

A DIFFICULT GAME TO PLAY





Published by: Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Robertson House, Slim Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4NP. Tel: 01276 412708/412660

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A difficult game for

“Deterrence, in the Cold War, was a relatively straightforward concept to understand,” said one of the speakers at the recent CHACR workshop that considered deterrence, and that this edition of *Ares & Athena* summarises. He was, of course, right – but only because he inserted that key word ‘relatively’ into the statement. Because deterrence, in the Cold War, was a very difficult and complex subject: hard to articulate and hard to understand. Indeed, the most eminent of academics, like Sir Lawrence Freedman for example, built their careers upon a bedrock of Cold War deterrence theory. The thrust of what the speaker had to say, therefore, was that it is now much harder to understand a concept that was already hard to understand. So it is not a subject that can be ‘solved’ by the tidy-minded and set aside in a neat piece of defence doctrine. It is a subject that should become, once again, central to the discussions, debates and reflections of defence professionals. The CHACR workshop provided a rich vein of insights and ideas, but in the limited space of a day, this afforded merely a wave-top skim of notions that deserve much deeper consideration. As an amuse-

bouche for the meal of ideas contained in this *Ares & Athena*, here are just a few of those notions that found their way into notebooks:

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Proving a negative is always a problem. In a world where money is tight and every expense and action seems to need to prove its effect and effectiveness, resourcing effective deterrence becomes very hard to argue for if the purse-holders wish to be blindly stubborn

● Deterrence is all about a play upon people’s minds. Whose minds are we talking about? And that’s not as simple a question as it first appears.

● Rationality is always an issue; and remember that rationality does not equal reasonableness. And also remember that even those that others consider to be copybook ‘irrational actors’ would consider themselves, through their own lens, to be acting entirely rationally!

● Deterrence, almost by definition, only works if something doesn’t happen as a result of something else being done. Proving a negative is always a problem. In a world where money is tight and every expense and action seems to need to prove its effect and effectiveness, resourcing effective deterrence becomes very hard to argue for if the purse-holders wish to be blindly stubborn. We need, perhaps, to be much more relaxed about needing to ‘prove effect’ when we discuss, fund, structure and act with a view to achieving effective deterrence.

● If you have an insufficiency of ‘conventional forces’ for ‘conventional deterrence’ then you need a hard and wide-ranging discussion about the credible alternatives that you intend to use. And you need to understand how to use them.

● You can, of course, deter by denial – i.e. make a target so hard to get to that you deter an opponent from even trying.

Defence to play

But that is likely to take considerable resource, especially in terms of homeland defence.

● We know, from research, that terrorist activity in Northern Ireland was deterred by a fear of ‘the men in cars’. What work is being done to understand how we can engender a similar deterrent effect on the would-be terrorists of today, or, perhaps more significantly, on the puppeteers that send them on their way?

● Capability, credibility, communication. Do we have a proper strategic plan against which we are conducting our communication? Are our military leaders usefully engaged in a dialogue with those who we wish to deter? Are we using our military and political leaders together in a dialogue that would help us better to understand our adversaries, better to help them to understand us, and better to build relationships and channels of communication? Or are we finding excuses to fudge or avoid the issue? Case studies tell us that weak relationships, evasion, poor understanding and a lack of clear messaging are at the root of failed deterrence.

● Unintended messages also sit at the heart of weak deterrence. For example, what message are we actually sending about NATO if, within a formal alliance such as this, we need to form further ‘coalitions of the willing’ to conduct specific activities? Does that not, surely, tell potential opponents that much of the alliance is ‘unwilling’?

● How well do we understand our potential opponents? Are our actions deterring them or provoking them?

● Health and safety law gets written, more often than not, as a result of accidents. ‘Deterrence’ often finds its way onto the strategic agenda only after events have occurred that we find strategically unpalatable. Isn’t that, in both cases, too late? Wouldn’t it be better to provide predictive or anticipatory action or legislation that prevent unwanted outcomes? (Without having to prove the negative!)

● ‘Deterrence’ is not a singular activity, nor, in the twenty-first century world, can it be a single-nation activity. Each part of the equation has its own kaleidoscopic lens. Each equation has many parts, so it has many kaleidoscopes. Who do we think is the coordinator of those multiple kaleidoscopes?

● How do underdogs deter?

If that snapshot of insights has whetted your appetite, please read on...

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DETERRENCE: MORE THAN JUST THREATS TO PUNISH

As the UK Armed Forces refresh their understanding of deterrence in response to Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 and the renewed emphasis on deterring threats to UK interests, this short thinkpiece advocates that considering threats of punishment as the only way to deter adversaries is short-sighted and neglects other ways of influencing adversary decision-making.

Deterrence by punishment

It is useful to start at the beginning and understand what we mean by ‘deterrence’. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘deter’ as ‘discourage (someone) from doing something by instilling doubt or fear of the consequences’¹. The dictionary explains the origin of the term from the Latin *deterre*, which is derived from *de-*, meaning ‘away’, and *terre*, meaning ‘frighten’. This roots our understanding of deterrence in what is referred to in classic deterrence theory as ‘deterrence by punishment’; fear of the consequences of taking a course of action. UK MoD continues this emphasis with the definition provided in *JDP 0-01.1 UK Glossary of Joint and Multinational Terms and Definitions*, which describes deterrence as “the convincing of a potential aggressor that the consequences of coercion or armed conflict would outweigh the potential gains...”. Again, the emphasis here is on the assumedly negative consequences of action, although this is couched in the language of costs versus benefits.

The emphasis on cost imposition is at the core of government’s understanding of deterrence as a form of influence. When discussing deterrence, as well as the usual word association that results in the majority of personnel thinking we are discussing Trident (‘the deterrent’), the default is to assume deterrence by punishment. If we wish to improve our ability to deter, we must refresh our core understanding of deterrence principles, beginning with reminding ourselves of other ways of influencing an adversary’s decision-making.

Deterrence by denial

The other main form of deterrence which is commonly referenced is deterrence by denial. In his award-winning 2010 article *The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research*, Jeffrey Knopf describes this as aiming “to dissuade a potential attacker by convincing them that the effort will not succeed and they will be denied the benefits they hope to obtain”². Examples of capabilities that can contribute to deterrence by denial include individual and collective protective equipment for chemical and biological defence; and ballistic missile defence

systems. Some argue that deterrence by denial is a more reliable strategy than deterrence by punishment because, as Sir Lawrence Freedman puts it: “with [deterrence by] punishment, the [adversary] is left to decide how much more to take. With denial, the choice is removed”³.

Perceived costs (and benefits) of restraint

The two ‘classic’ strategies of deterrence presented in the previous sections place the emphasis on increasing the adversary’s perceived costs, and/or reducing the perceived benefits, of taking a specific action. Very often overlooked are what adversary decision-makers consider to be the costs and benefits of not acting; of inaction, or restraint. What negative consequences might result if he does not take this course of action? These are often the perceptions that push a decision-maker down a certain path, which may be seen as the ‘least bad option’. Similarly, what might be the positive results in him showing restraint? We may be able to influence these perceptions by communicating that ‘not undertaking the action we seek to deter will result in an outcome acceptable to [the adversary]’⁴.

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In times of crisis and conflict, the adversary leadership’s perceptions of domestic or financial issues, for example, or even issues of personal survival, may be what drives their thinking

If we are to have any chance of successfully deterring an adversary, we must maximise our understanding of what is motivating him to consider the course of action in the first place. This is no easy feat, but it is central to successful influence. Seeking to influence the adversary’s perceived costs and benefits of restraint is rarely, if at all, considered in such assessment (if, indeed, any such assessment takes place, but that is another issue).

Historical cases abound where factors other than a grand strategy, or a clear objective, drove a leader to embark on military action.

It must be remembered that in virtually all decisions taken at senior levels of government – whether regarding military action or other activities – there are a whole host of other considerations and drivers which leaders attempt to balance and manage. In times of crisis and conflict in particular, the adversary leadership’s perceptions of domestic or financial issues, for example, or even issues of personal survival, may be what drives their thinking. One example is the domestic political pressures faced by the Argentinian junta in 1982 that contributed to the decision to invade the Falkland Islands.

Any successful deterrence strategy must consider these perceived costs of inaction and attempt to reduce them if at all possible. This may also require us to dangle ‘carrots’ that represent benefits of inaction; the risk here is of being seen to reward what the majority of the international community

¹English Oxford Living Dictionaries, accessed online at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/deter> on 9 October 2016.

²Knopf, J., ‘The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research’, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (April 2010).

³Freedman, L., *Deterrence* (Cambridge, UK: Policy Press, 2004), quoted in Gerson, M., ‘Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age’, *Parameters* (Autumn 2009).

⁴U.S. DoD, *Deterrence Operations Joint Operating Concept, Version 2.0* (December 2006), p. 24.

might consider to be ‘normal’ or routine behaviour. It may also be labelled as ‘appeasement’, which must be avoided at all costs; but identification of suitable ‘off ramps’ or exit strategies, that are acceptable to all parties involved, is a crucial yet frequently overlooked aspect of effective deterrence.

Coherent deterrence strategies

As the U.S. Department of Defence Deterrence Operations Joint Operating Concept describes, effectively influencing adversary decision-making is best achieved through ‘integrated efforts’. Any

deterrence strategy must therefore involve closely linked and overlapping activities that seek to threaten to deny the adversary the benefits sought; impose costs that are viewed as too painful to incur; and encourage restraint, by convincing the adversary that not undertaking the action will result in an acceptable outcome. Whilst threatening cost imposition is a valid way to deter, it should not be considered in isolation. Any steps taken by Her Majesty’s Government and UK Armed Forces to improve our ability to deter must acknowledge this and ensure that a ‘portfolio’ approach, using all available levers, is adopted.

Lethal weapon: One of the UK’s nuclear submarines, HMS Vanguard, arrives back at HM Naval Base Clyde, Faslane, Scotland following a patrol. © Crown copyright

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When discussing deterrence, as well as the usual word association that results in the majority of personnel thinking we are discussing Trident (‘the deterrent’), the default is to assume deterrence by punishment



OPERATIONALISING DETERRENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY: AN OVERVIEW

“The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting” – deterrence in the land environment is an age-old concept and recalling Sun Tzu is instinctive. Tzu advised commanders to only fight when entirely necessary, manoeuvring to a position of tactical or political strength so your opponent is either unable or unwilling to fight and, as the case studies examined in the workshop highlighted, deterrence (successful or not) has been a core activity since 1945. Despite this, since the end of the Cold War much less study has been dedicated to the subject and it has been suggested that Land understanding of deterrence in the current environment is not as comprehensive as it should be. Discussion on deterrence often defaults to nuclear capability. In the European paradigm there is a confidence that atomic deters atomic and MAD [mutual assured destruction] theory retains a balance of power⁵. However, mounting Russian aggression, the development of ever more sophisticated technical capabilities such as counter intercontinental ballistic missile and cyber, continued political interest in the CND and the constantly evolving extremist threat means that deterrence in the Land environment is more relevant and important than ever. This article seeks to address this shortfall and ensure deterrence remains an enduring subject for study and consideration within the Land environment.

Theory into action

Deterrence theory from geopolitical to the tactical is reasonably simple, but operationalising the detail is far from simple. Deterrence can take on two shapes, punitive or denial. In the mind of your adversary (as it always must be) any action that they take will result in such severe reaction and punitive ‘punishment’ that the action becomes untenable. Alternatively, the in-place defence is sufficient to deny any chance of victory

⁵In the Indian and Pakistan conflict the dynamic has been different. The atomic parity has allowed limited conflict as each side is confident that escalation will not breach a certain level and prompt.

