that the degree of abstraction of the reasons depends on the distinctions made by the speaker (i.e., whether s/he will vote in favor of or against the impending bill or resolution), with some distinctions being highly subtle semantically or syntactically, whereas others are much

¹ It is those similarities and differences we are interested in, as part of a larger project on Lasswell's "garrison state" hypothesis. Our specific concern is whether there has been an increase in elite consensus, over a half-century, on national security issues as compared with other issues in foreign policy and domestic politics. We examine overlaps in policy argumentation by legislators for eight separate countries, seeing whether the hypothesized pattern of growth in consensus holds for a variety of developed democratic states. For an overview of the project, as well as a discussion of the technical issue of determining overlap in policy argumentation, see Sylvan and Thornton 2016.

broader, resembling issue dimensions. This implies a more bottom-up approach to coding speeches than the standard classification schemes used in many data construction efforts, a point made in other “text as data” projects (e.g., Grimmer and Stewart 2013; D’Orazio et al. 2014; cf. Bunea and Ibenskas 2015).

We then turn to the relation between individual speeches. Even if different speakers use different words, they may nonetheless put forward the same reasons, a point which implies that policy argumentation for any particular debate can be seen as akin to a space, with the reasoning chains used in individual speeches occupying specific regions of that space.² Speakers’ legislative intentions—whether any particular point is a justification of their position on the legislation, as contrasted with other things they may also be doing in the speech, such as demonstrating bona fides, or settling scores, or announcing future struggles—can be used as a filter in coding speeches as reasons and, by comparing those reasons to other speakers’, in giving an informal sense of how central or peripheral individual speeches are relative to the others on the same side.

These considerations then lead us to a detailed methodological discussion. The criterion of justifying a position on legislation implies a multi-step procedure for hand-coding speeches. As the procedure is both intricate and time-consuming, it would be helpful if it could be automated; for various reasons tied to both the nature of policy argumentation and limitations in existing parsing programs, this simply is not possible right now. Instead, we argue, as have others in the last few years (references in Marinova 2016), that a methodology related to crowd-sourcing may be a way to address the resource constraints inherent in having dedicated, professional hand-coders. The paper concludes with some thoughts on next steps in the study of political speech.

1. Policy argumentation

We take a nominalist approach to argumentation: an *argument* is any verbal construction of the sort A because of B. The various types of “because” (e.g., causal, legal, and so forth) will be discussed

² Technically, reasoning chains can be seen as paths in the space, and it is possible to define a metric that permits calculation of the distance between any two paths.

below; but the important thing is that an argument links two points. As we are concerned with legislation being debated in parliaments, the A point is a *claim*: a speaker's position on the pending vote.³ A *reason* is a point made in support, whether directly or indirectly, of a claim. A reason that supports a claim directly (so that we could represent the role of reason X in the speech, say, as "vote for the bill because of X") is a *core reason*; a reason that supports a core reason (hence, for reason Y, "vote for the bill because of X and X because of Y") is a *secondary reason*. There can be multiple core reasons in a speech and also multiple secondary reasons in support of a given core reason; there can also be a secondary reason in support of another secondary reason, with the latter in support of a core reason. In some cases, a reason that is used as a secondary reason in one speech may be used as a core reason in another (indeed, this may even occur in different paragraphs within a single speech). A *reasoning chain* is a claim supported by a core reason which in turn is supported by at least one secondary reason and, recursively, any secondary reasons in support of the latter. At the minimum, then, reasoning chains are composed of three connected elements, a claim, a core reason, and a secondary reason; but if the latter is in turn supported by one or more secondary reasons, the reasoning chain may be composed of four, five, or more connected elements, though these latter possibilities are relatively rare. As we will discuss below, two chains in a speech may start out with the same core reason in support of the claim and the same immediately supporting secondary reason in support of the core, then, further down, as it were, diverge into different supporting secondary reasons. Such *compound* chains may, for purposes of pairwise similarity assessment, be treated as composed of multiple individual chains. In Figure 1, for example, there are four individual reasoning chains:

Figure 1 here

³ As noted above, legislators can and do announce their positions on issues which are not the subject of pending votes, but although some parliaments set aside time for members to make speeches of that sort, this is not universal. Hence we have opted for speeches on pending measures, even if the measure may not yet have been introduced formally or if, on the contrary, it ends up being withdrawn for redrafting or in the face of opposition. Similarly, for reasons of tractability, we ignore speeches on amendments unless the amendment is in effect a proposal to kill the bill ("strike the rest of the text") or if it sparks a major debate on its own.

two *simple* chains, one linking C to B and the other linking F to E to D; and one compound chain with an individual chain linking I to H to G and another individual chain linking J to H to G.⁴ Finally, the *justification* made in a speech is the combination of the claim and all the reasoning chains supporting it.⁵

Note what justifications do not include. First, as touched on above, whatever else a speaker is doing in a speech besides arguing in favor of or against a piece of legislation (or, perhaps, arguing for abstaining) is not part of the justification. A member of parliament may use a speech to signal a future negotiation, for example, or settle scores with political adversaries, but unless those portions of the speech are arguments in support of the speaker's claim, they are of no particular significance for policy reasoning. Second, and of more immediate analytical significance, justifications do not include isolated reasons. Not all reasons are linked together as chains: quite often, speakers put forward a core reason unsupported by a secondary reason,⁶ and the former are not part of justifications. The rationale here is simply that unsupported reasons are more likely to be tropes or undeveloped items on a list than bona fide explanations of positions on legislation.

It is important to keep in mind that the reasoning chains for a particular speech may not be consistent, at least in the eyes of many observers. A justification may include chains that not only differ in their content but appear contradictory: for example, “vote against the resolution because the Soviets are aggressive; they are aggressive because Stalin made a speech calling for supporting revolutions” and also “vote against the resolution because the Soviets are trying to lull us to sleep;

⁴ Chains may be interconnected not only because they all lead to the same claim (this is trivially the normal case, although there are speeches in which more than one claim is made [e.g., to vote in favor of something and also to be wary of something else in the future]), but because they may be so-called “divergent structures” (Freeman 1991) in which a given secondary reason is used in support of more than one “higher” reason. We do not discuss such chains here because they pose no particular issues for coding or similarity assessment, though, interestingly, they are not permitted in many kinds of argument mapping software (since they are not, mathematically speaking, trees).

⁵ Terminological notes. The phrase “reasoning chain,” as we use it, overlaps to some degree with its use in political science and in computational linguistics (e.g., Sniderman et al. 1986; Sizov and Öztürk 2013). Our concept of “argument” is similar, though not identical, to the first two meanings discussed by Hornikx and Hahn (2012); it is definitely not as differentiated in its notion of “support” as Toulmin’s (1958) canonical model or as limited to direct responses as Rescher’s (1978) notion of a back and forth between two different persons.

⁶ Note that the reverse cannot be true: a secondary reason must by definition support a core reason, and thus be part of a reasoning chain. However, as we will discuss below, our coding procedure does not actually identify secondary reasons directly from summarized speeches. Instead, we code summaries as a set of candidate core reasons, then, among the latter, identify some as supporting others, i.e., as secondary reasons. Any core reasons left unsupported by secondary reasons after this step are precisely the isolated reasons referred to above. The rationale behind this procedure is discussed below.

they are trying to lull us to sleep because Stalin made a speech calling for peace and negotiations with us.” A justification can thus be composed of chains that are mutually inconsistent; on the other hand, a particular chain will display some consistency, via the type of connection (as discussed below), even if the individual reasons may appear ludicrous to observers.

Consider now the connections by which reasons are linked into chains. We said above that each reason is connected to other reasons, or to the claim, by a “because.” These *connectors*, as we call them, are subdivided by type: 1) L: legal or conceptual/definitional (e.g., “we can’t do X because it would be unconstitutional”); 2) H: historical (e.g., “we should do it because we’ve done it before”); 3) C: consequential (including slippery slope arguments) of the sort X occurs, triggering Y (e.g., “if we do X, it will put the budget into deficit”); 4) N: normative (e.g., “we can’t do X because it’s immoral to treat people in that way”); 5) A: anthropological (e.g., “we should do X because it’s the only kind of language people like Y understand”); 6) I: identity/who we are or are not (e.g., “we shouldn’t do X because we’re a democracy, not a dictatorship”; “do X because advocates of X [like me and my allies] are certain kinds of people”); and 7) O: opponents (e.g., “do X because opponents of X are reprobates”).⁷ Note that ad hominem arguments (connection type O), pleas of good faith or being on the side of the angels (connection type I) can be categorized using these connectors, as can “notwithstanding” arguments (“yes, it’s true that so-and-so is a dictator, but we should still do X because ... [any of connection types L, H, C, N, or A]”).

Below, we will discuss the procedure for coming up with connectors, including a consistency criterion that constrains the variety of connectors in a given chain. For now, just note that representing speeches as justifications along the lines proposed above offers a tractable and systematic way of seeing just how much agreement in reasoning there is across speeches. For example, consider the quotations on waterboarding drawn from different political elites in the United States and displayed in Appendix 1.⁸ An informal look at the quotations suggests that

⁷ This list of connectors was put together after provisionally coding a number of speeches in the U.S. Senate debate over Philippines annexation (Thornton and Sylvan 2015), as amended after coding speeches in the research project.

