

Do scientists speak truth to power? During the Cold War, a group of American strategists and science advisors claimed to do precisely that. Styling themselves as figures of rationality and restraint, they insisted that mutual assured destruction was the natural logic of the atomic age: as long as nuclear deterrence was credible, no one would ever shoot first. This doctrine, known as “strategic stability,” became the foundation of the arms control movement. But in this counterhistory, Benjamin Wilson shows that we have misunderstood them and their efforts.

As Wilson makes clear, strategic stability was never the objective condition the analysts presented it as. It was a flexible, contested metaphor. Yet the advisors insisted on one upshot above all: constant military research and development and the continuous upgrading of America’s strategic arsenal. That these policies benefited the military-industrial complex is no surprise, since many arms control thinkers were creatures of the Pentagon and corporate defense contractors. Some even spoke out against missile development in public while backing lavish funding behind closed doors.

*Strange Stability* corrects decades of mythmaking surrounding arms control. Wilson offers a sobering reflection on the dream of technocratic restraint.

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Read by Tom Parks



Runtime: 17h. 15m. • Unabridged

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AUDIO

STRANGE STABILITY



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Adult



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