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The Falkland’s campaign, although a failed deterrence, demonstrated UK capability and led to a reassessment of UK power by the Kremlin

and so again render any potential action untenable. The ‘three Cs’ of capability, credibility and communication are often used to describe effective deterrence. In order to operationalise either punitive or denial deterrence we must have combat power, or capability, to effect on any potential opposition. This will be a blend of mass, proficiency, technology, positioning and posture that are ‘capable’ of either the punitive or denial activity. Capability in the Land environment is often scalable, allowing flexibility in confronting an evolving threat as well as a proportionate response within legal and resource considerations. The current geopolitical situation presents challenges of scale; the UK may struggle unilaterally to present sufficient sustainable combat power to deter Russian manoeuvring. Working alongside NATO allies allows us to mitigate this shortfall by contributing to a convincing coalition with significant scale, technical advantage and political power. Coalitions can, of course, present issues such as varying national political appetites, response criteria, chain of command issues etc.

A state may have the capability to mount any deterrence but to be credible it must also have the will to use that capability. The possibility that a national leader may not be prepared to use a capability can very quickly disarm the entire deterrence strategy, a situation that has been the subject of debate within our own parliament in recent months. It is worth highlighting here that history has shown that military action is not routinely authorised as part of a deliberate pursuit of grand strategy, but the decisions are emotional responses, often reactions to single events. Indeed, it is evident that risk appetites will also mature with events such as recent loss of life, the length and severity of a conflict to when a conflict matures into a perceived fight for survival. While this may be typical at the political level it makes sense that in the Land environment we have a more rigorous approach and deploy

Undeterred: Landing craft from HMS Intrepid approach the beach at San Carlos in the Falkland Islands to land British troops, 21 May 1982. © Crown copyright. IWM (FKD 2119)



deterrence by design for best effect on the enemy.

Once the technical capability and political credibility of deterrence have been established it is crucial that they are communicated. This communication could be clear show of force or visible deployment of combat power; a military campaign can also have this effect, demonstrating capability and resolve. It is thought that the Falkland's campaign, although a failed deterrence, demonstrated UK capability and led to a reassessment of UK power by the Kremlin. Other communication methods are available, diplomatic channels, defence engagement, information and outreach and media activity. The choice of method will depend on the desired audience but without clear communication it is likely any deterrence will be futile. The case study on the Falklands in this publication presents some fascinating insights into the failure to communicate political resolve resulting in failed deterrence.

Deterrence is of course an inherently political activity and so is as much about the home audience as the any external entity. There is a need to reassure the domestic population that their safety and security are the paramount concern of the state. This home audience will also have an influence on how any deterrence is mounted. Military capability is expensive and its deployment is currently politically sensitive in the UK in the post Afghanistan and Iraq environment. It can be difficult to communicate the need for a robust deterrence operation when a threat may not be immediately apparent and sufficiently menacing. More subtly, and perhaps more importantly, the communication must not present an aggressive picture. Deterrence during the Cold War actually presented a very threatening picture; both the West and the Kremlin were convinced that they were under threat from an aggressive and expansionist opposition. The reality was very much a defensive policy on both sides, but the communication and rhetoric resulted in ever increasing tensions. There is a real danger that this could happen today with the deployment of the Enhanced Forward Presence into Slovenia and other eastern European states. It is very easy for Russia to interpret these as aggressive moves, it should not be forgotten that the current issues and violence in Ukraine emerged as they moved towards closer relationships with Europe.

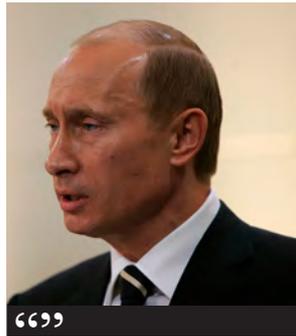
These concepts work well in a state-on-state paradigm, where much of this study focuses, but it was recognised that deterrence is less easy to conceptualise when facing a stateless or lone enemy. Indeed it was argued that it may be impossible to deter committed martyrs, although recent efforts to prevent attacks in the UK have been successful and the publicity generated – by the state – may serve to highlight the futility of their actions and deter others.

Strategic Planning / Understanding the Context

No military strategist would begin any planning process without seeking to understand their opponent. The importance of the depth of understanding required was a consistent theme throughout the workshop and is discussed in some detail in many of the submissions in this edition of *Ares & Athena*.

Several questions quickly emerge: Who is the UK trying to deter? Are they a 'peer' or state actor? How does the UK stance vary from deterring against Russian aggression in Europe, protection of overseas territories and the evolving threat from Daesh? Can all these threats be deterred simultaneously?

When looking for answers to these questions some seek to understand our opponents as 'rational' or 'irrational' actors, it could be argued that this is failing to understand the opponent at all. The UK may face a threat whose motives and actions are difficult to rationalise from our perspective, but that does not mean they are 'irrational'. Only by really understanding the situation from a human perspective, relevant to the opponent will their actions be understood as 'rational'. With this understanding we can design our deterrence narrative to resonate with an actor who has different priorities and considerations to ours.



Putin's motives behind the annexation of Crimea were as much about a reaction to EU expansion than appealing to internal post imperial sympathies

There is a danger of being content with an understanding of superficial motivations. However, there are likely to be secondary pressures that motivate aggression towards the UK and her assets. An effective deterrence must be sufficiently persuasive to counter all those more complex pressures. Again an interesting example of this is the Argentine invasion of the Falklands. The combination of a legacy dispute, pressure from a malcontent population, and a poorly communicated deterrence made the invasion a worthwhile risk. However, as previously discussed, the political decision to fight to liberate the Falklands was a human action, influenced by both emotional and rational discussion. The launch of the taskforce was not triggered once a decision point was reached along a strategic decision support matrix; General Galtieri reasoned that the political will was not strong enough. The Argentine example is simple when compared to the analysis required to understand the motivations and strategic goals behind

current Russian aggression and the threats to the UK posed by Daesh. Arguably Putin's motives behind the annexation of Crimea were as much about a reaction to EU expansion than appealing to internal post imperial sympathies. We must understand these motivations, not in order to appease, but to design the most effective deterrence strategy and narrative.

This leads to one of the most important concepts when looking to operationalise deterrence. It is not sufficient to have a general cultural understanding of the countries and groups that present threats, it is vital that we understand the minds and decision triggers of our adversaries. It is easy for us to bemoan the fact that almost all of the Russian experts so valued in defence in the 1980s are now almost entirely gone, but what they were able to provide was a detailed personal understanding of personalities and decision makers. A study of Russian attitudes would present a kaleidoscope of opinion, what is important is what are the attitudes and likely actions of Putin and his influencers? This highly personal understanding takes significant investment that is difficult to justify when threats are more opaque. Deterrence often only becomes operationalised once a threat becomes reality. This reactive nature often ensures the deeper understanding that is so vital has not been available.

THE ROLE OF DETERRENCE IN 21ST CENTURY EUROPEAN DETERRENCE

*Words: Professor Paul Cornish,
The Cambridge Analysis Institute*

Deterrence is no mystery; it is a feature of many human activities, behaviours and relationships, ranging from the private matter of bringing up children to society's attempts to control crime. At any level, and in any sector, deterrence is a promise to impose cost on a given action in order that the perpetrator is convinced that the benefits of the action will be outweighed by the costs incurred, and will thus choose not to act as planned. Several ingredients must be in place for deterrence to function; often described as the 'three Cs'. First, the deterrer must have the capability to impose the costs he has promised or threatened. Second, the deterrer's promise must seem credible to the potential miscreant. As well as the appropriate capability, credible deterrence also requires that the deterrer has the will – personal, political or moral – to carry out his promise, and that this can be communicated to, and understood by, the wrong-doer. Deterrence is therefore a relational activity, in which both sides must employ a broadly compatible rationality.

Deterrence is particularly well known as a feature of politico-military strategy. The basic ingredients remain: a potential aggressor's cost/benefit calculation might be influenced by the threat of a punitive response, or by the realisation that the defender's preparations are so advanced and effective that the costs of carrying out the aggression would be too great. Throughout human history, when an aggressor has taken stock and decided not to proceed,

it may be that deterrence played a part. The difficulty with this assumption, and with deterrence thinking generally, is the problem of negative proof. It will always be difficult, practically and logically, to isolate the reasons why aggression or war did not take place and equally difficult, therefore, to be confident that deterrence had succeeded as the cause, so to speak, of a non-event. Conversely, the frequency and extent of war in human history suggest that it might be easier to find evidence of deterrence having failed, or not having been attempted.

With the invention of atomic and nuclear weapons in the mid-20th century, and the onset of the Cold War, it became critically important that deterrence should work – always. After their use against Japan in August 1945, there was a tendency to see atomic weapons as super-bombs, and as a means to extend and amplify existing doctrines of strategic air power. Atomic weapons also offered more 'bang for the buck' than an expensive conventional force posture and could offset weaknesses in conventional defences, particularly at a time when the conventional strength of the Soviet Union was thought to have remained overwhelming while the US and its European allies had demobilised rapidly after the war. But as the Cold War advanced, atomic and then nuclear deterrence became far more elaborate. Capability alone was not sufficient; with weapons of this scale, credibility and will also mattered. And as the vulnerability to attack became mutual, so communication became ever more important. Atomic and nuclear deterrence could no longer be considered a component of one side's politico-military strategy; mutual deterrence became the central purpose of the Cold War as a whole. Paradoxically, this critically

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With the invention of atomic and nuclear weapons, it became critically important that deterrence should work – always

Show-stopper: A large mushroom cloud produced by a British nuclear test during the 1950s.
© IWM (TR 65682B)

important idea could never be analysed too closely, for fear of revealing its fragility; it could not fail, but neither could it be tested. In his *Strategy in the Missile Age* (1959), Bernard Brodie pointed to the difficulties of deterrence in the nuclear era: “We expect the system to be always ready to spring while going permanently unused.”

The end of the Cold War has been described as the ‘bonfire of the certainties’ – a particularly apt expression when it comes to the consideration of deterrence in Europe. A body of ideas, capabilities and untestable assumptions that, nevertheless, had for several decades been at the heart of security policy in and for Europe, deterrence was unceremoniously consigned to history in the early 1990s. It was not only that the highly elaborate, mutual strategic deterrence of the Cold War was considered suddenly to have become irrelevant but that politico-military deterrence itself was thought to be obsolete. In retrospect this judgement was both complacent and ahistoric. The past 25 years have shown that in certain respects, mutual strategic deterrence is still required; and there should have been no reason to suppose that the basics of deterrence had become any less valid with the end of the Cold War than they had been throughout the previous millennia of human history. Nevertheless, almost overnight European deterrence arguably became a mere façade, swaying ominously in even the lightest of strategic breezes with no clear sense of how and where it is anchored. This situation should be a cause of concern in NATO, for NATO governments and for European security in general. In an interview with the Atlantic Council on 28 September 2015, former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey observed succinctly that “as an alliance we’ve taken deterrence for granted for 20 years now, but we can’t do that anymore”.

The stability and security of Europe requires a rediscovery and re-articulation of deterrence in order to meet a broad range of challenges, both traditional and novel. Some of the questions to be asked of deterrence are familiar, others much less so. But it is precisely this combination of the old with the new which poses a general challenge to European deterrence theory, policy and practice. In early 21st century Europe, what is deterrence for and how should it be achieved? Is mutual nuclear deterrence credible after the Cold War? How much conventional military deterrence is needed? How can terrorists and criminals be deterred? Is it possible to deter or prevent the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons by non-state actors? Can cyber deterrence be a meaningful activity? And can deterrence be achieved through other, non-military means such as sanctions and soft power?

There have been occasional attempts to revisit, revise and update the deterrence debate, but these have so far made little impression on a post-Cold War European security consensus which has proved to be complacent and lacking in vitality where deterrence is concerned. In 2003 the European Union published a European Security Strategy in which the words ‘deterrent’ and ‘deterrence’ did not appear. The 2016 European Union Global Strategy makes a slightly better effort: “As Europeans we must take greater responsibility for our security. We must be ready and able to deter, respond to, and protect ourselves against external threats.”