⁸ Note that only one of the statements (Cheney’s) was part of a speech, although another one—the McCain press release—reflected what he said on the Senate floor. Bush’s statement was drawn from his memoirs, which were

Bush's reasoning is similar to that of his vice president, Cheney; that McCain and Clinton agree in some respects; and that Trump partly tracks Bush and Cheney while going further in other regards. These intuitions can be checked through coding the statements as arguments, using the methodology laid out below. Appendix 2 lists all the reasons used in the statements, as well as the reasoning chains which connect them in the arguments; the chains should be read across in this fashion: S-3-5 means support the claim because of reason 3 and support reason 3 because of reason 5.⁹

2. Distinguishing reasons

In coding a speech, it is necessary to identify which reasons are being used in support of the claim. Here, it is important to avoid two obvious extremes. It obviously would add very little if the reasons being abduced are too general: vote for the resolution because good things will happen, or because it is the right thing to do, or because the opponents are incorrect. Just as obviously, one should avoid abducting hyper-specific reasons: vote against the bill because its provision for sending troops for 4 months violates Title 14 of Public Law 882, as per the Constitutional Court's ruling in 1973. Within these extremes, there is a broad range of alternatives, and it is impossible to say a priori how abstract or granular reasons should be; instead, the degree depends on the distinctions made by the speaker in developing his/her argument. For example, in the House of Commons debate of 1947 about reinstating military conscription in the UK, one speaker (Yates) made this particular complaint partway through his speech:

This then is our problem. Here we have these huge Forces and we have a policy of peacetime secretiveness. We do not know where the Forces are or how many there are, for they are stationed all over the world. I understood in my early days in the Labour movement that we did not believe in secret diplomacy, or in secrecy at all. I do not see any reason for approving this Measure. Even the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) was asking for information which is, of course, absolutely essential if the House is to make a sound decision on a matter of

presumably drafted with some concern for consistency. It should also be noted that Clinton's statement to some degree contradicted another statement made years before when she was still in the Senate:

<http://www.democraticunderground.com/1251711013>.

⁹ If the claim were to be opposed, the string would begin with O. For reasons of legibility, in this example we have omitted the types of connections discussed above.

this kind.

The coding procedure we followed (see below) led us to code this passage as a single reason:

“Government hasn’t given us the info we need to decide on conscription.” The claim about what Labour used to believe, or the reference to Churchill, are not in this particular case indicative of a finer-grained distinction.

On the other hand, the government minister (Isaacs) who began the debate by introducing the bill made a point of distinguishing between, on the one hand, deferment of service because of employment or educational training, and, on the other hand, reinstatement in the pre-conscription job following military service. We could have coded both these points as a single reason—for example, “not harm conscripts’ civilian employment”—but, because the speaker insisted on the difference as a way, *inter alia*, of arguing for the legislation on grounds of both flexibility and equity, we instead coded two reasons: “Some valid deferments/postponements of service will be permitted” and “Reinstatement rights will continue to apply, with some caveats.” (As there were several other specific but related distinctions made by Isaacs, we then added an additional, more overarching reason, one used with some frequency by other speakers: “Conscription will not interfere with young men’s futures.”)

This emphasis on the speaker’s legislative intentions implies that the reasons used in any one speech may be heterogeneous in their degree of granularity; taking the collection of reasons across all speeches in a given debate, we would expect high levels of heterogeneity. Consequently, standard top-down approaches to coding speeches will be problematic, except of course as a starting point. On the other hand, so-called bottom-up approaches, such as that employed in topic modeling methods (Quinn et al. 2010; Lucas et al. 2015; Törnberg and Törnberg 2016) or in Wordfish (Slapin and Proksch 2008, 2014) not only are problematic because of the sheer size of the corpora needed to discover co-occurrence patterns but, above all, because of the idea that particular phrases are determinately mappable onto reasons irrespective of the speakers’ legislative intentions.¹⁰ Instead,

¹⁰ As we will see below, some distinctions (e.g., between “dictators” and “thugs”) may be irrelevant pragmatically, whereas others (e.g., between “we will be able to act” and “we may be able to act”) may be relevant. More importantly,

the implication of using legislative intentions as a guide to coding reasons is that the coding procedure is very much an exercise in “grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss 1967): an iterative process in which an initial set of reasons is added to with successive speeches, some reasons being complemented by new ones, others being merged, and still others split up into multiple reasons. As the number of coded speeches increases, the general tendency is that each additional speech adds fewer new reasons and changes few existing ones (though there are some flagrant exceptions to this, typically involving marginal or independent legislators; see below).

3. Reasons and speeches

How are individual speeches related to each other, and to reasons? To start with, we know that regardless of how striking or idiosyncratic a given legislator’s language may be, it must be (and almost always is) understood by others. Although some of this understanding may well be due to the speaker’s past performances and to listeners’ expectations, the words actually uttered must be sufficiently comprehensible that, at a minimum, the speaker’s claim must be clear, and most likely the justification as well.¹¹ This places a severe limit on the extent to which not only words can be used nonstandardly by any individual speaker, but also the extent to which the reasons advanced through certain words are different than those of any other legislator.

In addition, we know (and the various speeches we have studied demonstrate clearly) that speakers often aim at making points similar to those of other speakers. This can happen because a legislator approves what his/her peers have said, or deliberately echoes their speeches, or is repeating “talking points” distributed by party whips or floor leaders. We thus should expect that certain reasons will be advanced over and over in the course of a debate, so much so that later speakers may well fall into a sort of shorthand, condensing details or referring to reasons by exophora (e.g., “Mr. Smith’s [or: “my distinguished colleague’s”] argument”).

some reasons are inferrable even without explicit words: for example, in the Yates quotation above, there is nowhere a sentence stating explicitly that the government has not in fact given the information; rather, it is an inference that most competent English speakers would routinely and unproblematically make.

¹¹ Evidence for this is abundant, from characterizations of speakers by other speakers (then, or afterward) to press accounts of speeches.

It follows, then, that the same reason can be advanced by more than one speaker and thus that, for two or more reasons, the same reasoning chain can also be advanced in different speeches. This has two implications. The first is that, as mentioned above, policy argumentation in a particular debate can be seen as akin to a space, with reasoning chains occupying specific regions of that space. It is possible to compute an ordinal distance between pairs of chains, based not on a priori similarity of issue areas but on whether any given pair shares one or more reasons. By extension, we can therefore calculate the distance between any two speeches (aggregating over pairs of their respective chains) and therefore determine the degree of overlap across speeches within each side of a debate as well as across sides. An interesting corollary of this calculation is that it helps to validate informal assessments of particular speakers as independents, rebels, or simply cranks.¹²

The second implication of the fact that reasoning chains can be advanced by more than one speaker is that speeches are sequentially structured in a way that reasoning chains are not. Although many speeches are highly repetitive—we are continually struck by how often speakers make the same point over and over, often in immediate succession—or, conversely, are in essence long lists of reasons, the speeches are sequentially organized at least insofar as they have to start and to end; moreover, sequential order also comes out because if a reason is indeed advanced repeatedly, its prior invocation will often be acknowledged. Reasoning chains, however, do not exist in any kind of sequential order. The fact that a chain may involve historical or consequential connections does not mean that the linked reasons of that chain are temporally ordered, much less that such chains must precede or follow certain other chains. Speeches put forward reasoning chains relevant to a position on legislation, but the speeches are not the chains themselves. As mentioned above, speakers may well be using their speeches for multiple purposes, of which justifying a claim is only one. Even if the latter is the only point of the speech, the fact that there is not a one-to-one relation between particular phrases of a speech and particular reasoning chains (there are many

¹² We have found that in coding the paragraphs of isolated speakers, there either are no reasons advanced in many of them (to be precise, no reasons which support the claim. There are certainly other points being made, but they are not germane to justifying the speaker's position on pending legislation) or very long paragraphs will end up being coded as advancing only one or two reasons.

combinations of words by which speakers can put forward the same reason; some reasoning chains are only implied by the words rather than stated explicitly; and the same exact words, in different contexts, can put forward different reasons) means that automated coding procedures, involving precisely a determinate mapping of words onto reasons, are likely to be of limited use (see below).

However, the fact that reasoning chains are put forward in speeches but are not the same as speeches does not mean that there is a pre-set collection of reasoning chains for any particular debate and that speakers, say, choose among that collection to construct their own speeches. Certainly speakers have in mind that they do wish to make a particular point, but they cannot do so without words, and it is exactly their choice of words that not only instantiates reasoning chains, but also modifies them. A speaker may want to emphasize a hitherto neglected point, or to modify someone else's argument, and so even if debates were not joined—e.g., speakers did not try to rebut their opponents—they would still progress, because later speakers will necessarily make slightly different points than earlier ones. (Imagine that you are the 30th speaker in a debate. Even if you only say, "I agree with everyone else on my side of the issue," the fact of saying that adds a reason: "Those on my side are correct.")

4. Methodology: hand-coding

The above considerations suggest that we use the legislative intentions of speakers to code speeches as reasoning chains. We have developed a methodology for doing so. It involves a series of steps, starting with pre-processing debates and ending with a data set consisting of the reasoning chains for each speech in the debate. That set of chains can then be analyzed to determine homogeneity of reasoning both within and across the opposing sides of the debate. We pass over the question of choosing debates, which is a task that depends on the researcher's substantive and theoretical focus. We would simply observe, in passing, that many contested issues do not necessarily make it to the floor; that not all debates involve numerous speeches on both sides; and that some debates do not terminate in votes. The debates we examine meet all three criteria.

Pre-processing. We take a debate and reduce it in size by eliminating procedural preliminaries (unless they raise substantive points), as well as end-game skirmishes; we also eliminate many lower-level debates on amendments, though some of the latter are kept because they raise general questions. By the same token, we eliminate many colloquies, whether insulting or friendly, unless they involve reasons advanced in support of the proposed legislation. Speeches that are interrupted by questions are stitched together. The end result of the pre-processing is that debates are cast as a collection of pro- and anti- speeches. The number of such speeches varies, depending on country and time period, from 20 to 60; those speeches are usually clustered in a handful of days, often nonconsecutive. Depending on the country, the collection of speeches may only include those made in the lower house.

Paraphrasing. We operate on transcripts that are divided into paragraphs, even if paragraphing conventions vary considerably from one language and indeed one parliament to another. Each paragraph in a speech is paraphrased in English (obviously for speeches in other languages, this adds considerable time), sentence by sentence. The paraphrasing aims to simplify sentence structure (in some cases, sentences have to be broken into parts to produce readable English), eliminate quotations and presentation of numbers, clarify obscure references, standardize courtesies, and in various ways to produce texts that can be read as stand-alone documents by other researchers. Paraphrasing is carried out by individual researchers, who then on two occasions, and with somewhat different personnel, distribute their paraphrases to other researchers and answer questions about confusing or perhaps repetitive points. Often, those question-and-answer sessions involve the paraphraser going back over the original text; it is the first in a series of reliability checks (not ideal, as we would like to have at least a second researcher paraphrasing the same texts, but given resource constraints, it is unavoidable).