In the UK’s case, although the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2015 dwells at some length on the need for a comprehensive, cross-governmental approach to deterrence, the document falls short of providing a publicly accessible understanding of 21st century deterrence; a conceptual framework in which policy, strategy, ethics, technology and psychology are all intertwined. Instead, the UK National Strategy takes little more than a declaratory line: “Deterrence means that any potential aggressors know that any benefits they may seek to gain by attacking the UK will be outweighed by the consequences for them.” Similarly, the most recent French White Paper on Defence and National Security (the *Livre Blanc*, published in 2013) also covered deterrence to some depth, but almost exclusively in terms of the preservation of France’s national nuclear deterrent capability.

Contemporary challenges to the European security order require an intelligent reapplication of principles and techniques with which we have long been familiar. The basic principles of deterrence are unchanging; the imposition of intolerable cost, whether through defence and denial or by the threat of a punitive response, in order to dissuade an actual or potential adversary from adventurism or aggression. Equally, the ‘three Cs’ remain a valid description of the conditions that a deterrent posture – any deterrent posture – must satisfy if it is to be effective and if an adversary’s cost/benefit analysis is therefore to be influenced appropriately. But effective, durable deterrence has become more than strong defences and much more than a declared promise to inflict violence with one capability or another; 21st century European deterrence requires a range of capabilities (passive and active, military and non-military) in a posture which is both coherent and credible and which can be communicated unambiguously to any potential adversary.

At its most basic, deterrence should continue to convey the message that the benefits expected from adventurism or aggression will be outweighed by the costs imposed. But in both its operation and its overall goal deterrence, it could make a more ambitious and imaginative contribution to European security. The established principles and techniques of deterrence can be reconceived in ways which are more appropriate to 21st century European security challenges. As Jeffrey Knopf argued in *The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research*, closer interest should be taken in recent attempts to revive and reapply deterrence theory, such as ‘triadic’ or indirect deterrence (i.e. deterrence by third-party influence); normative deterrence (‘soft’ deterrence by positive moral preference); associative deterrence (‘soft’ deterrence by the possibility of reputational damage); and ideational deterrence (or ‘deterrence by counter-narrative and delegitimation’). More ambitiously still, the overarching goal of European deterrence could be to develop a more stable and predictable strategic environment in which actors avoid conflict out of mutual interdependence and self-interest. In the European context, it is obvious that deterrence should be against instability, adventurism and conflict. But deterrence should also be for the urgent construction of a more stable, cohesive and mutually beneficial strategic environment in Europe.

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THE SHIFTING NUCLEAR LANDSCAPE

Words: Dr Heather Williams,
King's College London

In July 2016 the United Kingdom voted to renew its nuclear deterrent, typically referred to as Trident. In Parliamentary debate over the renewal decision, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon stated: “Nuclear weapons are here, they are not going to disappear. It is the role of government to make sure we can defend ourselves against them.” Fallon’s point gets to the root of nuclear deterrence: nuclear weapons are meant to deter nuclear weapons or other threats to the survival of a state. But three recent trends call into question whether or not nuclear deterrence as we know it is sustainable over the long-term.

Russian aggression, emerging technologies and pressure for faster nuclear disarmament require deeper consideration in terms of how Western powers will adapt to a rapidly evolving strategic environment. This paper offers an introduction to these challenges in the context of deterrence theory, and demonstrates the enduring value of nuclear deterrence.

Any discussion of nuclear deterrence must begin with the knowledge that these weapons cause massive loss of life and destruction to infrastructure. A nuclear detonation would be a cataclysmic event, and in many scenarios, consequence management would be unable to cope with the humanitarian, political and environmental consequences. For this reason, nuclear weapons draw on morality as much as on strategy. It is the material traits of nuclear weapons that require deep moral consideration, and in security terms cause states to give them a special status. Nuclear deterrence is decidedly different from other forms of deterrence: whereas if conventional deterrence fails conflict may break out but can be rolled back and loss of life minimised, if nuclear deterrence fails and nuclear weapons are used, hundreds of thousands of people may die and it would signal a seismic shift in geopolitics. It is the fear of nuclear retaliation, or the ‘delicate balance of terror’, that prevents states from using nuclear weapons except in cases where the survival of the state is at risk or in response to a pre-emptive nuclear strike.

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A nuclear detonation would be a cataclysmic event, and in many scenarios, consequence management would be unable to cope with the humanitarian, political and environmental consequences

In *Thinking the Unthinkable*, Herman Kahn described strategic stability as “the most important requirement of a stable strategic system is that it not be ‘trigger happy’”, but rather was one that could “ride out” an attack, affording time for decision-making in a crisis to prevent further escalation. In 1978, James Steinbruner defined it as “a characteristic of deterrence based on mutual assured destruction and has been measured largely in terms of the potential vulnerability of strategic force components”. Therefore,

a stable strategic system is one in which both sides’ forces could survive a first strike, causing the adversary to avoid nuclear first-use or escalation because any nuclear use would be reciprocated. This basic relationship is the foundation of nuclear deterrence. It depends on three factors. First, the capability to both survive a second strike and retaliate. Nuclear weapons can be delivered by air (strategic bombers), land (intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBMs]) or sea-based systems (submarine-launched ballistic missiles [SLBMs]), and at least one means of delivery would need to survive a pre-emptive nuclear attack. Second, the political will to make the threat of nuclear use credible. And lastly, communication or signalling to the adversary that any nuclear use will trigger a response imposing massive unacceptable costs.

Underpinning these three requirements, however, is a broader need to understand an adversary. In order to have the appropriate nuclear capability, a state must know where its adversaries’ nuclear forces are located, whether they are hardened, their launch status, etc. A credible nuclear deterrent requires an understanding of the adversary’s decision-making process: is he risk averse or risk prone? Does he value his population or is he willing to accept major casualties? The same can be said for the need to understand an adversary to fulfil the communication requirement. But while the West understands strategic stability as survivable second-strike forces, others do not and have the potential to undermine stability.

The first challenge to strategic stability is a revisionist state seeking to upset the status quo, as recently manifested by Russian aggression. Russia’s approach to strategic stability is broader than the British, American or NATO approach: it incorporates both soft and hard power, therefore includes political as well as military components; ‘strategic’ does not necessarily equate to ‘nuclear’; and it is asymmetric in that it mixes capabilities across domains, such as advanced conventional capabilities and cyber. This was manifested in recent Russian aggression in Ukraine, which incorporated cyber, information operations and ‘little green men’, along with nuclear bullying.

Second, emerging technologies have the potential to impact conflict escalation and undermine the capability, credibility and communication of a nuclear deterrent. For example, Russia claims advanced conventional weapons, such as hypersonic glide vehicles and other assets in the American



Nuclear weapons are here, they are not going to disappear. It is the role of government to make sure we can defend ourselves against them



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As long as others have nuclear weapons and rely on them for nuclear bullying, only nuclear weapons will deter their use. Nuclear weapons are the business of survival, but they raise difficult questions for any decision-maker: what is worth killing hundreds of thousands of people? What is worth putting your population at risk of nuclear attack? And what are the values that underpin the survival of the state?

Prompt Global Strike programme undermine Russia's nuclear deterrent. Turning to another non-nuclear technology of interest, cyber could undermine nuclear command and control, cutting off commanders from political leadership and undermining the capability and credibility of a nuclear deterrent. Finally, and of particular interest for the United Kingdom, anti-submarine technology, such as drone submarines and low-LED sonar capabilities, may make sea-based deterrents vulnerable to detection and first strike.

The third challenge to strategic stability and nuclear deterrence is pressure by a group of states and non-governmental organisations for nuclear possessor states to unilaterally disarm. The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty requires the five recognised nuclear possessors to work towards nuclear disarmament. For decades, advocacy groups have called on states to fulfil this responsibility and argued for nuclear abolition on moral grounds. More recently, these criticisms have also come to argue that nuclear weapons do not actually deter, as evidenced by the Falklands War or terrorist attacks. This pressure has manifested into support for

a nuclear weapons ban through the United Nations, and while no nuclear possessor is likely to agree to it, the movement demonstrates the potential for political pressure to change states' nuclear policies with implications on strategic stability.

As a thought experiment, we can attempt to envision what a stable world would look like in 2021. Undoubtedly, that world remains a nuclear one, as Secretary Fallon stated. As long as others have nuclear weapons and rely on them for nuclear bullying, only nuclear weapons will deter their use. Nuclear weapons are the business of survival, but they raise difficult questions for any decision-maker: what is worth killing hundreds of thousands of people? What is worth putting your population at risk of nuclear attack? And what are the values that underpin the survival of the state? These questions were an important part of strategic discussions during the Cold War, and hopefully this paper has demonstrated the need to revive such debates in the face of new pressures and new technologies while maintaining a strong nuclear deterrent. As observed by Michael Quinlan, “our grappling with the issues of security has to remember Auschwitz as well as Hiroshima”.

HOW RUSSIA ‘DOES’ AND UNDERSTANDS DETERRENCE IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

*Words: Dr Alexander Lanoszka,
City, University of London*

Western military strategists argue that three ingredients are essential for the successful deterrence of an adversary. The first is that the deterring state must make clear that its adversary should not undertake a particular course of action intended to revise the status quo. The second is that the deterring state must also indicate that it would inflict unacceptable harm on the adversary if and only if the adversary engages in that undesirable action. The third is that the threat to issue this harmful response must be believable. To this end, military strategists often argue that the credibility of a threat hinges on the willingness and ability of the issuer to carry it out. For example, the deterring state could signal that its adversary will experience difficulties in achieving its battlefield objectives (that is, deterrence-by-denial). Alternatively, the deterring state could retaliate with devastating force in the event that the adversary undertakes the proscribed action (that is, deterrence-by-punishment). Simply put, geopolitical interests and military capabilities shape the credibility of the deterrent threats and promises that states convey to others.

How then does Russia conceptualise, and put into practice, deterrence? Though some observers regard Russia as revisionist, Russia still practices deterrence in order to contain nuclear and conventional threats to its physical security as well as to defend its influence in key neighbouring countries like Ukraine. Russia might treat each of these interests as vital, but its strategic problem is that it has regional but not global escalation dominance. Put differently, although it may be militarily superior to its immediate neighbours on its western borders, Russia faces a major imbalance in power with respect to the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It is manifold stronger than Poland and the Baltic countries located in NATO's northeastern flank. Yet direct military action against those countries could trigger a severe response from the United States and other members of NATO. To be sure, such a response is not automatic: Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty stipulates that an attack against one is an attack against all but it does not bind NATO members to use military force in the defence of others. However, the resulting ambiguity creates uncertainty both for vulnerable NATO members and potentially opportunistic adversaries like Russia.

Russian leaders and defence planners have had to struggle to reconceptualise deterrence in a manner that is appropriate for their country's geopolitical situation. In outlining the Russian concept of 'strategic deterrence', Kristen Ven Bruusgard documents how Russian military-theoretical debates centre on how Russia could use its political and

military tools so as to prevent NATO from encroaching on its security interests. She argues that Russian deterrence theorists understand the concept as including elements of Western notions of containment and coercion. For Russian theorists and practitioners, deterrence does not only involve conflict prevention, but also the de-escalation of an ongoing military conflict. Accordingly, despite not having escalation dominance over potential adversaries like NATO, Russia still depends on its nuclear arsenal to thwart conventional and nuclear threats in addition to holding off any aggressor in a conventional conflict. For this reason Russia disavowed a nuclear no-first-use policy in the 1990s. Nevertheless, Russia has been modernising its conventional forces so as to improve its war-fighting capabilities and to reduce steadily its purported reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence.

These Russian-specific understandings of deterrence might seem familiar to those who know NATO's history. For much of the Cold War, the United States and its Western allies had to face an unfavourable distribution of conventional military power in Europe. Nuclear weapons thus helped to offset the conventional military superiority of the Warsaw Pact. Even the official doctrine of flexible response was premised partly on the idea that tactical nuclear weapons could keep armed hostilities from escalating further.