Summarizing. After a speech is paraphrased, each paraphrased paragraph is summarized, the idea being to focus on the main point(s) of the speaker in that paragraph. Sentence structure is further simplified, repetitions are (usually) eliminated, and tacit points are interpolated or added.

Often, the summarizing will be abstract and be written in a form quite different in tonality or word choice than the paraphrase. Summaries are produced by the same researcher who did the paraphrasing; as with the latter, summaries are presented on two occasions to other researchers for discussion and amendment as a second reliability check.

Reasons. Summaries are coded as collections of reasons. In principle, each phrase, or at least clause, of each sentence in a summary is coded as one or more reasons. Many times, the reason borrows some of the same terminology as the phrase, but at other times, if the reason was already put forward by another speaker in a previous speech, there will be a slight difference in terminology. Tacit points, whether complementary to a particular explicit reason or implicit in a set of explicit reasons, will also be coded as reasons, though we signal this to ourselves by putting them in square brackets. To capture the speaker's legislative intentions, researchers are instructed to use argument-related formulas such as "vote for the bill because of X," where X is the candidate reason. Reasons are initially coded, after the summaries of all speeches in the debate have been done, by the same researcher who produced the paraphrases and summaries for that debate. As with the preceding steps, reasons are checked, twice, by other researchers.

As indicated above, there are some summary paragraphs for which no reasons are coded. These paragraphs involve other types of arguments irrelevant to justifying the core claim. Although this does not happen all that often, it occurs from time-to-time that a particular speech has few or no reasons after processing.

As speeches are coded, researchers construct, draw upon, add to, and at times revise the wording, of a master list of reasons. That list can be quite lengthy: of three debates we are currently coding, it appears that there will end up being between 250 and 300 reasons (for 20–60 speeches). For retrieval and simplicity purposes, reasons are assigned a number and arranged in the master list either numerically or, in some cases, crudely, by topic (e.g., cost of the bill, motivations of supporters). Although our focus is not on individual reasons, impressionistically, it appears that debates in different parliaments at roughly the same time period overlap at least to some degree on

the type of reason: for example, and unsurprisingly, speakers in the debates in the UK on conscription (1947), in the US on aid to Greece and Turkey (1947), in Japan on the Peace and Security Treaties (1951), in Germany on the EDC (1952), and in Switzerland on the purchase of jet fighters (1947) all advance reasons having to do with the cold war.

Reasoning chains. After each summary paragraph has been assigned reasons, researchers make another pass through the summaries and, for each paragraph, code the reasons into chains. Researchers are instructed to use the same sort of argumentative formula as for the abducing of reasons “vote for the bill because of X, and X because of Y.” This means that some reasons are, so to speak, orphaned because they are neither supported by, or themselves support, other reasons. In linking reasons into chains, some standard political science ways of producing arguments, notably causality (A leads to B, which leads to C, etc.) have to be modified: if situation A leads to situation B, then the reasons referring to those situations may have to be reversed: vote for the bill because situation B will occur (which is a good thing), and situation B will occur because of situation A. Again, reasoning chains are checked, twice, by other researchers.

Filtering. In order to avoid overemphasizing particular reasons and to capture the main points of a speech, after the reasoning chains are coded, researchers make a final pass and eliminate all reasons that are only used once in that speech. If a reason is eliminated, then the chain in which it may be included will also be eliminated. The result is a datum for each speech consisting of a claim and a filtered set of chains.

To get an idea of how this procedure works in practice, consider an example. Partway through the UK conscription debate (1 April 1947), a Conservative MP, Oliver Stanley, spoke. Appendix 3 presents his speech, complete with interruptions. Pre-processing of the speech led to elimination of interruptions and of numerous details, as can be seen in the paraphrase (interspersed with italicized summaries) in Appendix 4. The summaries further reduced the amount of detail, while adding (signaled by square brackets) a number of points that seemed to be made, though not explicitly, in the paragraphs (see, for example, paragraphs 4, 10, and 14). Note that when the

summarizing was complete, what had begun as a 7-page transcript of a 35-minute speech was reduced to just over a page of summary.

The summary was then coded for reasons and reasoning chains. This is shown in Appendix 5, with each summarized paragraph being followed by reasons (numbered by their order in the master list) and reasoning chains. It will be noted that some reasons are not included in reasoning chains, because we could not see any links between them and other reasons. Some reasons are in square brackets because they are implied, though not stated explicitly, or because they have been interpolated from another part of the speech. Still other reasons, and all chains including them, are lined through because they did not pass the “used more than once” filtering test. Finally, some paragraphs are marked N/A because they do not contain any reasons relevant to the claim. In the end, Stanley’s speech is coded as using a single reasoning chain (twice): the bill should be supported because opponents (Liberals and left-wing Labour Party MPs) are playing politics; and they are playing politics because, contrary to their claims, conscription is not a fundamentally Conservative Party idea. Everything else in the speech is either a one-off which we cannot claim is part of the main reasoning supporting the claim or irrelevant to the claim itself.

5. Methodology: alternatives

It is apparent from the intricacy and time-consuming nature of the above procedure that it would be preferable to have an automated procedure that would operate on debate transcripts and produce one or more of the subsequent products (pre-processed transcripts, paraphrases, summaries, reasons, reasoning chains, or filtered reasoning chains). Unfortunately, there are no such automated procedures, at least as far as we are aware. Even the first two steps—pre-processing and paraphrasing—require an examination of content and a discrimination among points germane to the debate, or to the justification in the speech, which in turn requires a knowledge of both the issue at hand as it was debated in that country at that time, and how politicians argue and position themselves. Summarizing requires not only both types of knowledge but also a sense of how points

can be made allusively, indirectly (we frequently found ourselves asking why a speaker would utter a particular sentence, or what an otherwise obscure reference or a certain turn of phrase was getting at; this is particularly true for so-called dog whistle politics (Lopez 2014; Mimno and Bamman 2015): the use of certain expressions which will be interpreted in a savvy way by the target audience while being ignored by other audiences¹³), or indexically (what does “this” or “here” mean?). Similarly, and as we saw above, coming up with reasons requires not only a sense of the semantics of certain phrases (so that we know which reason a given phrase seems to be pointing to) but a knowledge of how arguments are constructed, in order to add square-bracketed (i.e., inferred) reasons. Indeed, we know of no work in either political science or computational linguistics that even raises the issue of coding reasons, much less does so. Finally, coding reasoning chains is only to a very limited degree a matter of hunting for connectives such as “because” and “hence” and more a matter of using our formula (vote for X because of Y) in a way that we think corresponds to what is happening in the speech. Indeed, as we pointed out above, some chains are constructed without the use of any standard connectives, whereas many connectives are used in a way that has nothing to do with what we mean by reasoning chains.¹⁴

One of the ways in which researchers have been able to correct the shortcomings of automated methods has been by “training” parsers to recognize certain words or phrases as pointing to other linguistic objects, such as actions or sentiments (e.g., Young and Soroka 2012; Zhou 2013). However, training requires prior hand-coding, and to have sufficient range in a training corpus, the

¹³ The canonical example is the late Lee Atwater, a Republican Party operative who, when interviewed in 1981, explained how politicians appealed to Southern white voters over time: “You start out in 1954 by saying, ‘Nigger, nigger, nigger.’ By 1968 you can’t say ‘nigger’—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states’ rights and all that stuff, and you’re getting so abstract. Now [1981] you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites.” <http://www.thenation.com/article/170841/exclusive-lee-atwaters-infamous-1981-interview-southern-strategy>

¹⁴ Most discourse connection parsers use explicit connectors drawn from the Penn Discourse Treebank, a large collection of *Wall Street Journal* articles which have been manually annotated for this purpose. For example, see Pitler et al. 2008; Ling, Ng, and Kan 2012. Much work has been put into training parsers to recognize implicit discourse connectors (e.g., Pitler, Louis, and Nenkova 2009; Lin, Kan, and Ng 2009; and Feng, Lin, and Hirst 2014), but none of these efforts come near to the types of reasoning connectors discussed here. Alternative approaches, such as looking for clusters of covarying words (e.g., Klebanov, Diermeier, and Beigman 2008) also fall short, mostly because of the mapping problem referred to above.

latter would end up being around the same size as our hand-coded debates.¹⁵ In fact, since many important debates do not exceed 60 speeches, and since debates vary massively across issue areas, countries, and time periods, there would be no particular value to training, since there is no larger, unified corpus on which software could operate.

Our original intent, in planning this paper, had been to test two different automated parsing methods: one based on frequency counts (Wordfish) and the other on discourse connectives along the lines of the Penn Discourse Treebank. However, as we refined our methodology and coded reasoning chains for a number of speeches, it became apparent that a test along these lines would add no particular value. For now, there simply are no automated methods available for replacing hand-coding.