What might be less familiar – or more opaque – to Western observers is how Russia would use non-military means for the purposes of deterrence. Indeed, it is easy to forget that deterrence involves more than using military capabilities for the sake of manipulating the cost-benefit calculations of others to one's favour. After all, a relatively weak deterring state has incentives to negate the willingness of its more capable adversary to use its superior strength. If geopolitical interests partly determine

willingness, then the deterring state could strive to convince its adversary that none are at stake over a given issue-area. The deterring state might even persuade its adversary that they have a shared interest in sustaining what might otherwise be a contentious interpretation of the status quo.

Russia is a weaker major power that has implemented such forms of deterrence. Consider its foreign policy conduct since it began hostile operations against Ukraine upon annexing Crimea in 2014. Although it may be odd to see deterrence in practice when Russia is attempting to take territory from another sovereign state, this case is instructive. For one, Russia has an interest in keeping the conflict localised. It wishes to prevent Ukraine from launching military action in order to regain Crimea and other regions under dispute. For another, Russia wishes to limit the backlash from members of NATO. It wants to avoid economic sanctions and to keep supporters of Ukraine from providing it with meaningful military assistance.

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Russia has undertaken several measures intended to forestall such unfavourable political and military responses to its efforts against Ukraine. One is that Russia has cultivated a network of politicians and activists friendly to its interests by aligning with anti-establishmentarian political movements and parties in the societies of NATO member-states. Vladimir Putin's courting of Donald Trump and his campaign advisers is just the latest example of such an effort. Another is its manipulation of ethnic politics in Eastern Europe – a region with which it is naturally more familiar than other major powers in the west like the United States and France.

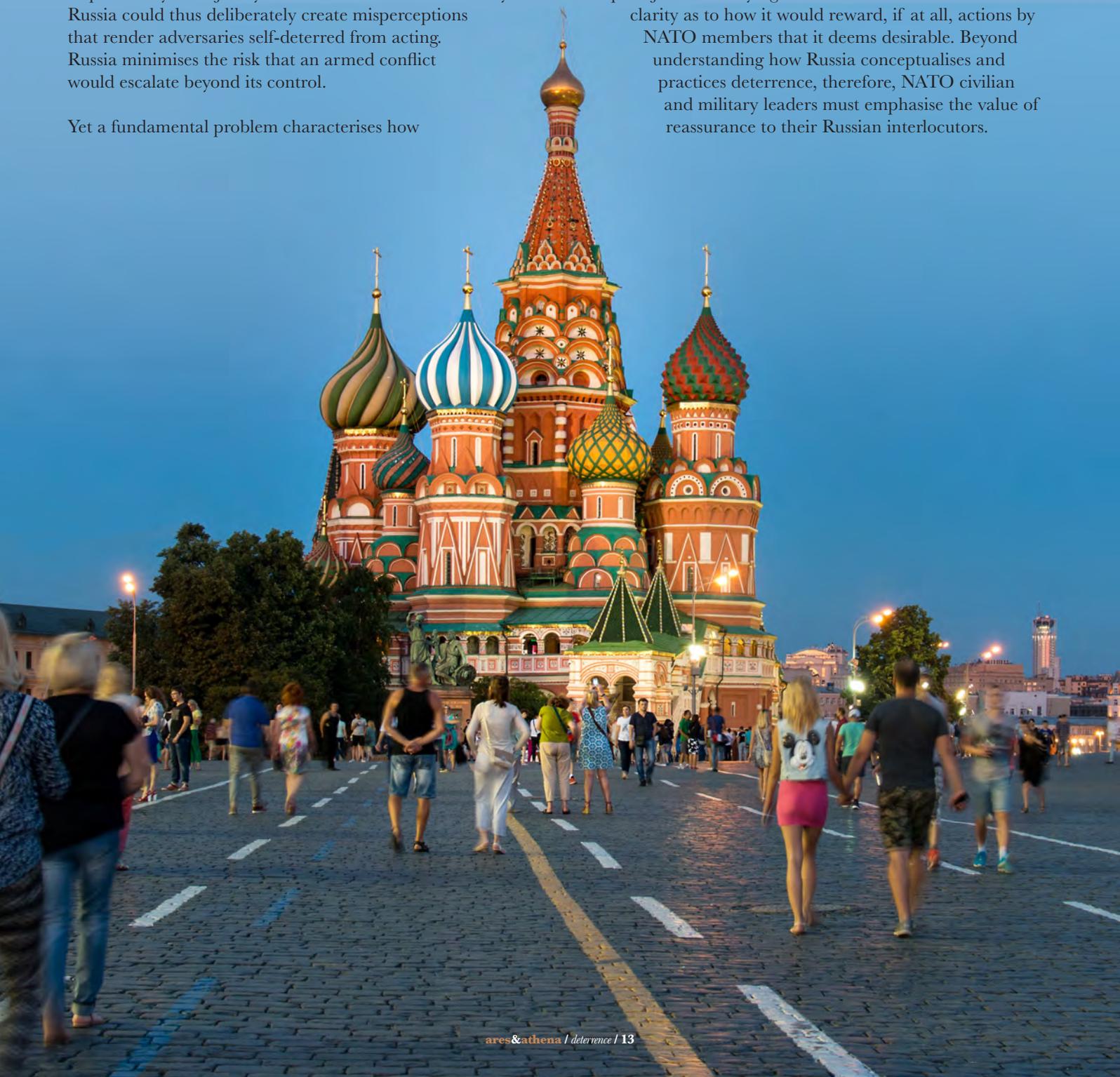
Russia can exploit the complexity of local political grievances so as to hide its involvement, to deflect responsibility or to justify an intervention when necessary. Russia could thus deliberately create misperceptions that render adversaries self-deterred from acting. Russia minimises the risk that an armed conflict would escalate beyond its control.

Yet a fundamental problem characterises how

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Russia uses both military and non-military means for practicing its version of deterrence. Recall the need for a state to communicate its intentions and preferences in issuing a deterrent threat. Absent a common understanding of what is acceptable and what would happen under certain conditions, deterrence becomes harder to achieve. Unfortunately, Russia's capabilities and force posture do not match its proclamations that (tactical) nuclear weapons serve to deter large-scale conventional conflict. Large-scale snap military exercises and flight intercepts offer reminders of Russia's conventional military might, but they seem unlinked to specific deterrent threats. Similarly ambiguous is how Russia would behave if its efforts to undermine western willingness fail to produce the desired effect. Indeed, Russia has done a poor job in conveying reassurance due to its lack of clarity as to how it would reward, if at all, actions by NATO members that it deems desirable. Beyond understanding how Russia conceptualises and practices deterrence, therefore, NATO civilian and military leaders must emphasise the value of reassurance to their Russian interlocutors.



THE ARMY AND DETERRENCE IN THE INFORMATION AGE

*Words: Olivier Grouille,
University of Cambridge*

Deterrence is a simple idea whose impact is almost impossible to measure and which can be fiendishly difficult to implement. As the Army seeks to reinvigorate and develop its thinking about deterrence and its contribution to the UK's overarching deterrence posture, front and foremost should be its relationship with its sister Services, its partners across government and its allies in NATO and the EU and other bilateral and multilateral relationships. Although the UK will likely want to deter largely the same actual and potential adversaries as its closest allies, there will be some degree of difference based on geography, independent economic and geopolitical national interests and national threat assessment. This will translate into closely aligned but not totally synonymous deterrence postures between allied nations. The relational nature of deterrence must also be borne in mind, with cultural differences and perceptions of certain behaviour patterns between deterrer and deterree factored in from the outset. The deterrence doctrine currently being written by the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) is welcome news: the Army might consider whether this could usefully be supplemented by a single Service publication of some kind and the insertion of new or updated sections on deterrence into existing staff officer's handbooks, training courses and field army unit concepts of employment and concepts of use.

Until DCDC's deterrence-specific doctrine is published, the 2015 National Security Strategy/Strategic Defence and Security Review (NSS/SDSR) is a good reference point for MoD's current thinking. However, future iterations of this document need to lend greater weight to a discussion between the differences between deterrence, coercion and conflict prevention. In the current version, these terms are often used together and in some cases interchangeably, which runs the risk of muddying the conceptual waters to the point where the Army's single Service deductions risk strategic disconnect with MoD head office. A degree of ambiguity is certainly necessary to protect the existence of certain capabilities and for reasons of diplomacy between nations, but terms appearing within MoD policy documents should be internally consistent and coherent. A degree of caution should also be exercised with the use of attractive-sounding phrases such as 'full-spectrum approach', which is problematic for several reasons. First, it impinges on similar phrases already in use to refer to different areas of capability and policy and creates conflated and confused meanings. Second, it runs the risk of being dismissed as simply the latest iteration in a much unloved series of Whitehall jargon such as 'comprehensive approach', 'integrated approach' and others. Regardless, it is incumbent upon the Army and

its sister Services not to turn such phrases into capitalised pseudo-concepts that inevitably lead to unhelpful full-spectrum approach documents that attempt a definition and then subsequently waste a lot of intellectual capital on trying to 'operationalise it'.

In a practical sense, deterrence will always be one element among many that defines the UK's relationship with actual and potential adversaries and its importance and priority relative to the other elements will change over time and according to circumstances. In his paper in this collection, Paul Cornish outlines the three 'Cs' necessary for deterrence to function: capability, credibility and communication. Taking the first of these, a significant number of new equipment programmes and upgrades to existing platform suggests the Army's backbone of fighting power will remain potent for decades to come. The debate continues over size, mass and the sorts of operations that the Army may be called upon to undertake alone, as opposed to with allies, but these are political-military decisions based more on what the Army is for rather than how it will fight. But its current and near-term equipment table suggests that in capability terms, the Army is in a pretty good position.

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The Army has a hard-earned reputation for professionalism and a fighting spirit second-to-none, which certainly enhance the credibility aspect of its deterrent posture

The Army has a hard-earned reputation for professionalism and a fighting spirit second-to-none, which certainly enhance the credibility aspect of its deterrent posture. Since 1945 British politicians have time and again demonstrated their willingness to use force in the pursuit of national interests, and generally speaking the British public have demonstrated a willingness to stomach the costs associated with British soldiers fighting overseas, although there have certainly been many voices raised to argue the opposite, and in particular with regard to the Iraq intervention in 2003. All of this suggests a democratic process in rude health, and despite

the occasional wobble such as the 2013 parliamentary decision to vote against British air strikes against the Assad regime in Syria, a level of credibility that matches the capability that underpins the Army and the Joint Force's capability. What cannot be denied is that recent press attention on the Army's seeming inability to hit its recruitment targets and meet its Regular establishment of 80,000 – let alone its Reserve establishment of 30,000 – has seriously undermined its credibility in delivering the force packages that constitute its conventional deterrent.

The Army also knows that its ability to communicate is not what it should be. Deterrence is about changing the behaviour of potential and actual adversaries by threatening to impose unbearable costs on them (deterrence by punishment) or by denying the opportunity for them to succeed in their aims (deterrence by denial). As such, it fits conceptually within the wider idea of behavioural conflict, which is actually nothing more than a useful contemporary re-articulation of the unchanging nature of war (a violent contest between two



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Media operations, psychological operations, capacity building and strategic communications... these are skills that require expert training, education and practice, and, one day, dissemination throughout the Field Army. An army at home with these skill sets and which has them embedded in every tactical unit will be an army capable of first-rate communication

opposing wills) in the information age, in which rapid changes in information and communications technology and the accompanying changes in social mores gives the impression of a relative acceleration in the ever-changing character of conflict. On a corporate level the Army has struggled greatly to articulate and explain how it intends to adapt to these changes, even as it is manifestly obvious that the vast majority of its officers and soldiers innately understand what is happening in the world around them and have adapted accordingly.

The establishment of 77 Brigade is a hugely welcome step in the right direction, but organisationally it has faced a significant number of challenges as it seeks to fulfil its potential. These risk undermining the entire approach of information activities and outreach (IA&O) whose advocates and practitioners have fought hard for recognition and acceptance in recent years. Wider problems across Defence have exacerbated the situation, most notably the lack of operational level gearing between the strategic aspects of MoD and cross-Whitehall actors and military tactical level delivery units. Single Service agendas have not helped resolve these issues. These issues should be a major cause of concern with those seeking to make the Army into an organisation comfortable and adept in the contemporary information environment and of making the most out of the deterrent effect of recent impressive contributions to joint military exercises in Central and Eastern Europe.

Part of the difficulty lies in separating two ideas that have become conflated and which are making 77 Brigade's job of being the champions for and custodians of IA&O that much more difficult. The first is the generalist challenge of remembering that provoking behavioural change is central to all Army activity, and always has been – killing people is a perfectly good way of changing their behaviour, although you can only do it once. It is in the rediscovery of the acme of what has at different points in time been known as the indirect approach, the manoeuvrist approach, sneaky thinking, the full spectrum approach – in short, the principle that a range of different approaches and techniques to supplement the central idea of the controlled application of violence is both useful and necessary.

The second is the very specific and expert disciplines grouped under the title of IA&O – media operations, psychological operations, capacity building and strategic communications. These are skills that require expert training, education and practice, and, one day, dissemination throughout the Field Army. An army at home with these skill sets and which has them embedded in every tactical unit will be an army capable of first-rate communication and, married to a sound and credible suite of capabilities, highly effective conventional deterrence as part of a Joint Force cognisant of the wider diplomatic, economic, intelligence and criminal justice elements of a holistic government deterrence posture.

CONFERENCE SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

On Wednesday 14 September 2016 a conference on the theme of deterrence was organised by the CamSAI – Cambridge Security Associates International – on behalf of the British Army’s Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR) at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The event’s aim was to provide a theoretical foundation for thinking about deterrence for an audience of around 20 mid-career British Army officers and a selection of academics and Foreign Office representatives. Four talks were given, after each of which the floor was opened to questions. Discussion centred on three main themes: deterrence theory’s origins and development during the Cold War; changing contemporary understandings, priorities and challenges in multilateral deterrence (particularly relating to Russia) and its potential to meet new strategic challenges in the near future. What follows is an amalgam of the speakers’ main comments and the ensuing discussion, all held under the Chatham House Rule.

Deterrence theory in the Cold War and its legacy

All speakers firmly defined the bounds of deterrence theory, emphasising its relational, and traditionally bilateral and demonstrative qualities. Deterrence functions chronically as a geopolitical strategy to deter conflict, by threatening either denial or punishment to impel strategic cost-benefit calculations. While in essence an immemorial mainstay of strategy, contemporary theory and practice of deterrence crystallised during the Cold War, when the increasing power and number of nuclear weapons prompted such a theoretically specific response. These weapons were approached eventually with quasi-theological understandings – the enormous financial, strategic, humanitarian and moral implications of their use often countered ‘Limited Nuclear Option’ doctrine, rendering them tactically redundant but strategically indispensable. One participant put forward the dilemma of open, conventional warfare under the threat of nuclear escalation – the example of India and Pakistan demonstrated how skirmish warfare could still exist, and that the lack of major conflict between nuclear-armed powers illustrated a flaw in the analysis of deterrence: that of negative proof.

Contemporary deterrence and the British strategic calculus

The need for maintenance of a British nuclear deterrent, whether independent or similar in form to the existing Trident programme, was generally agreed upon. While some of the arguments in favour of maintenance were admittedly based on latent threats to national security, the potential might still arise. Historic Anglo-American collaboration on nuclear weapon research, testing, storage and operation continues to this day, with endeavours such as the Common Missile Compartment project linking the two programmes intimately. Questions were raised, firstly about the extremely low probability of further proliferation to ‘virtual nuclear states’,

and the effectiveness of diplomatic controls on proliferation. Crucially, the issue of British nuclear autonomy was raised, especially in view of the US-UK ‘special relationship’ – was this necessary or preferable to maintain in view of American preponderance, or even practically possible? Some argued that the British nuclear deterrent had no strategic autonomy, and would always be subject to American leadership. Contrarily, it was more generally agreed that nuclear collaboration was integral to both sides’ programmes – as one of very few American-aligned, nuclear-armed powers in the world, a leader in sub-critical modelling for testing, as well as providing important finance for new initiatives. It was also agreed upon that the British military calculus would change almost unimaginably if nuclear weapons were abandoned, and that it would not simply mean a straightforward augmentation of the Army’s budget.

The threat of terrorism raises many questions for deterrence strategy, especially the difficulty in conceptualising the interaction of state-level strategy with non-state actors. If terrorism is considered as a form of violent negotiation with

semi-conventional organisation and concrete political goals, then deterrence strategy could operate assuming a ‘rational’ cost-benefit calculus – if the contrary was true, as has been argued over recent Daesh-inspired attacks, then simple deterrence by denial may perhaps be the only option. One participant reminded the conference that ‘terrorism’ must be removed from the abstract: it is a set of behaviours and tactics, a mode of warfare, carried out in specific circumstances by specific actors, and emphatically not something that merits a blanket deterrent response.

Indeed, contemporary deterrence strategies appear much more multifaceted: beyond ‘denial’ and ‘punishment’, participants discussed at length deterrence by entanglement or influence, as well as normative, associative and counter-narrative deterrence. Particularly with regards

to Russia, participants were invited to take a more reciprocal view of deterrence thinking. Russia’s regional objectives and strategy were observed as a product not just of Soviet thinking, but older experiences with European incursion. While the West may perceive Russian expansionism in Eastern Europe, participants were reminded that Russian concerns over encirclement were just as profound in domestic thinking and strategy-making – US missile defences in Eastern Europe were an example of perceived aggression. Questions were raised over the effectiveness of Russian conventional forces; some noted their objective paucity compared to NATO forces, but that they still could ably threaten the Baltic states and other former Warsaw Pact nations. Most importantly, Russia was perceived as creating effective ambiguity over its objectives and strategies; participants however roundly denounced reductive or obfuscatory ‘buzzwording’ of non-conventional Russian strategy in Crimea and the Ukraine, as well as in political and media campaigning across Europe, as ‘hybrid warfare’. In reality, such strategies are shared by most

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Participants were reminded that Russian concerns over encirclement were just as profound in domestic thinking and strategy-making – US missile defences in Eastern Europe were an example of perceived aggression



Strategic hub: GCHQ is part of the UK team which defends Government systems from cyber and terrorist threats and strives to keep the public safe, in real life and online. © Crown copyright

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Cyber warfare has been a growing strategic threat over the past decade, and our conceptions of deterrence must necessarily rise to meet this. Alongside disrupting communications infrastructure, hacking attacks could also be directed against softer economic targets, such as energy infrastructure

modern powers to differing extents for achieving their political goals. On the topic of deterring Russia from acting against the Baltic states, for example, it was agreed that no single deterrent strategy in isolation would produce the intended retrenchment – stationing materiel and personnel was strategically insufficient and potentially provocative, fulfilling Russia’s own narrative. Indeed, the particular grievances of stateless Russian-speakers in the region – whose plight was mobilised by Moscow as justification for annexing Crimea – had to be approached holistically. It was observed that NATO’s recent acceleration in funding is not representative of its character of the last several years, and its status as a ‘paper tiger’ (as one participant put it) had categorically failed to provide the effective deterrent to Russian ambitions in 2014 that it had served as, with varying efficacy, in the past.

Meeting the challenges of the next decade

Cyber warfare has been a growing strategic threat over the past decade, and our conceptions of deterrence must necessarily rise to meet this. Alongside disrupting communications infrastructure, hacking attacks could also be directed against softer economic targets, such as energy infrastructure. One participant questioned whether conceptualising cyber was, indeed, very different at all from conceptualising conventional state-to-state architecture.

The example of US responses to hacking incidents from Shanghai in 2013 was raised: deterring cyber warfare is a

precarious balance of information control, where revealing knowledge of the source of cyber attacks could humiliate and alienate a perpetrator, but also demonstrate the victims’ strategy of defence. The role of the British Army itself in future deterrence strategy was also questioned, and the extent to which it could improve flexibility and continuing relevance.

Strategic communications in the military context were emphasised by one conversant, especially the aforementioned balance between covert and obvious deterrent activity. Broadly speaking, it was agreed that the British Army remained unquestionably a formidable, world-leading conventional force, but the extent to which such a reputation could be considered deterrent to contemporary asymmetrical threats was questioned. The need for more organic and realistic training exercises was noted, as well as more ministerial education on the topic of military deterrence; the military’s political leadership was integral to this strategy, fundamentally because deterrence has explicit geopolitical goals which rendered military and diplomatic concerns inseparable.

One participant noted that improving interoperability with European allies was central in order to provide a concerted deterrent front – both to deter threats and to assure our regional allies. The ‘pocket hyperpower’ approach of trying to replicate the full set of capabilities held by the US Armed Forces but at 15 per cent of the scale was consequently warned against.

OPERATIONALISING LAND DETERRENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY – TWO HISTORICAL CASE STUDIES

The following case studies focus purely on historical examples of conventional military deterrence. Both take place in the era of the Cold War and the reader should understand the wider context of the political and military tension between the Western and Eastern Blocs, as well as British interests at the particular time. The first study presents the facts around Britain's actions to counter an assessed invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1961, with the plan being codenamed Operation Vantage. The second case study is one of a failure in deterrence, describing the events leading up to the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982. Both examples are in some ways joint but reflect on the operationalisation of deterrence specifically to the land environment or the land component.

It can be difficult to assess how effective deterrence operations were after the fact, because the intended outcome is usually the prevention of a conflict or other hostile event. Simply put, the difficulty is often in isolating the reasons why something didn't happen. It is useful to remember whilst reading the two case studies one of the basic theories around deterrence; that to be effective the deterrent must be capable of deterring the assessed action,

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It is useful to remember one of the basic theories around deterrence; that to be effective the deterrent must be capable of deterring the assessed action, credible in the face of adversaries, and there must be clear communication of what the deterrent is to achieve to all actors

credible in the face of adversaries, and there must be clear communication of what the deterrent is to achieve to all actors. Effectively, what you are asking of the entity being deterred is that they conduct a cost/benefit analysis and come up with the answer that they don't benefit from the cost of their action. Therefore, the logic is that the belligerent must be made to understand that the consequences of defying the threat will at best prohibit him from achieving his goal, and may well lead to further, possibly severe, penalties. Communication therefore, is key to making deterrence effective.

Kuwait 1961

In 1899 Kuwait and the United Kingdom signed a treaty guaranteeing British protection of the state. By the 1960s, oil production and the resulting rise in Kuwait's wealth meant that the treaty was obsolete and inappropriate. Accordingly, on 19 June 1961, an Exchange of Notes formally terminated the 1899 treaty. However, the Exchange still affirmed that the British Government would undertake to support the Emir of Kuwait on request. General Kassem, leader of Iraq, saw this as an opportunity to revive old claims that Kuwait should be a part of Iraq. Iraqi oil production was declining and Kuwait was the richest oil producing area in the world. Kassem was also keen to push Iraq as the natural leader of the Arab world, and was thus in direct competition with Nasser of Egypt.

On 25 June 1961, the Iraqi Government announced that it planned to annex Kuwait following the end of the 1899 Treaty, which they viewed as illegal. Kuwait appealed to the UK and Saudi Arabia for help on 27 June and to the UN on 1 July. The crisis rapidly developed and although the UK Government was unsure if Iraq seriously entertained invading Kuwait or whether this was merely sabre-rattling, it answered the Emir's call for assistance. A contingency plan, Op Vantage, had already been prepared for intervention. It involved deploying forces to defend the high ground of the Mutla Ridge, which sat astride the Kuwait-Basra road. Additional forces were to act in a counter-attacking role to meet any Iraqi thrust towards Kuwait City.