Nonetheless, there is one way of scaling up the number and perhaps variety of coded speeches, and that is through a sort of crowdsourcing methodology. As we mentioned at the start of this paper, researchers analyzing text have recently turned to crowdsourcing (Leeper 2013: 4–6; Conway 2013; Benoit et al. forthcoming), and we think that, with modifications, that approach might well turn out to be useful. What we need is a cadre of coders with some knowledge about politics, as well as being sufficiently fluent in both English and another language to produce paraphrases. This suggests that it might be possible to solicit graduate students (perhaps undergraduates) in political science at different universities to code speeches. Our estimate is that the time required to paraphrase, summarize, code reasons, and code reasoning chains for a single speech is between one and four hours, and it might therefore be possible to code a debate by asking one or two classes of political science students at a given university to do the work, with each student coding a single speech. Of course, there would be additional complications, because there would be no master list of reasons to consult for each student, therefore necessitating project

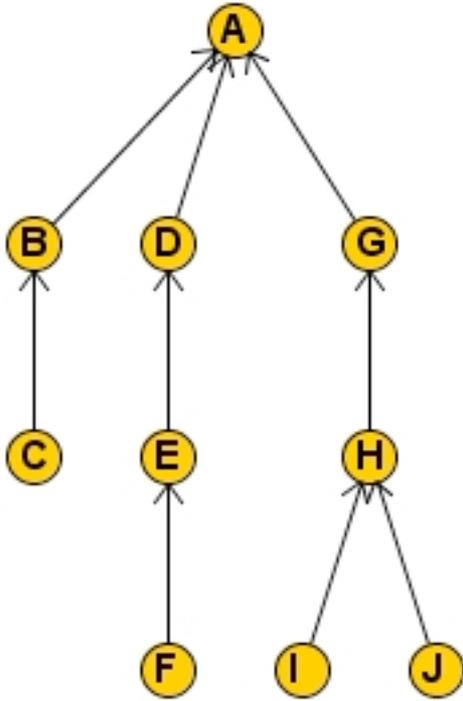
¹⁵ Laver, Benoit, and Garry (2003: 315; see also Lowe 2008: 369; Hjorth et al. 2015: 6), in their seminal paper on Wordscores, indicate that their two “reference texts” each run from 10,000 to 30,000 words in length, with between 2,000 and 4,000 unique words per text. The Stanley speech reproduced in Appendix 3, which is somewhat on the long side for the UK parliament, is around 5,000 words, and so we would likely need anywhere from 10 to 20 speeches just to train a parser to code individual words. Since we want to code reasons, we would need phrases, which drastically scales up the number of reference texts required.

researchers to construct such a list after the fact, using as inputs the list of reasons put forward in each speech (this would take a nontrivial amount of time, though it could replace time currently spent in going through the entire coding procedure scores of times); alternatively, students could simply be asked to paraphrase and summarize, with current researchers coding the summaries for reasons and reasoning chains. It would also be challenging to come up with a clear set of instructions for the exact procedure the students would follow, but in principle, it should be possible to modify the existing set of instructions used for our current researchers to work with students who do not have prior contact with us. By the same token, it should be possible to devise a remuneration scheme, either monetary or in-kind, to compensate the students for their time.

6. Conclusion

The thrust of this paper is that the glass is half-full. Yes, coding along the lines we have presented is time-consuming and intricate, and yes, there are significant methodological and logistical constraints on doing it on a large scale. But the methodology is both systematic and reliable, and the end result is a deeper insight into legislative debate, precisely by attending to the points that speakers are making, than even the subtlest analyses of voting or of key words can currently contribute.

Figure 1
Four reasoning chains



Appendix 1

Statements on waterboarding

1. Cheney (2008)

“The military has interrogated terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay. And in addition, a small number of terrorists, high-value targets, held overseas have gone through an interrogation program run by the CIA. It’s a tougher program, for tougher customers. These include Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11. He and others were questioned at a time when another attack on this country was believed to be imminent. It’s a good thing we had them in custody, and it’s a good thing we found out what they knew.

“The procedures of the CIA program are designed to be safe, and they are in full compliance with the nation’s laws and treaty obligations. They’ve been carefully reviewed by the Department of Justice, and very carefully monitored. The program is run by highly trained professionals who understand their obligations under the law. And the program has uncovered a wealth of information that has foiled attacks against the United States; information that has saved thousands of lives.

“The United States is a country that takes human rights seriously. We do not torture—it’s against our laws and against our values. We’re proud of our country and what it stands for. We expect all of those who serve America to conduct themselves with honor. And we enforce those rules. Some years ago, when abuses were committed at Abu Ghraib prison, a facility that had nothing to do with the CIA program, the abuses that came to light were, in fact, investigated, and those responsible were prosecuted. ...”

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cheney-defends-us-use-of-waterboarding/>

2. Bush (2010)

“CIA experts drew up a list of interrogation techniques. ... At my direction, Department of Justice and CIA lawyers conducted a careful legal review. The enhanced interrogation program complied with the Constitution and all applicable laws, including those that ban torture.

“There were two that I felt went too far, even if they were legal. I directed the CIA not to use them. Another technique was waterboarding, a process of simulated drowning. No doubt the procedure was tough, but medical experts assured the CIA that it did no lasting harm.”

Though Bush confirms that he knew the use of waterboarding would one day become public, and acknowledges that it is “sensitive and controversial,” he asserts that “the choice between security and values was real,” and expresses firm confidence in his decision. “Had I not authorized waterboarding on senior al Qaeda leaders, I would have had to accept a greater risk that the country would be attacked. In the wake of 9/11, that was a risk I was unwilling to take,” he writes.

Bush further declares that the new techniques proved effective, yielding information on al Qaeda’s structure and operations, and leading to the capture of Ramzi bin al Shibh, the logistical planner of the 9/11 attacks who was captured on the first anniversary of 9/11.

And if there were any lingering doubts or conflict about the use of waterboarding, Bush discloses that he received reassurance from an unlikely source: terror suspect Abu Zubaydah.

The former president writes, “His understanding of Islam was that he had to resist interrogation

only up to a certain point. Waterboarding was the technique that allowed him to reach that threshold, fulfill his religious duty, and then cooperate.” Bush elaborates that Zubaydah gave him a direct instruction, ““You must do this for all the brothers.””

Intelligence gleaned from interrogations of Abu Zubaydah and other suspects led to the capture of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Bush writes. During a raid on Mohammed’s compound, agents discovered more plans for terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

Prompted by the discoveries, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet asked if he had permission to use enhanced interrogation techniques including waterboarding on Mohammed.

Bush exposes his inner thoughts on what led him to reach this decision: “I thought about my meeting with Danny Pearl’s widow, who was pregnant with his son when he was murdered. I thought about the 2,971 people stolen from their families by al Qaeda on 9/11. And I thought about my duty to protect my country from another act of terror.

‘Damn right,’ I said.”

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/11/05/bush.book/>

3. McCain (2016)

“Given the loose talk on the campaign trail about reviving waterboarding and other inhumane interrogation techniques, it is important to remember the facts: that these forms of torture not only failed their purpose to secure actionable intelligence to prevent further attacks on the U.S. and our allies, but compromised our values, stained our national honor, and did little practical good. It is also important to remember that our nation has tried, convicted, and executed foreign combatants who employed methods of torture, including waterboarding, against American prisoners of war. As I have said before, our nation should never have employed such practices in the past, and we should never permit them in the future.

“There is broad, bipartisan agreement on this fundamental question. Last year, the United States Senate passed in an overwhelming vote of 91–3 the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, legislation that took a historic step forward to ban torture once and for all by limiting U.S. Government interrogation techniques to those in the Army Field Manual. The Manual embodies the values Americans have embraced for generations—preserving the ability of our interrogators to extract critical intelligence from our adversaries while recognizing that torture and cruel treatment are ineffective interrogation methods. Some of the nation’s most respected leaders from the U.S. military, CIA, FBI, as well as faith communities and human rights organizations, have expressed their support for this legislation.

“As Americans of conscience we must remember that in the war on terrorism, we are fighting not only to defend our security, but for an idea that all men are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights. How much safer the world would be if all nations believed the same. How much more dangerous it can become when we forget it ourselves even momentarily, as we learned in the aftermath of Abu Ghraib. Our nation needs a Commander-in-Chief who will make clear to those that fight on our behalf that they are defending this sacred ideal, and that sacrificing our respect for human dignity will make it harder, not easier, to prevail in this war.”

<http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=6044CE90-20F1-4823-A126-C03D5F770565>

4. Clinton (2014)

“Today we can say again in a loud and clear voice, the United States should never condone or practice torture anywhere in the world,” Clinton said.

The former secretary of state, accepting an award from the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, acknowledged that Americans are frustrated by the country’s “division and polarization” that often seems to block progress.

“That should be absolutely clear as a matter of both policy and law, including our international treaty obligations, and if that requires new legislation, then Congress should work with President Obama to quickly enact it and it shouldn’t be an issue of partisan politics,” Clinton said of eliminating the use of torture techniques.

“America is at our best when our actions match our values,” she said.

Clinton said she was “proud” to be part of the Obama administration noting brutal interrogation tactics such as waterboarding were banned with a 2009 executive order.

“Yes, the threat of terrorism is real and urgent, scores of children were just murdered in Pakistan, beheadings in the Middle East, a siege in Sydney, these tragedies not only break hearts but should steel our resolve and underscore that our values are what set us apart from our adversaries,” Clinton said.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/hillary-clinton-speaks-us-torture/story?id=27654296>

5. Trump (2015)

“Would I approve waterboarding? You bet your ass I would—in a heartbeat,” Trump said to loud cheers during a rally at a convention center here Monday night that attracted thousands. “And I would approve more than that. Don’t kid yourself, folks. It works, okay? It works. Only a stupid person would say it doesn’t work.”

Trump said such techniques are needed to confront terrorists who “chop off our young people’s heads” and “build these iron cages, and they’ll put 20 people in them and they drop them in the ocean for 15 minutes and pull them up 15 minutes later.”