Fortuitously, *HMS Bulwark* was at Karachi with 42 Commando Royal Marines embarked, preparing to go to the Persian Gulf to conduct hot weather trials. She was ordered on 28 June to proceed to Kuwait. Part of the theatre reserve consisted of *HMS Striker* and a Landing Ship Tank (LST), each with a half-squadron of Centurion tanks of 3rd Dragoon Guards on board. They also had with them crew from the Royal Navy Amphibious Warfare Section, with the means to immediately get armoured forces ashore. On 29 June, *Striker* was ordered to proceed to Kuwait but remain out of sight of land.



Kuwait contingent: Daimler Ferret Scout Cars, pictured during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), deployed to the desert as part of Op Vantage in 1961. © IWM (D 88417)

Assessments indicated on 28-29 June that Kassem was considering imminent military action. On 30 June Commander-in-Chief Middle East was ordered to implement Vantage. The initial force was to be not less than two infantry battalions, a squadron of tanks, one squadron of armoured cars and two Royal Air Force squadrons of fighter-bombers. Following on 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment were to be flown in from Cyprus and elements of 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) from Aden. 42 Cdo was to arrive in *Bulwark*, with 3 DG in *Striker* and the LST. Reinforcements were already being prepared and 45 Cdo was to be flown from Aden as soon as aircraft were available. 24 Infantry Brigade was instructed to start moving from East Africa to Bahrain.

Unfortunately on the night of 30 June, Turkey and Sudan refused to allow UK forces overflight rights. This meant UK aircraft had to take a circuitous route across Africa to Aden and 2 Para could not be carried. This severely limited the opening phase of Vantage and meant that only 42 Cdo and 3 DG could definitely be landed by 1 July. 42 Cdo was lifted to Kuwait New Airfield by helicopter to secure the area and once this was completed, a squadron of RAF Hunter jets landed to provide air support. 42 Cdo was then instructed to occupy the Mutla Ridge. On the same day, 3 DG disembarked from *Striker* and the LST in Kuwait Harbour. Two companies of 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Guards were dispatched from Bahrain with all possible haste to help in the absence of 2 Para. Commander 24 Inf Bde arrived late on 1 July and set up a preliminary joint Kuwaiti-British HQ.

During the afternoon of 1 July, Sudan and Turkey rescinded their decision and allowed overflights, which eased the transport situation. 45 Cdo was airlifted in and arrived late on 1 July. During 2-3 July additional troops, including 2 Para and a light artillery battery, were flown in. On 4 July 24 Inf Bde Group began to arrive from Kenya, led by the 1st Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. By 6 July most of 24 Inf Bde was in place in Kuwait and the UK force was complete. This had been a speedy deployment of British forces including; Centurion main battle tanks, Ferret scout cars, several battalions of infantry, medium and light artillery, as well as Hunter fighter-bombers.

During this period there had been very little offensive activity on the Iraqi side of the Kuwaiti border. Intelligence reports indicated that on 5 July, the Iraqis had assumed a defensive posture and were digging tank traps and preparing minefields. Further reports from 7 July onwards suggested no change to Iraqi preparations and no concentration of troops for possible offensive action. As it appeared that the UK deployment had discouraged any attempt by Kassem to annex Kuwait, discussions began to draw down the UK presence. Elements were removed by air and sea from 20 July, but 24 Inf Bde remained. On 20 July, the Arab League agreed to admit Kuwait, despite Iraqi protests. In consultation with the UK and Kuwait, the Arab League agreed that they would provide 4,000 troops to replace UK troops. From 19-28 September, the forward British units withdrew from their positions and began to leave Kuwait. Remaining ground forces left between 29 September and 19 October 1961.

The build-up after 1 July was aided by the planning that had gone into Vantage. Several major stockpiles of equipment had



Service stalwart: Centurions tanks, similar to those sent to Kuwait in 1961, were used by British Army personnel a decade earlier during the Korean War. © IWM (BF 454)

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The effect of this rapid deployment on Iraqi intentions is hard to discern but it seems likely that this quick and visible action would have forced caution, especially considering the strength of the advanced party, even before the main elements were in place on the ground

already been created. Eight Centurion tanks had been stored in Kuwait, meaning that crews merely had to be flown in from Aden. In Bahrain there were armoured vehicles, spare parts and ammunition that had been pre-positioned in the event of a contingency operation in the region. Vital stores were also already in place in Aden and Kenya so that Vantage could be successfully put into action with the minimum of trouble.

The effect of this rapid deployment on Iraqi intentions is hard to discern but it seems likely that this quick and visible action would have forced caution, especially considering the strength of the advanced party, even before the main elements were in place on the ground. The communication of Britain's position was clear.

Without detailed information on the Iraqi plans, it is difficult to determine exactly how much of a deterrent effect the deployment had. There were concentrations of Iraqi troops around Basra but whether these were in place for a parade on Iraq Independence Day or to threaten Kuwait is unclear. British assessments indicated that there was a threat of Iraqi 'crash action' at the start of July but after the 5 July, despite numerical superiority, there was little in the way of overt military preparation on the Iraqi side of the border. By 11 July it was recognised that there was still a threat of attack but that the Iraqis would have to concentrate forces to threaten the strong UK forces, and no such preparations were being undertaken. This may have been as a result of the very visible demonstration of UK ability and intention to aid Kuwait, especially with the deployment of armour.

Alternatively, it may have been that Iraq never really intended to attack Kuwait. At the political level it was considered that Kassem's speech had merely intended to reserve the Iraqi claim to Kuwait, following the ending of the treaty with Britain.

Falkland Islands 1965-82

Negotiations between the UK and Argentina on the future of the Falkland Islands took place from 1965, following resurgence of Argentine interest in its claim to the Islands. In September 1966 a group of 20 young Argentines hijacked an airliner and forced it to fly to the Falklands, landing on the Port Stanley race-course. This was known to the Argentines as Operation Condor. Although the Argentine Government in public dissociated itself from the Condor incident, demonstrations took place throughout Argentina in support of the claim and shots were fired at the UK Embassy.

The UK response was to reinforce the Royal Marine detachment on the Islands to Troop strength, which was subsequently maintained at this level. From 1967, the ice patrol vessel *HMS Endurance* was stationed in the area during the summer months. *Endurance* was armed with two 20mm cannon and two Wasp or Whirlwind helicopters with air-to-surface missiles. However, the 1974 Defence Review (the Mason Review) took the decision to remove *Endurance* from service. Despite continued negotiations over Sovereignty, relations between the UK and Argentina deteriorated gradually over 1973-76. By 1975-76 the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) assessed that the possibility of invasion could not be excluded, although 'adventurist' actions were more likely. The JIC also noted an increased likelihood of specific Argentine measures against the Islands, such as suspension of the air service.

In February 1976 an Argentine naval vessel fired at the unarmed UK research ship *Shackleton*. In response, the Secretary of State for Defence authorised the deployment of *HMS Endurance* (then about to go out of service) to the Falklands, which was actually continued until 1981 when again she was due to be withdrawn⁶. The Prime Minister was sufficiently concerned over the threat of invasion to persuade the Secretary of State for Defence also to deploy a frigate to the area, supported by a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship. This was deployed in February 1976, travelling to the Falklands overtly in order to provide a visible demonstration to the Argentines.

In March 1976, a coup in Argentina brought a military junta to power. From this time, the Argentine approach became more aggressive. In January 1977 the UK discovered an Argentine military presence on Southern Thule (in the South Sandwich Islands). The UK made formal protests but the presence remained on the island. The JIC assessed the Argentine Navy had contingency plans for an invasion of the Falklands, and that the Southern Thule presence was aimed at gauging UK reactions. Dependent on the UK

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The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) assessed the Argentine Navy had contingency plans for an invasion of the Falklands, and that the Southern Thule presence was aimed at gauging UK reactions. Dependent on the UK response, the JIC felt that Argentina may be encouraged to take further military action

Falklands War (clockwise from below): Commandos from 40 Commando Anti-Tank Troop march towards Port Stanley (© Crown copyright, IWM (FKD 2028)); Captured Argentine prisoners are marched away from Goose Green (© Crown copyright, IWM (FKD 363)); Argentine prisoners walk out to the airfield at Port Stanley, where a temporary prisoner of war camp was set up by British forces after the Argentine surrender (© Crown copyright, IWM (FKD 367)); Soldiers of 5 Infantry Brigade disembark at a jetty from one of HMS Intrepid's landing craft at San Carlos Water (© Crown copyright, IWM (FKD 931)); The Battle of the Mountains – walking wounded of the Scots Guards move toward a Scout helicopter for evacuation (© Crown copyright, IWM (FKD 317)).



response, the JIC felt that Argentina may be encouraged to take further military action. However, apart from its formal protest, the UK took no action over Thule, and the Government did not make the incident public (although it became so in May 1978).

Between February and December 1977, negotiations between the two countries were resumed. In July, the Cabinet Defence Committee considered a paper by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, noting that serious negotiations were necessary as the Islands were militarily indefensible except at prohibitive cost. Between September and December 1977, the Argentine junta showed increasing militancy over the Falklands dispute, both in its actions (stopping Soviet and Bulgarian fishing vessels in Falkland's waters) and its public statements in Argentina. A MoD assessment in October 1977 (compiled at FCO request) concluded that a military operation to recover the Falklands, if invaded by Argentina, would be a complicated and expensive major operation. In the light of this the Cabinet Defence Committee decided in its 21 November meeting that a military presence should be established in the Falklands area prior to the next round of negotiations in December. Accordingly, one nuclear-powered submarine and two frigates were deployed, the submarine in the immediate vicinity of the Islands and the frigates standing off some 1,000 miles away. The Defence Committee agreed that the force should remain covert. There is no evidence that the Argentine Government was aware of its existence, either at the time or afterwards. The December 1977 negotiations however, went well and the Argentine threat receded significantly.

⁶Following FCO representations, she was retained on an annual basis until 1978, and on special extensions until 1981.



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Galtieri was committed to regaining the Falkland Islands from the UK and sought to focus the Argentinean public’s attention on foreign rather than domestic affairs. The UK continued to assume it was dealing with a rational group of actors who thought in the same way they did, rather than considering the situation from the junta’s perspective

The continued UK-Argentine dispute over the Falkland Islands worsened during 1981. This included Argentine reduction of its air service to the Falklands, and overflights of the Islands by its Air Force. Proposals for a gradual ‘leaseback’ of the Islands to Argentina were rejected by the islanders. The FCO assessment in 1981 was that the demise of this option left no way for the UK to prevent the dispute ultimately moving to open confrontation. The 1981 Defence Review (the Nott Review), published in April 1981, was essentially an economy exercise. Its decisions included the sale of the aircraft carrier *HMS Invincible* and other large-scale reductions in the UK surface fleet. A further consequence was the decision to withdraw from service *HMS Endurance* after her 1981-82 deployment. The Foreign Secretary pressed for the vessel’s retention or its replacement by a similar type. This was on the grounds that any reduction in the normal UK presence in the Falklands would be interpreted by Argentina (and the Islanders) as reduction in the UK commitment to defend the Islands. However, the decision to withdraw *Endurance* was confirmed and announced in Parliament on 30 June 1981. This immediate defence of the Falklands then rested on a troop of Royal Marines (42 all ranks)⁷.

Subsequently, the UK Embassy in Buenos Aires reported several Argentine newspapers presenting this decision as the UK abandoning its protection of the Falklands. An intelligence appreciation in September 1981 was that Argentina viewed the decision to withdraw *Endurance* as a deliberate political gesture, rather than the defence economy it in fact was. The Foreign Secretary argued against the decision in Parliament and suggested it was viewed by Argentina as a stage in a deliberate UK policy of reduction of support for the Falklands. Given that 1981 had been a year of significant tension between the UK and Argentina, the Foreign Secretary and many MPs felt that the decisions flowing from the 1981 Defence Review sent unwise signals to Argentina. Further government appreciations failed to identify that the internal Argentinean political situation and economic outlook were poor. In December 1981 General Galtieri became President and head of the junta. Galtieri was committed to regaining the Falkland Islands from the UK and sought to focus the Argentinean public’s attention on foreign rather than domestic affairs. The UK continued to assume it was dealing with a rational group of actors who thought in the same way they did, rather than considering the situation from the junta’s perspective.