“It works,” Trump said over and over again. “Believe me, it works. And you know what? If it doesn’t work, they deserve it anyway, for what they’re doing. It works.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/23/donald-trump-on-waterboarding-if-it-doesnt-work-they-deserve-it-anyway/>

Appendix 2

Reasoning chains for waterboarding

Claim: Blanket prohibition on waterboarding

Reasons

- 01 Waterboarding is good
- 02 Prisoners talk
- 03 Waterboarding is not torture
- 04 Waterboarding is safe
- 05 Prisoners deserve to be waterboarded
- 06 Waterboarding is torture
- 07 Waterboarding is bad
- 08 Prisoners lie
- 09 Waterboarding stains our reputation
- 10 Waterboarding is contrary to our values
- 11 US should never condone waterboarding
- 12 US follows international law

Reasoning chains

Cheney

O-1-2

O-3-4

Bush

O-1-2

O-3-4

McCain

S-7-8

S-9-10

Clinton

S-11-12

S-9-10

Trump

O-1-2

O-5-6

Appendix 3

Speech in a debate

Oliver Stanley (Bristol, West) The House has listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. Member for West Leeds (Mr. Stamford) who has explained to us with great clarity the reasons why he is unable to take a stand either for or against the Bill. I think that probably most people in this House approach the decision to be taken tonight, with a certain amount of difficulty and hesitation. I exempt from that, of course, the right hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. C. Davies) and his followers. He has told us that the whole of his band in this House are united in the stand they are taking, and definite in their views. If he has had no difficulty among the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, he cannot say there is the same unity of belief in the Liberal Party throughout the country. If he were to say that, he would show that he had not done, what every good Liberal ought to do every morning, and that is to read the "News Chronicle." If he had read the "News Chronicle" this morning, he would have noticed a leader which stated that: "It is apparent, for instance, that within the Liberal Party all do not think alike on this issue. Parliamentary Liberals are to oppose outright the Government's Conscription Bill. Yet the recent draft statement of Liberal policy, which is to be submitted to the Party Assembly, while regarding conscription as undesirable as a permanent institution goes on to say that, 'the existing situation clearly makes a continuation of the war-time Measure obligatory.'" We, no doubt, on our side of the House, could, if we liked, have also made our decision an easy one. I noticed that my Sunday paper, last Sunday, was full of the events of what was described as the biggest sporting day of the year. The semifinals of the Cup, the Grand National, the Boat Race, and a speech by the Attorney-General. This speech was full of bitter complaint against the Tory Party. [Interruption.] Hon. Members opposite, surely, have learned by now never to applaud any statement by the Attorney-General, without waiting, not only for the end of the speech, but for the apology that comes after it. He accuses us of putting party advantage before national interest, and of being prepared to exploit the country's difficulties in order to inconvenience the Socialist Government. It is fair to say that he did not only deal in generalities. He cited a grave charge in support of his views. He said that we have encouraged people to grumble against the blessings which that benevolent bunch on the Front Bench opposite are continually bestowing upon us. If that were true, it would be a grave charge, but, of course, like most of the Attorney-General's charges, it is untrue.

If it were true and if, in fact, we thought nothing but of our party advantage and if we were prepared to subordinate the national interests to them, what a glorious opportunity we should be having this evening. If we chose to oppose this Bill tonight we should not be causing the party opposite only some petty annoyance. We should be inflicting upon it a first-class Parliamentary defeat, and as I speak from this Box we would be looking on many of the faces opposite for the last time—an aesthetic loss but one that could be fully compensated for by the political advantages. No doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer as he goes into the Lobby tonight will do so with a song in his heart, and as he looks on his followers so soon to be reduced the song may well prove to be, "Will ye no' come back again?" But what the Attorney-General said about this party on Saturday is going to be proved wrong on Tuesday. That is unusually quick, even to disprove a statement by the Attorney-General, and I hope, therefore, that tonight when he and I go through the same Lobby—because we shall be tonight what I think is technically called "fellow travelers"—he will favour us with one of those felicitous apologies for which, if for nothing else, he has during the last year gained such reputation.

We are going to take on this occasion what is, politically at any rate, the hard course. We are

going to divide on this Bill as we think it to be in the national interest and not to our party advantage, and we or at any rate the great majority of us intend to support the Bill. It is not a very pleasant decision for anyone to have to take. There cannot be anybody in any party on any side of the House who likes conscription in peacetime or the consequences that it entails. At the best, it is as was described by an hon. Member opposite in the Debate yesterday a reluctant necessity.

I was very interested yesterday in the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Dudley (Colonel Wigg). I listened to the whole of it, I read it again this morning and I hope I am not doing the hon. Member an injustice if I say he spoke in favour of the Bill, but curiously enough most of his speech was devoted to a condemnation of my hon. Friends on this side of the House for supporting the Bill, and what remained was a condemnation of the Liberal Party for opposing it. The hon. and gallant Member's chief reason against us was he said that we had been in favour of conscription for 40 years. Even if he is right, I do not see why that would make it wrong for us to vote in favour of it tonight. There is nothing fundamentally wrong in sticking to an opinion for a long time. However, the hon. and gallant Member has only been in the House a short time and he may have been misled by his experiences. I can assure him that only recently has it been considered shameful to maintain after the Election the same themes as one propounded before it. There are many earlier and most respectable precedents in favour of saying the same thing, both before and after appealing to the electors.

As a matter of fact, the hon. and gallant Member was wrong. Conscription has not been a part of the Conservative policy for 40 years. It has never figured in our programme. With regard to the argument of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Montgomery that if it was not in our programme or speeches or policy it was in our heart of hearts, I would reply: Is not that rather a dangerous argument to put forward? It is, of course, an easy line to take. If one's opponent does not say things to prove one's case it is open to one to say that a certain view is still held by him in his heart of hearts. It is, of course, an argument that several people can use. It would be quite possible, although I would not dream of saying so, to say that "in their heart of hearts" the Liberal Party really believe that conscription is necessary. I should have just as much evidence to give in support of that, as there is in support of the charge which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has brought against us. But it has not been our programme for 40 years. It is not something which we have looked forward to, something we have worked for, or something that we welcome.

We recognise just as well as anybody in this House the hardship and the losses which a policy of this kind is bound to entail. We see the results upon the individual, and we see the results upon the economy of the State. We wish that we could go back to the days in which the Liberal Party was triumphant—and in which to a large extent they still live—when it was unnecessary to bring forward a Measure of this kind. I certainly do not think that a period of service in the Armed Forces is something that is bound to do irreparable harm to a young man who has to undergo it. I think it is an experience from which, as all Members of the House who served in the Armed Forces would agree, a great amount of good can be drawn by an individual. But it would be equally foolish to argue that there is some full educational recompense to counterbalance the disadvantages to the individual in the Service. Therefore, if we support this Bill tonight it is for no love of the Measure itself. It is because we fully admit that though grave difficulties, loss and injuries will be brought about by it, there are still graver consequences on the other side.

During this Debate the opposition to this Measure has been fully expressed. Hon. Members

have supported it from many different angles, but in the end all roads seem to lead to the "No" Lobby. I am not going to deal with some of the more exotic criticisms of this Measure. An hon. Lady who spoke yesterday objected to the Bill because it did not extend to women. She said that it was placing women, most unfairly, amongst the unprivileged. I am sympathetic with feminism, but I really think there is a point when feminism, merges into folly. But there have been certain broad principles of objection to this Bill on which I wish to say a few words. In the first place, there are those who are genuine objectors to compulsory military service on conscientious grounds. They have opposed conscription in peace and war. They have opposed conscription, whether it has been brought in by a Tory Government or a Labour Government; they have opposed it whether their position was popular or unpopular; and they have been prepared, in some cases, to pay heavily, politically speaking, for their opposition. For those people, I and I think everyone in the House has very sincere respect even if we cannot agree with their judgment. To them, I only say this that to my mind the only reason why they are still able to urge in this House views of that kind is because on two occasions the majority of the people of this country have taken a different view.

I understand their point of view, but I cannot understand those people who, while prepared to admit that compulsory service may be morally right in wartime, are also prepared to insist that it is morally wrong in peace. I can see the difference between conscription in peace and conscription in war. I can see the difference in the weight of the argument and I can see the argument that the burden is far more onerous in peace while the reasons for it are less obvious and that the alternative course appears more promising and more possible. But I cannot see the difference between the two on the question of ethics. I cannot see that it is right to do it, as long as it may be too late and wrong to do it if it is done in time to avert danger or disaster.

There was another group who did not object to conscription in itself, but as we were told objected to conscription in support of a foreign policy with which they did not agree. The most prominent exponent of that particular theory was the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. Zilliagus). I noticed one hon. Member opposite in a speech yesterday tried to dissuade the hon. Member from his course by the threat that, if and when the hon. Member for Gateshead became Foreign Secretary, he might be reminded of the attitude he was now taking. That was ineffective, largely, I think, because the hon. Member for Gateshead realises that under any Government of which he is likely to be a member, the opportunities for reminding Ministers of previous inconvenient statements will be limited and the results will be discouraging—painfully so. I regard the doctrine advanced by the hon. Member as a most dangerous doctrine. If you are to oppose conscription because you disagree with the foreign policy of the Government, why stop there? Why not oppose all armed forces of any kind? Indeed, such a policy would be much more logical and it would be no more dangerous, because to my mind there is only one thing worse than a bad foreign policy which is strongly supported and that is a bad foreign policy which is weakly supported. The first may possibly lead to war; the second will lead inevitably to defeat. I will say no more upon that particular branch of the objectors because it has been dealt with very effectively by the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman). His reproof must have been felt far more strongly by the hon. Member for Gateshead and his friends than anything I could say. He and the hon. Member for East Coventry were, so recently, in close juxtaposition, both politically and, indeed, in those days, physically. Both literally and figuratively it appears to us, looking from this side of the House, that during the last few months the hon. Member for East Coventry has made a considerable movement to the Right.

Now I come to that third class of opponents of this Bill who I think have been much the most

formidable in this Debate, and for whom I myself have most sympathy. They are the people who, however much they may dislike a measure of conscription, are prepared to accept it, if they are convinced that it is necessary and practicable, and if they are shown, as they are entitled to be shown, that the objects for which this Measure is asked are reasonable, and that this is the only practicable way of obtaining the numbers that are required. That group—which, I think, includes most of us in this House—want and are entitled to have an answer to certain very important questions. We are entitled to know in some detail what are the strategic requirements of this country during the period to be covered by this Bill. We are entitled to know how those requirements are affected in terms of manpower, weapons and tactics by the latest developments in the science of war. We are entitled to know whether all other means of meeting these necessities has been fully exploited, and whether conscription will give us not only the numbers that are required but the type and composition of the forces that are necessary.

Those are formidable questions, and in a Debate of this kind they deserve a detailed answer. It is our complaint that the Debate has been so arranged that no attempt has been made or will be made to answer those questions until the eleventh hour tonight. This Debate was opened by the Minister of Labour. He gave an admirable exposition of the contents of this Bill. By the way, I disagree with an hon. Friend of mine who charged the Minister of Labour with reading. On several occasions I noticed him lifting his head and taking his eyes off the script, and I must warn him that if he goes on like that, he will run a very great risk of being regarded as a “scab” by his more conventional colleagues.

I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will not pretend that he attempted during his speech to deal with the kind of questions to which I have been referring, and which, incidentally, have entered into nine-tenths of all the speeches delivered up to now. His contribution was clearly one that had to be made, and he explained with great clarity important points in the Bill. He dealt with the position of conscientious objectors, claims for reinstatement, and the machinery for postponement, but it is not on questions of that kind that support of or opposition to the Second reading of this Bill will be built. By and large, I think most people, if they were convinced of the necessity of the Measure at all, are prepared to accept a Bill of this kind, and what the House really needs is some authoritative statement upon the real questions which are agitating it. So far the only contribution we have had on questions of higher strategic importance has been a discussion between the hon. Member for Aston (Mr. Wyatt) and Captain Liddell Hart, appearing by kind permission of the hon. Member for Rushcliffe (Mrs. Paton). It was a plucky bout, in which the hon. Member for Aston fought himself to a standstill, but it is no substitute for the kind of argument to which this House is entitled.

I wish the Minister of Defence had found it possible to open the Debate. Not so long ago, I heard him speaking on the subject of finance. I thought then that he had better stick to defence. I regret that through illness I was unable to listen to the speech he made last week on defence, but I read it all through and I began to think that I was wrong. But at any rate the right hon. Gentleman could have given us some lead. He could have obtained from the same organisation that on the other occasion, supplied him with his roneoed impromptus about the Tory Party some considered judgment on the military future. To this side, at any rate, it would have been comparatively new. I realise that he has been making the same speech at gatherings on many occasions, but he must remember that though the reports of those gatherings are as accurate as and much more prompt than the OFFICIAL REPORT, they are not nearly so detailed, and much of what he had to say would have been of novelty and interest to us.

But even if the Minister of Defence was unable to open the Debate—if he feels that, like modern generals, he must lead his troops from the rear—would it not have been possible for one of the Defence Ministers, at any rate, to have taken part earlier? They have from time to time been in the House—at any rate we have seen enough of them to convince us that they are at least in London. Yet not one of those whom, I am afraid, the irreverent describe as “Alexander’s Ragtime Band”, has spoken. There is one point upon which the Secretary of State for Air could have spoken with great authority. A great deal of genuine apprehension has been expressed in the House as to the compatibility of this Measure with our obligations and objects under the United Nations organisation. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for Air is a great expert on world organisation. He was an expert on the League of Nations, and he is already a great expert on the United Nations; and it would have been an authoritative pronouncement coming from him had he been able to indicate that support of this Bill was in no way inconsistent with support of the United Nations.

We might have had the Secretary of State for War—a more recent convert to the doctrine of conscription. As such, an account of his process of conversion would have been acceptable to the House. He could have told us—and it would have had a very great effect upon us all—what hard facts and what inescapable arguments changed the Bourbon of Blackpool into the Moltke of Whitehall.

[The Secretary of State for War \(Mr. Bellenger\)](#) The right hon. Gentleman has made that allegation against me before. I do not know whether he has an official copy of what I said at Blackpool, but if he has, and will do me the honour of reading it, he will find that I have been most consistent in this matter. Indeed, I said at Blackpool that a new National Service Act would be necessary after the war, and the Foreign Secretary referred to that in his reply at Blackpool.

[Mr. Stanley](#) I must accept the right hon. Gentleman’s statement and apologise to the House that I have been misled by what I believed to be a perfect extract from the speech he made. As soon as I get back I will look up the whole speech. This extract reads as follows: “Are we going to have a continuation of compulsory military conscription? I say that if that is the policy the Labour Party, and especially the trade unions, will never tolerate it. It will result in the lowering of wage standards and labour conditions in industry.”

[Mr. Bellenger](#) Perhaps the right hon Gentleman will allow me to give a somewhat fuller extract? This is what I said: “Are we going to have a continuation of compulsory military conscription? I hope that Mr. Bevin will give an indication of our long term policy on this issue. Although we recognise that the short term policy will necessitate some continuation of national service for a limited period”—” for which this Bill provides—

[Mr. James Hudson \(Ealing, West\)](#) No.

[Mr. Bellenger](#) The quotation continues: “—”are we going to have compulsion in our national affairs ostensibly to achieve a national aim?”

[Mr. Stanley](#) I am perfectly prepared to leave that explanation to the House. I certainly thought that the temporary extension was the extension that the Government already had, and prolonging it for the period of this Bill did certainly appear to me to be some change of policy. Apparently, however, I am wrong and this is exactly the policy which was put to the Conference at Blackpool and accepted by the Labour Party. I, therefore, apologise unreservedly to the right hon. Gentleman.

I want to put to the right hon. Gentleman the Minister of Defence certain specific questions, in the hope that he will answer them when he winds up the Debate. The first is in regard to the strategic commitments of this country, and the requirements in personnel which will be necessary to carry them out. In ordinary circumstances, I should have had little doubt that the numbers asked for and the numbers procured by this Measure will be fully justified by the obvious commitments. But there is a doubt which, I think, is in the minds of many hon. Members, and that is about the effect of new weapons upon all that the ordinary man thinks and knows about strategic requirements and the necessities of defence. We are told, in many quarters, that the Services which we have long considered essential are now as inadequate and as useless as the archers, pikemen and charioteers of the past. That is a point on which we are surely entitled to some more definite pronouncement by the Government. My belief is that the effect of new weapons is not to abolish all the old methods and requirements of defence. I remember being told in the old days, before the last war, that the advent of air power had made the Army useless, and that the advent of armoured fighting vehicles had made infantry superfluous. Neither of these statements proved to be correct. I still think that it does not mean the abolition of all their functions, although it does mean their roles are altered and their emphasis changed.

That, surely, is something which Members cannot be asked to decide themselves on the very scanty information which they can obtain. It should be a subject on which the Government are prepared to give the frankest and fullest information. We see, of course, the necessity for some restraint in this matter, but there is a danger of too great an insistence on secrecy, which leaves an impression, not that there is a plan which must not be disclosed, but that all the secrecy conceals is a failure to think out the implications of the new weapons.

I agree with many hon. Members on the other side who have given reasons why they believe it is possible, if we accept these numbers, to attain them by voluntary means. We are told, "Increase the attractions," but those who put forward this policy have never told us to what extent we have to increase them before they have the result we desire. To expect any services, in the order of the magnitude contemplated under the Government's policy to be attained by voluntary recruitment, is wishful thinking. We are very concerned, granted that this policy of conscription will give the numbers that are required, whether it will give us exactly what we want for defence. Mere numbers do not, in themselves, constitute a satisfactory defence.

The main object, I take it, of this conscription policy is to provide us in the future with adequate reserves. I was at the War Office in the early days of the war, and without any running down of an admirable Service which performed great work, I agree with those who say that under conditions of modern warfare and the difficulty of its technique, the prewar Territorial training is not sufficient and cannot be sufficient to provide fully trained reserves at the outbreak of war. I am not saying it may not be possible in certain directions, but speaking generally, of the Territorial Army as a whole, the amount of time men could afford to take from their ordinary civilian occupations, did not give them a real chance to learn the intricacies of the modern technique. For that reason, I agree that something has to be found to supplement the prewar Territorial Army system.

Wing-Commander Millington Would the right hon. Gentleman say, from his experience, that the conduct of the Territorial soldier in France at the beginning of the war was as good as, or better, or worse than the conduct of the militia, which, I believe, behaved badly?

Mr. Stanley I would not for one moment start to draw comparisons about anyone's behaviour. In any case, it is quite irrelevant, because the militia was started two months before the beginning of the war, and no one considered it was possible by the time the war came, that they could be trained. What I am discussing is whether a force which has been in

existence for many years, the members of which have given themselves wholeheartedly to their training, could, in fact, have been fully trained, or could have been capable of acting as a fully trained force when the war started. As I say, some new system has to be found to supplement the Territorial system. The advantage of the system put forward is obvious. If a man has had a year and a half of continuous training, then the ordinary Territorial training imposed on that, will keep him up to date, and will make him a fully trained reserve. But that depends on one thing. It depends on the basic training of one and a half years and the subsequent training in the Territorial reserve being in the same arm of the Service. Can we be assured that that is going to happen? Take the case of anti-aircraft defence, on which great importance is placed. Are the people in the reserve as anti-aircraft gunners, who are expected to play an important role on the immediate outbreak of war, the same people who have spent one and a half years of their training in the Army in anti-aircraft gunnery? Unless they are, it is clear that this proposal has little if any advantage over the old Territorial system.

Finally, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us the assurance which has been asked for from all sides, that proper use is now being made of the manpower the Services already have. Unless we are certain of that, we are reluctant to give them more in the future. There cannot be any Member of this House who has not heard, in his constituency or elsewhere, stories which seem to point to a considerable waste of time among those now included in the Services. Rightly or wrongly, these stories have raised general disquiet, and I suggest that that disquiet must be allayed. My right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill), speaking yesterday, suggested one way. He suggested the possibility of some kind of Parliamentary committee. What does the right hon. Gentleman think about that? If, for some reason or other, he thinks that that is not a course which he can accept, what alternative has he to offer, because I am certain that this widespread disquiet has got to be allayed? During the Committee stage we shall, of course, deal with many details in the Bill—the choice of Services which will be open to the men called up, whether the conscientious objector gets an advantage over the man who is called up, and so on. We shall want to know whether it may not be necessary to have some tapering-off at the end, just as there is a tapering-off of the pre-Bill conscription in order to get fairness all round. Finally, we shall want to know what opportunities will be given during the one and a half years' service for men to qualify for commissions subsequently in the Reserve. These, and other similar questions, have been put by hon. Members on all sides of the House during the whole of this Debate, and we are, I think, entitled to expect answers to them tonight. Perhaps “expect” is the wrong word, because it indicates a certain amount of confidence, but at all events we hope to get answers tonight.