⁷There was also the locally recruited Falkland Islands Defence Force, which had a nominal strength of 120.

In December 1981, an Argentine ice-breaker had entered the waters off the island of South Georgia without

permission. In January 1982, the UK warned that any violation of sovereignty of any Islands would not be tolerated. Further negotiations took place in New York in February-March 1982. On 1 March, Argentina published a communiqué on the talks. This included a veiled threat to withdraw from negotiations and take more direct action. On 19 March 1982, an Argentine civilian/military party landed on South Georgia. On 20 March 1982, Argentina was warned that the party must leave or the UK would take such actions as appeared necessary. In case this was rejected, *HMS Endurance* was on 20 March ordered to sail for South Georgia with additional Royal Marines embarked. Her destination was kept confidential however, to avoid any escalation of the situation. On 23 March, despite the Argentine vessel's withdrawal, ten Argentine personnel remained on the Island. Ministerial approval was given for *Endurance* and her embarked Marines to remove them. This intention was notified to the Argentine Foreign Minister the same day. In perhaps an unwise and unclear manner, following the response by the Argentinean Foreign Ministry that such action would inflame the situation, *Endurance* was ordered to hold off from action but remained on station.

Over the next week, tensions remained high. The UK Cabinet decided on 29 March that a nuclear submarine should be deployed to the area, operating covertly. The Secretary of State for Defence advised that an RFA had already been despatched to replenish *Endurance*, and that a submarine could reach the Falklands by 13 April, while a second would be prepared. On 30 March, the Foreign Secretary stated in Parliament that *Endurance* would remain on station as long as necessary. Also on 30 March, a MoD meeting discussed the presence of an Argentine maritime task group on exercise some 900 miles north of the Falklands. The meeting recommended against UK deployment of surface forces as likely to escalate the situation. A joint MoD-FCO Minute to the PM then advised that a credible surface force could take 24 days to muster and would be highly provocative unless Argentina intended to invade the Falklands – of this there was no sign they argued. On 31 March, the UK press reported that a nuclear submarine had been sent to the Falklands. This led to a message being delivered to the Argentine Foreign Minister, in which the UK intention to resolve the dispute by

negotiation was re-affirmed. On 1 April, the US was asked for diplomatic intervention. The decision to retain *Endurance* on station was confirmed. It was decided, however, not to reinforce the garrison at Port Stanley as further troops could not deploy in time and could aggravate the situation.

The US diplomatic effort proved unsuccessful and a pre-prepared Argentine task force invaded the Falkland Islands on the night 1-2 April. The UK then commenced preparation of a joint task force that sailed in April, and undertook the recapture of the Falklands over May-June 1982, ending with the surrender of Argentine forces on the Islands. Successive UK Governments had attempted to resolve the Falklands dispute and avoid confrontation with Argentina by negotiation. On numerous occasions the UK's deterrent position with regard to the Falklands was not capable, credible, nor clearly communicated. The deployment of assets was piecemeal, in response to perceived threat levels and the progress of negotiations. Prior to late March 1982, most forces were deployed as gestures of UK political/military intent.

Throughout the period, UK Governments were essentially willing to negotiate with Argentina over the future of the Falklands. UK deployments over 1965-77 must be viewed in the light of continued talks with Argentina, and the UK desire to avoid escalation while reassuring the Islanders of their continued safety and sovereignty. Failure to act over Southern Thule in 1977 meant that Argentina continued to regard small-scale acts as a viable way to improve their position at the cost of the UK. Communicating Her Majesty's Government's position to the Argentines was confused and unclear. The UK was perceived as keen to scale down or even abandon its military commitment to the area. The announced withdrawal of the token naval presence clearly reduced the deterrent capability, while proposed reductions in the surface fleet suggested a future inability to respond to infringements of sovereignty in the South Atlantic. The UK reduction of forces to support its deterrent policy came at a time when a hawkish Argentine leadership made direct military action over the Falklands increasingly likely. The UK did not take in to account the Argentinean political and economic situation and failed to appreciate that the military junta might not calculate the cost/benefit analysis in the same way as they did.

Cold reception: HMS Endurance pictured off South Georgia.
© Crown copyright. IWM (MH 27511)



Coalition capability: A British Army Rapier Air Defence System belonging to 16th Regiment Royal Artillery deployed to Estonia under NATO's Trans-Atlantic Capability Enhancement and Training (TACET) initiative earlier this year
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DETERRENCE: THE CASE OF ANTI-ACCESS AREA DENIAL IN THE BALTIC

The deployment, and counter-deployment, of NATO and Russian Federation (RF) forces in and around the Baltic captures the manner in which deterrence as a strategy is being re-discovered. The arcane lexicon and stately dance of the Cold War has largely been forgotten in the West and newly interpreted by the current Russian regime. The principles of deterrence remain the same (capable, credible and communicated) but context and technology have moved on considerably since 1989.

The principal challenge for military strategists, and commanders across NATO and supporting coalitions such as the Joint Expeditionary Force, is to develop a new lexicon of words and deeds and new channels of communication. Only then would there be the prospect of our intent being understood and Russian behaviour modified. Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) in the Baltic offers an interesting case study both to understand the new deterrence and demonstrate its complexities. The term A2AD was first coined by observers who noted the impressive ability of the US-led coalition in the first Gulf War to prevent the Iraqi Army from interfering with the coalition in any domain or environment. The ability of sophisticated US (and NATO) equipment and capabilities to extend their reach far into a neighbouring country was particularly noticed by Chinese and Russian militaries on which subsequent investment decisions have been based.

These decisions have shaped inventories and now allow them to conduct more aggressive defence and foreign policies in their near abroad. As a defensive system by design, intended primarily to protect sovereign – or assumed sovereign – land, air and sea space, on the surface its deployment could be presented as non-aggressive and reactive.

Yet the density and sophistication of particular capabilities within the A2AD system in the Kaliningrad oblast, and their reach (particularly SA-21 and SS-22) places it firmly in a more offensive category. The purpose of this deployment has been interpreted as deterrence; a clear message to NATO to refrain from militarising the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea. Indeed, the Kaliningrad ORBAT would certainly make

reinforcement of Baltic States by NATO in time of crisis extremely challenging. Moreover, RF actions in the Donbas and Syria could be evidence of intention to employ such capabilities if the circumstances demanded. One could argue, therefore, that inaction by NATO and the Baltic States would equate to a successful Russian deterrence strategy: action constrained without recourse to physical force. But we cannot be sure whether that is the Russian regime's intent. Channelling Sun Tzu, we must understand ourselves and our adversary if we are to prevail.

It would be an idle assumption if we were to judge that we understood ourselves well, particularly across such a diverse alliance with competing political tensions in each nation. Understanding the social and political composition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is a prerequisite of building an alliance or

coalition that is able to withstand the potential consequences of deterrence action. So, the deployment of the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) to the Baltic States and Poland, Baltic Air Policing and Maritime BALTOPS could certainly be judged to be action which counters the intention of an A2AD capability. But we cannot with any confidence predict the reaction of various ethnic and social groups within each nation to the long-term presence of foreign servicemen in their region, particularly soldiers in the country.

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The term Anti-Access Area Denial was first coined by observers who noted the impressive ability of the US-led coalition in the first Gulf War to prevent the Iraqi Army from interfering with the coalition in any domain or environment

Likewise, the need to develop the depth of understanding of Russia that the UK used to enjoy is a matter of urgency. Much has been misunderstood about the Russian regime's mindset and rationale. For example, we have labelled RF activity in the Baltic as 'hybrid warfare' but this is not a term the Russian military would understand. Gerasimov laid out the philosophy for developing RF Armed Forces in a 2013 article entitled *The Value of Science in Prediction*. Its themes and recommendations would be recognised by any UK military student but his interpretation of NATO's role in the colour revolutions, particularly the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, demonstrates both an interesting degree of paranoia but importantly the underpinning logic of the current RF approach. One might therefore interpret the RF rationale for the deployment of A2AD in Kaliningrad as deterrence against any attempt by NATO to destabilise Belarus and North Western Russia.

Understanding is the route to communicating our reaction to that deterrence posture clearly enough that it can be understood through any cultural lens. The reaction NATO has chosen is escalation by improving allied interoperability and readiness through initiatives such as the Framework Nation Concept (the JEF is an example), the VJTF and EFP. Our challenge is now to develop the ability to predict whether these actions will have the desired response of deterring RF from further escalation and to devise a strategy by which Russia had the option to de-escalate without loss of face: the need to create mechanisms and channels for communication,

most of which would have to be discreet, is axiomatic.

In parallel, JFC is now scoping how UK might contribute, with allies and coalition partners, to countering A2AD. Much has already been done by HQ ARRC, by the Air Warfare Centre, by MARCOM, by 77 Bde, by 1 ISR Bde, by COMOPS and by PJHQ; and only an enterprise approach will crack the problem. In the meantime, through the JEF a spectrum of activity is possible, from; reassurance activity to improve interoperability and understanding of the problem, to; focusing effort on how to neutralise this capability in times of heightened tension to enable joint theatre entry. Tackling an A2AD threat head-on, whether by kinetic or non-kinetic means, is unlikely to be the best strategy: we think ourselves out of the problem with our allies, partners across government, academia and industry. We have a vehicle for so doing: Exercise Joint Venture 17. Thereafter, we might have a route to market for a coherent deterrence strategy.

Focusing on A2AD has many benefits. Firstly, the constituent capabilities that deny access to physical, electromagnetic or cyber environments are proliferating, and it is highly likely that, wherever we operate in future, the JEF will have to defeat similar systems. Secondly, the threat that A2AD presents to our access to the global commons could well threaten us as a trading nation. But thirdly and, as far as the JEF is concerned, most importantly, it is essential to reassuring our coalition partners and offering NATO additional options.

Combined effort: HMS Ocean is pictured with Apache, Merlin and Chinook helicopters embarked during a Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime) exercise in the Mediterranean.
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OPERATIONALISING DETERRENCE: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

*Words: Dr KC Gustafson, Brunel University,
Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies*

It has been argued that the post-1989 world order is crumbling. While it is hard to see the truth of macro-political events other than in hindsight, it is apparent that the “rules of the game” as we have become used to them since 1989 are changing quickly. The increasingly peaceful world described by Stephen Pinker in *The Better Angels of our Nature* seems at risk of slipping away from us. We now openly talk of a “new Cold War”, a term handily keeping us from discussing a new hot one. Russia and China are key actors here, ambiguously hostile to us and our interests in Europe or to our allies in Asia. For the first time in near three decades, the need to deter a peer or near-peer competitor is a very real consideration. My aim is to discuss the problems in making real deterrence – here, I discuss deterrence by conventional arms – in the actual international environment. I will focus on the importance of two theories of international relations which show how we too often wrongly gauge the cause and target of other states’ international behaviours. These are Graham Allison’s theory on the “Bureaucratic Politics Model” and Putnam’s theory on “two level games”. Both theories deal more with the question of who we are trying to deter, and therefore laterally with how. This leads us to the problem of communicating deterrence to our perceived opponents. The bottom line is that we too often view states as rational actors who we can deter with a single message – in fact states are complex constellations of special interest parties and individuals whose product is not, necessarily, a singular rational policy which can be deterred singularly. This problem is compounded by the deficiency of conventional arms to inherently communicate deterrent intent.

Deterrence is a topic with no lack of literature. This literature was largely written in the context of nuclear deterrence, but its basic theories remain valid. Deterrence is a threat. The substance of that threat is that action by your opponent will generate risks greater than benefits that stand to be gained. The goal of deterrence then is “to secure inaction by forcing an unsatisfactory cost-benefit calculation onto a potential adversary.”⁸ We can achieve this by punishment (increase the cost) or by denial (decrease the benefit). But communication is key: French nuclear strategist Pierre Gallois has called deterrence the “product of two factors, one of which, purely technical, represents the operational value of the military means of retaliation and the other, subjective, expresses the will of the menaced nation to use force...”⁹ In order to make a credible threat, in other words, a nation must be militarily capable of carrying it out, willing to do so despite the costs of action, and able to communicate that intent to the right audience.