I think we are entitled to have the information. We are prepared to support this Bill, but we feel that we ought to have the full material upon which the Government which have proposed it have come to their conclusions. These matters are so important that they ought not to be decided merely on Ministerial command, or indeed on personal investigation by private Members. We ought to have the fullest information on which to make up our minds, and I therefore hope that the Minister of Defence this evening will break his usual policy of wordy silence, and give us the whole of the facts, so that we may go into the Lobby tonight not only believing, but knowing, that we are right.

Appendix 4

Paraphrasing and summarizing

39 Mr. Oliver Stanley (Conservative; pro; 35)

1 The house listened with great interest to Stamford's speech, who explained clearly why he can't stand either against or for this bill. I think most people approach this decision with difficulty and hesitation. Except for Mr. Davies and his followers. He has said they are united and definite in their views. If he had no difficulty among the Liberals in the House, he can't say there's such unity among Liberals through the country. If he said that, he would show he hadn't read the "News Chronicle." If he had read it today, he'd have seen the headline that said not all Liberals think alike on this issue. We conservatives could have also made our decision an easy one. I noticed last Sunday's paper was full of major sporting events and a speech by the Attorney General. This speech was full of bitter complaints against the Tories. Those opposite must have learned never to applaud a speech for the AG without waiting for the apology that will follow it. He accused us of putting the party's interests before the nation's and of exploiting the country's difficulties to inconvenience the Socialist government. He dealt in more than generalities. He cited a grave charge to support his views. He said we have encouraged the people to grumble against the blessings which the benevolent Socialists have bestowed upon us. If that were true, it would be very grave, but like most of the things the AG says, it's not.

No political party in this country is fully unified in its position on this difficult bill [and Labour and the Liberals are misrepresenting how difficult this is by claiming each party is totally unified against conscription]. [The Tory Party is not the evil boogeyman Labour's Attorney General claims it is].

2 If we were to think only of our party's interest, what an amazing opportunity tonight would be for us. If we chose to oppose this bill we wouldn't simply be causing some petty annoyance to the party opposite. It would be a "first-class parliamentary defeat," and I'd be seeing a lot of my colleagues in this House for the last time. No doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer will go to the Lobby tonight with a song in his heart, but as he looks at his followers who will soon be no more, the song might be "will you not come back again?" What the AG has said about us is going to be proven wrong on Tuesday. That is very quick to disprove a statement by the AG, and I hope when I see him tonight at the Lobby, he will favour us with a felicitous apology, which he has become so known for.

If the Conservative Party was going to act only in its interest, it would happily vote down this bill.

3 We're going to take, politically, the hard course tonight. We will divide on this bill because we think it's in the country's interest, and most of us will support it. This isn't a pleasant decision for anyone. No one from any party can like conscription in peacetime or its consequences. At best, it has been described by a Labour MP as a reluctant necessity.

As Conservatives, we're not taking the easy political road: we'll vote on this issue and most will support conscription because we believe it's in the country's interest.

4 I was very interested in Mr. Wigg's speech. I listened to it and then read it, and though he supported the bill, most of his speech was a condemnation of Conservatives for supporting it and Liberals for opposing it. His primary complaint was that he says we've favored conscription for 40 years. Even if that's right, I don't see why that makes it wrong for us to vote for it. There's nothing wrong with sticking to an opinion. But Mr. Wigg has only been here for a short time and he may have been misled by his experiences. It has only recently been shameful to maintain one's pre-election positions post-election. There are many respectable precedents of doing the same thing pre- and post-election.

The Conservative Party has not supported conscription for 40 years, and those who claim this are painting a biased picture. [There's nothing wrong with sticking to your principles, unlike some Labour MPs, like Mr. Wigg].

5 As a matter of fact, Mr. Wigg was wrong. Conscription has not been a Conservative policy for 40 years and it has never figured in our program. Regarding the argument made by the Member for Montgomery that if it wasn't in our policies it was in our hearts, I'd say that was a dangerous argument. It's easy to make. If your opponent doesn't say what you want, you can always say he believes it in his heart of hearts. Several people can use this argument. Even though I'd never dream of doing this, it's possible to say the Liberal Party really believes conscription is necessary. I have just as much evidence for that as what Mr. Wigg charged us with. But it hasn't been in our program for 40 years. It's not something we have looked forward to, worked for, or welcome.

The Conservative Party has not supported conscription for 40 years, and those who claim this are trying to make us look like villains.

6 We recognize the hardships a policy like this will entail. We see the individual impacts, and the economic ones. We wish we could return to the time when the Liberal Party reigned—a time in which they still live—when this type of measure was unnecessary. I don't think a period of military service will do irreparable harm to a young man. It's an experience from which, as anyone here who has served knows, one can greatly benefit from. It's equally foolish to argue that there is full educational recompense for individuals in the service. Thus we support this measure tonight but we don't love it. Even though this measure will have grave consequences, the consequences of not doing it are greater still.

This policy will have individual and economic ramifications that we regret but we still need it [so I will support it]. Military service won't harm young men and might even do them some good.

7 The opposition to this bill has been fully expressed during this debate. Support has come from many different angles, but they all seem to lead to "No". I wish to say a few words on the broad principles of objection to this bill. There are those who are genuine conscientious objectors to compulsory military service. They oppose conscription in peace and war. They oppose conscription whether instituted by a Tory or Labour government; whether their position was popular or unpopular; and they have been prepared to pay a heavy political price for their opposition. We all must respect these people, even if we don't agree. I think they can only have this view because on two occasions, the majority of people in this country have taken a different view.

Even if we don't agree with them, we must respect those MPs who oppose conscription no matter the situation or electoral consequences; these are genuine conscientious objectors.

8 I understand their view, but not those who think compulsory service is morally right in war but morally wrong in peace. I can see the difference between these two. I can see that the burden is far more onerous during peace and the reasons for it less obvious, and the alternative course seems more possible and promising. But I cannot see the ethical difference between the two. I can't see how it's right to do it if it's too late [to avoid war] and wrong to do it if it's done in time to avert war.

I do not support the view that conscription is morally right in war but morally wrong in peace; there is no discernible ethical difference.

9 Another group objects to conscription because they do not wish to support a foreign policy they disagree with. Mr. Zilliacus is the most prominent holder of this view. One member tried to dissuade him from this view by noting that if [Mr. Zilliacus] became foreign secretary, he might be reminded of his current attitude. That was a largely ineffective argument because he knows that opportunities of reminding Ministers of past inconvenient statements are limited and the results discouraging. I regard his doctrine as dangerous. If you oppose conscription because you disagree

with the government's foreign policy, why stop there? Why not oppose all armed forces? Such a policy would be more logical and no more dangerous because there's only one thing worse than a bad foreign policy and that's a bad foreign policy that's weakly supported. The first could lead to war; the second surely to defeat. I will say no more about this type of objector. Mr. Crossman criticized them enough. Mr. Zilliacus and the Member for East Coventry have recently been very politically close. It seems to us that the Member for East Coventry [Crossman] has recently moved sharply rightward.

I also do not agree with those who refuse to support this bill because they dislike the government's foreign policy. It's dangerous to have a bad foreign policy with a weak army as this will lead to defeat in any conflict.

10 Now I come to the third class of opponents, for whom I have much sympathy. They are prepared to accept it—even if they don't like it—if they think it's necessary, and if they are shown the reasons for it are reasonable, and that this is the only way to get the numbers required. This group, which is most of us, are entitled to answers to some important questions. We are entitled to know the strategic requirements of this country. We are entitled to know how manpower, weapons, and the latest technological advances affect those requirements. We are entitled to know whether other means to get the troops have been fully exploited, and whether conscription will give us the numbers and type of force we need.

I do agree with those that will support this bill if they think it necessary, even if they don't like it. We are entitled to answers to some important questions that will help them decide if it's necessary [and the government hasn't been forthcoming with these answers].

11 Those are important questions that deserve a detailed answer. We complain that this debate has been structured so we won't get these answers until the 11th hour tonight. Mr. Isaacs opened this debate and he admirably explained the bill. I disagree with my friend who said Mr. Isaacs was reading his speech. On several occasions he lifted his head, and I must warn him that if he keeps doing this, many of his conventional colleagues will view him as a "scab."

The government has purposefully made it difficult for us to get answers to these critical questions.

12 I'm sure Mr. Isaacs won't pretend that he dealt with these questions during his speech, and which have been asked in 9/10ths of the speeches made. His contribution had to be made, and he clearly explained some important points. He addressed conscientious objectors, claims for reinstatement, and the procedures for postponement, but our support/opposition to this bill doesn't rest on these types of questions. Most, if they're convinced by the necessity for this bill, could accept a bill like this; what is really needed is an authoritative statement on the questions which are agitating the House. Only a few people have discussed the bill's higher strategic importance. It was a plucky exchange, but no substitute for the type of argument this House is entitled to.

The government has not provided us with the answers to the questions that are agitating this House, particularly about its strategic importance.

13 I wish the MOD had opened the debate. Recently, I heard him speaking about finance, and thought he should stick to defense. Because I was sick, I couldn't listen to his speech last week on defense but I read it and now think I was wrong [he's not good on defense either]. He could've given us some lead. He could've gotten from the same organization a judgment on our military future. To this side, this would've been new. He's been making the same speech and though reports of these gatherings are as accurate and more prompt than the Official Record, they are not as detailed, and much of what he said would've been interesting to us.

Again, the government has not provided us with the answers to the questions that are agitating this House.

14 But even if the MOD couldn't open this debate—if he feels he must lead his troops from the rear—couldn't a defense minister have participated earlier? They have occasionally been in the House. Yet not one of "Alexander's Ragtime Band" has spoken. There is one point on which one, the Secretary of State for Air, could've spoken authoritatively. Much apprehension has been expressed over the compatibility of conscription with our UN obligations. This person is a great expert on the UN. He was an expert of the League too, and already on the UN; it would have been an authoritative pronouncement had he said supporting this bill wasn't inconsistent with support of the UN.

Important Labour Ministers have ducked their responsibility to speak to us and give us important information [Labour MPs are shirking their responsibilities and not discussing critical questions, like whether this bill is contrary to our UN obligations].

15 We might've had the Secretary of State for War, who is a recent conscription supporter. An account of his conversion process would've been acceptable to the House. He could've told us what hard facts changed his opinion [changed him from Bourbon of Blackpool to Moltke of Whitehall]. Interruption. I accept what you say and apologize to the House for being misled by a perfect extract of his speech. He basically said the Labour Party and trade unions would never accept the continuation of conscription because it lowers wages and labor conditions. Interruption. I let the House decide. I thought the government already had a temporary extension, and that prolonging it for this bill wasn't a change of policy. Apparently I'm wrong and this was the policy put forth and accepted by Labour at the Conference at Blackpool. Thus I apologize unreservedly to you.

Some Labour MPs now support conscription but won't share with us the reasons why [the Labour Party is being cagey about the reasons we need conscription]. [Some Labour MPs are flip-floppers].

16 I want to ask the MOD some specific questions, hoping he answers them when he closes the debate. The first is on our strategic commitments and how many troops we need for them. Normally, I wouldn't doubt the numbers would be justified by our commitments. But me and many others question the effect of new weapons on our defense requirements. We've been told that our current services are as inadequate as the archers and pikemen of the past. We are entitled to more information about this from the Government. I believe that new weapons do not abolish old requirements for defense. I was told, before the last war, that air power made the army useless, and that armored vehicles eliminated the need for infantry. Neither were true. It just means their roles are altered.

The government has not told us how new military technology changes our defense/troop needs [the Labour government isn't giving us all the information we need to make an informed decision]. [The government's argument that our current military isn't adequate isn't credible].

17 Members can't be asked to decide this for themselves on the scanty information they can get. The government should be prepared to give the frankest information on this subject. We see the necessity for some restraint on this issue, but there is a danger of too much secrecy, which leaves an impression not that there is a plan that must be kept secret, but "a failure to think out the implications of the new weapons."

Again, the Labour government is withholding important information we need to make the right decision.

18 I agree with many Members from the other side that it is possible we can get these numbers [troops] voluntarily. It has been said we should make the army more attractive, but not how much more attractive we must make it before we get the desired results. To expect we can get the numbers the Government says are required voluntarily is wishful thinking. We're very concerned that though conscription might give us the numbers we need, it might not give us "exactly what we want for defense." Mere numbers are not a satisfactory defense.

Again, the Labour government is withholding important information we need to make the right decision. [We need more than just more troops to guarantee a strong defense].

19 The main object of this policy is to get adequate future reserves. I was in the War Office in the early days of WWII and agree that, under the conditions of modern warfare, our prewar Territorial training isn't enough to get fully trained reserves. I'm not saying it's impossible for all tasks, but the amount of time men can take from their occupations doesn't give them a chance to learn the "intricacies of modern technique." Thus we must supplement the prewar Territorial Army.
We need conscription so that we can get adequately trained reserves.

20 Interruption. I won't compare our soldiers to French ones. This is irrelevant anyway because the militia was only started 2 months before the war began. What I'm discussing is whether a committed force that existed for many years could've been ready for the outbreak of war. As I said, a new system must be found to supplement the Territorial Army. The advantages of the proposed system are obvious. With 1.5 years of training and then upkeep training after that, he will be a fully trained reservist. But this depends on whether the basic and upkeep training are in the same arm of the service. Can we be assured this? Take the case of anti-aircraft defense. Are the anti-aircraft gunners in the reserve the same people who trained in the army for 1.5 years in anti-aircraft gunnery? Unless they are, this proposed system has few advantages.
Conscription will get us the reservists we need, but we still have some important questions about training that need answering [and the government hasn't yet answered them].

21 I would ask the right Hon. Gentleman [MOD] to give us an assurance that proper use is being made of the manpower we have. Unless they are, we're reluctant to give them more in future. We have all heard stories of wasted time by those currently in the services. Right or wrong, these stories have raised concern and this concern must be put to rest. Yesterday Mr. Churchill suggested one way. He suggested a parliamentary committee. What do you think about that? If he doesn't think he can accept this, what alternative can he offer?
The government must confirm we're using our existing manpower as effectively as possible, otherwise we won't vote for you in future. [I'm not convinced Labour is running the military correctly].

22 During the committee stage, we'll deal with many details of this bill. We will want to know whether we'll need some "tapering off" at the end, just as there is for pre-bill conscription, to get fairness. Finally, we'll also want to know about the opportunities men will have to qualify for commissions once they're in the reserve. These and other questions have already been raised by members on both sides during this debate and we're entitled to expect answers. Expect perhaps is wrong word as it implies confidence; we hope to get answers.
Critical questions about this bill have been raised and we're entitled to answers [which the government hasn't yet given].

23 I think we're entitled to have the information. We're prepared to support this bill, but we need all the information the Government used to come to its conclusions. These matters are too important to be decided by Ministerial command, or by personal investigation by members. We must have the fullest information and thus I hope the MOD will break his policy of "wordy silence" and give us all the facts so we can go into the Lobby knowing we are right.
Conservatives are prepared to support this bill but we need more information from the Labour government [which the government hasn't yet given].

Appendix 5

Reasons and reasoning chains

Stanley (Conservative)

Claim: support the bill

Par 01 No political party in this country is fully unified in its position on this difficult bill [and Labour and the Liberals are misrepresenting how difficult this is by claiming each party is totally unified against conscription]. [The Tory Party is not the evil boogeyman Labour's Attorney General claims it is].

[Reason 105: Conscription is NOT a fundamentally Conservative idea]

Reason 121: Opponents are playing politics

Reason 14: Conservatives are not bad guys

Chain: 121-105

Par 02 If the Conservative Party was going to act only in its interest, it would happily vote down this bill.

Reason 14: Conservatives are not bad guys

Par 03 As Conservatives, we're not taking the easy political road: we'll vote on this issue and most will support conscription because we believe it's in the country's interest.

Reason 14: Conservatives are not bad guys

~~Reason 84: Good for the nation~~

Reason 4: Conscription is a military necessity now

Par 04 The Conservative Party has not supported conscription for 40 years, and those who claim this are painting a biased picture. [There's nothing wrong with sticking to your principles, unlike some Labour MPs, like Mr. Wigg].

Reason 105: Conscription is NOT a fundamentally Conservative idea

Par 05 The Conservative Party has not supported conscription for 40 years, and those who claim this are trying to make us look like villains.

Reason 105: Conscription is NOT a fundamentally Conservative idea

Reason 14: Conservatives are not bad guys

Reason 121: Opponents are playing politics

Chain: 121-105

Par 06 This policy will have individual and economic ramifications that we regret but we still need it [so I will support it]. Military service won't harm young men and might even do them some good.

~~Reason 260: Even though this bill will have negative repercussions, we still need it~~

Reason 4: Conscription is a military necessity now

~~Reason 114: The military life will be good for men~~

Chain: 260-4

Par 07 Even if we don't agree with them, we must respect those MPs who oppose conscription no matter the situation or electoral consequences; these are genuine conscientious objectors.

~~Reason 106: I respect conscientious objectors~~

Par 08 I do not support the view that conscription is morally right in war but morally wrong in peace; there is no discernible ethical difference.

N/A

Par 09 I also do not agree with those who refuse to support this bill because they dislike the government's foreign policy. It's dangerous to have a bad foreign policy with a weak army as this will lead to defeat in any conflict.

~~Reason 202: Opposing conscription because you don't like the government's foreign policy is invalid~~

[Reason 67: We need well-trained army and reserves]

Reason 4: Conscription is a military necessity now

~~Chain: 202-4-67~~

Par 10 I do agree with those that will support this bill if they think it necessary, even if they don't like it. We are entitled to answers to some important questions that will help them decide if it's necessary [and the government hasn't been forthcoming with these answers].

N/A

Par 11 The government has purposefully made it difficult for us to get answers to these critical questions.

N/A

Par 12 The government has not provided us with the answers to the questions that are agitating this House, particularly about its strategic importance.

N/A

Par 13 Again, the government has not provided us with the answers to the questions that are agitating this House.

N/A

Par 14 Important Labour Ministers have ducked their responsibility to speak to us and give us important information [Labour MPs are shirking their responsibilities and not discussing critical questions, like whether this bill is contrary to our UN obligations].

N/A

Par 15 Some Labour MPs now support conscription but won't share with us the reasons why [the Labour Party is being cagey about the reasons we need conscription]. [Some Labour MPs are flip-floppers].

N/A

Par 16 The government has not told us how new military technology changes our defense/troop needs [the Labour government isn't giving us all the information we need to make an informed decision]. [The government's argument that our current military isn't adequate isn't credible].

~~Reason 12: We need more troops~~

~~Reason 261: New military threats/technology doesn't make army obsolete~~

~~Chain: 12-261~~

Par 17 Again, the Labour government is withholding important information we need to make the right decision.

N/A

Par 18 Again, the Labour government is withholding important information we need to make the right decision. [We need more than just more troops to guarantee a strong defense].

N/A

Par 19 We need conscription so that we can get adequately trained reserves.

Reason 67: We need well-trained army and reserves

Par 20 Conscription will get us the reservists we need, but we still have some important questions about training that need answering [and the government hasn't yet answered them].

N/A

Par 21 The government must confirm we're using our existing manpower as effectively as possible, otherwise we won't vote for you in future. [I'm not convinced Labour is running the military correctly].

N/A

Par 22 Critical questions about this bill have been raised and we're entitled to answers [which the government hasn't yet given].

N/A

Par 23 Conservatives are prepared to support this bill but we need more information from the Labour government [which the government hasn't yet given].

N/A

Claim: support the bill

Retained chains:

121-105 (used twice)

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