We aim to deter a specific behaviour of an opponent –



I don’t know enough about the Soviet Union... but if anyone can tell me any other time since the Berlin blockade where the Russians have given us so clear a provocation, I don’t know when it’s been because they’ve been awfully cautious really – John F Kennedy

to conduct an action or to maintain a policy – which is inimical to our interests. But we are too often simplistic and overly self-regarding when we observe the behaviours of our perceived opponents. When John F Kennedy was presented with evidence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, one of his immediate comments was: “I don’t know enough about the Soviet Union... but if anyone can tell me any other time since the Berlin blockade where the Russians have given us so clear a provocation, I don’t know when it’s been because they’ve been awfully cautious really.” There are two errors here: the first error assumes that the US was the sole target of this action; the second error assumes that the policy is rationally determined by a singular actor named Russia. We do this all the time; Graham Allison called this the Rational Actor Model, by which we view international policies of states being benefit-maximising decisions for the state, an anthropomorphised single actor. We hear this over-simplified model when we say ‘Russia’s view of the Crimea is conditioned by deep historical ties and strategic interests’ or ‘Iran is interested in producing a pliant, pro-Shia Iraq’. Things many of us are guilty of uttering, because they are easy and offer an explicatory model which is seemly. But this is too simple to lead us to good deterrence against these states or these moves.

Allison offered a key alternative: the Bureaucratic Politics

⁸Stone (2012), p. 109.

⁹Pierre M. Gallois (1956) “Limitations des armes a grand pouvoir de destruction” *Revue de defense Nationale*, Vol. 12, December 1956, pp. 1485-1496.

Model. As Graham Allison noted: “Applied to relations between nations, the bureaucratic politics model directs attention to intra-national games, the overlap of which constitutes international relations¹⁰.” In his model, we acknowledge that states are not singular actors. Rather, they are made up of departments of state, each with their own institutional interests (both in budget share and type of activity it views as appropriate to solve certain problems) and behaviours. Moreover, the leaders of those departments, the principal ministers of state, each have their own interests. So a state is a web of different actors with sometimes narrow self-interest. Policy is determined by negotiation (and sometimes fights) between these interest groups and individuals. The various ministers and generals seek to secure their own careers and positions by successfully manoeuvring towards a policy which benefits their departments and therefore their leaders. The ‘rational policy’ we see a state enact is thus the result of ‘pushing and pulling’ between these interests, and the results may not be rational. Furthermore, we can divide the decision into, first, the pathways in which the policy was decided upon and, second, how that policy is enacted on the ground.

Each decision of a government further has what Allison and Halperin call “action channels”. There is an action channel running to a decision of a state and an action channel which follows from that decision. An intelligence officer or diplomat notices a behaviour or action in a state, this information moves through the analytic engine of that ministry, perhaps to something like a JIC, thence to Cabinet, where the Prime Minister makes a decision. The decision then flows back down through executive action channels. Along the way (indeed in both directions) actors benefit maximise, and SOPs condition how the action unfolds. A good example is the Cuban Missile Crisis – EXCOMM (the Executive Committee of the National Security Council) meetings leading towards the decision for ‘quarantine’ (really, blockade) showed many actors counselling everything from retreat to pre-emptive war¹¹. JFK negotiated with his various secretaries and advisers until he gained consensus for quarantine: a decision intended to deter Russia from completing its deployment by raising the apparent cost of their policy action. Implementing quarantine resulted in perverse actions such as the US Navy using practice depth charges against Russian submarines to try and signal them to surface, which came close to causing at least one sub to fire nuclear torpedoes¹². This was not intended by JFK or Macnamara – it was simply the SOP of the USN. The action channel had a life of its own. Kennedy further observed, when a U2 strayed into Soviet Airspace, “there’s always some sonofabitch who doesn’t get the word”¹³. State behaviours, in short, don’t always reflect rational state policy.

To be specific, departments of state have their own SOPs – armies fight, foreign ministries negotiate, development ministries develop. (Of course authoritarian states may act more centralised compared to democracies, but do not lack their own planes of cleavage, special interest parties or rival



Creating a buzz: A Russian Bear aircraft is escorted by a Royal Air Force Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon during an intercept in September 2014. © Crown copyright.

power centres). For Kennedy in the Missile Crisis, his key State Department sovietologist Llewellyn Thompson reminded him that some Russian behaviour was the product of this bureaucratic routine – when a U2 was shot down, it quite possibly was the result of an air defence unit SOP, rather than a hardened Soviet line¹⁴. But it was also usable against Russia: Soviet leaders were so worried about keeping secrets, no matter the Soviet line most captains and commissars would rather turn around than be searched by the US quarantine line.

Another interesting example is that of Op Claret, the operations against the Indonesians during the Confrontation. These were specifically deniable operations, up to 10,000 yards across the border. This was meant as a deterrent to Indonesian raids. Why did the UK come up with the solution of low-key, yet violent and deadly raids against the aggressors, Indonesia? The policy was a balance on the one hand to preserve Malaysia’s new independence without alienating permanently the powerful Indonesian state, balanced again by military necessity. Raids first went in 2,000 yards, a figure which slowly crept up until 10,000 was reached¹⁵. It was far less than the Army wanted. Still, it was unclear that British tactical military success translated into any measurable political effect. There was no evidence, for example, that Sukarno even knew that his cross-border military operations were being largely defeated by Commonwealth troops. Military success eluded Indonesia but, as the C-in-C Far East wondered “subordinates who conceal or distort the true situation have probably convinced Sukarno himself that [his] military activities have had some success”¹⁶. Neither the British decision towards Claret, nor the Indonesian response, was benefit maximising for the state. And further, we see how bureaucratic politics within a state like Indonesia renders deterrence difficult and non-linear. Ultimately it was probably only the coup in Indonesia which ended their ambitions against Malaysia.

We are led now to another key consideration on deterrence: something called interpretive flexibility. With nukes we have always presumed that the function of the weapon speaks for itself – it is the ne plus ultra, the final weapon, the embodiment of escalation superiority. Now there are problems with the deterrence by nuclear weapons which are beyond our scope here. But these problems are worse with conventional weapons. What sociologists sometimes refer to as ‘interpretative flexibility’ is the lack of clear message set by any particular

¹⁰Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow (1999), *Essence of Decision*. New York: Longman. p. 149. Author’s Emphasis

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Aleksandr Mozgovoi, “Order: If fired upon, Use the Nuclear Weapon”, *Komsomol’skaya Pravda*, 27 June 1995, p. 3.

¹³Michael Dobbs (2009), *One Minute to Midnight*. London: Arrow Books. P. 270.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 238.

¹⁵Raff Gregorian (1991), “CLARET Operations and Confrontation, 1964-1966”, *Conflict Quarterly*, Winter 1991, p. 53.

¹⁶Christopher Tuck (2013) “Cut the bonds which bind our hands”: Deniable Operations during the Confrontation with Indonesia, 1963-1966”, *Journal of Military History*, p. 77.



conventional weapons in the eyes of an intended audience. Expectations of the cost imposed against RED's decision to seek benefit from BLUE by the latter's weapons sit in a broader plausible range of variation than is the case with nuclear weapons, whose destructive potential imposes a more compelling narrative of unacceptable damage¹⁷. Signalling with conventional weapons is, again, a non-linear problem.

Consider Britain's attempt to deter Argentina from actions against the Falkland Islands and dependencies. In 1975, the government debated storing naval mines in the Falklands so they could be used by *Endurance* if needed: this would be "the maximum of provocation and the minimum of deterrence"¹⁸ said the UK embassy in Buenos Aires. How to signal to Argentina that Britain was resolved to protect the islands whilst not seeming to provoke? "A more balanced force of a helicopter cruiser or destroyer, frigates, possibly a fleet submarine and supporting fleet auxiliaries would raise the familiar problem of appearing to increase the stakes while Britain was still in a relatively weak position."¹⁹ Two frigates, two support vessels, and an SSN were sent: the Argentines never noticed it, but backed down for other reasons. The force was quietly withdrawn, on the assumption that the surreptitious communications to the Argentines about this force were successful. The movement of a small flotilla, even if it had been noticed by the Argentines, would not have prima facie signalled Britain's deterrent message, even with convoluted 'secret' messaging. Would a pair of frigates actually communicate serious intent? It was simply presumed they would. Freedman called this farce "undetected deterrence."²⁰

Ultimately, however, the Franks report concluded that the critical decision to invade the Falklands was taken completely in Buenos Aires, shaped largely by local stimuli. Outside of an overwhelming and expensive force, Argentina could not be deterred. Here is a problem in deterrence of what one theorist called "high-resolve states": simply "a state that chooses to perfectly deter another state from attacking regardless of its resolve, prefers to save on its investment under the slightest bit of uncertainty, often leaving itself vulnerable to attack by high-resolve opponents. A peaceful outcome through deterrence becomes highly unlikely."²¹ But more clearly it also shows the problem with the Rational Actor model. Was Argentina acting in a rational, benefit maximising way? Or were the junta seeking a diversion from their deteriorating

¹⁷John Stone (2012) "Conventional Deterrence and the Challenge of Credibility", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33:1, 108-123.

¹⁸Lawrence Freedman (2005) *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume 1: The Origins of the Falklands War*. London: Routledge, p. 54.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 72.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 65.

domestic situation? (A two level game where the domestic level was the greater driver). Likewise, why did Khrushchev seek to put missiles into Cuba? We know, as Kennedy also puzzled out after some very tense days, that they were not being aggressive but defensive²². Specifically, Khrushchev was seeking to placate his own general staff and party, stung by what they perceived as inroads made by the Americans: the holding of Berlin, the placement of missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev, like Galtieri, was not acting to hurt their opponents primarily, but to help themselves. This is what the theorist Thomas Putnam calls "the two level game." It argues that principally states make plans based on internal stimuli, and only adapt it lightly to suit external political events. To understand state behaviours, we thus must aim instead for 'general equilibrium' theories that account simultaneously for the interaction of domestic and international factors²³.

The examples above are part of a key point on what IR theorists call the 'security dilemma'. This is a spiral problem, related to signalling: it is "a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs tend, regardless of intention, to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive and measures of others as potentially threatening."²⁴ You move an armoured brigade because you are worried about the enemy threat, an attempt to 'signal' deterrence; because of 'interpretive flexibility', and because we keep secrets and guard our ambiguity of intent (because: SOPs), the Russians do not know if that brigade is meant to attack or defend. They must (because: two level game) treat it as aggressive – or they simply do treat it as aggressive because of their doctrine or SOPs, or decisions made at very low level (Russian planes buzzing NATO ships, a good example: Defensive or offensive?). They respond with an increase in their forces across the border. Result: escalation. Your deterrence provokes. The opposite problem was seen in my earlier example about the Falklands: if your force is too small, it is irrelevant to deterrence, possibly.

This paper has addressed some of the problems with deterrence, by using some select theories to frame our examples. We can see some clear points: in the first instance, opposing states are not (or at least rarely) unitary nor their actions benefit maximising, but the product of internal dynamics, and indeed perhaps aimed at internal audiences, and are the product of negotiation amongst competing parties. Since foreign actors are not unitary, deterrence aimed at 'the state' but exacted against some part of it may not achieve the desired effect. The flexibility in interpreting the 'meaning' of conventional forces further clouds our ability to use them for deterrence – the message may not get across at all, or may be seen as a pretext for further escalation. All of these theories have concrete applications in operationalising deterrence, and need to be part of our consideration.

²¹Denter & Sisak (2015), "The Fragility of Deterrence in conflicts", *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 57.

²²Richard Neustadt & Ernest May (1986), *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*. New York: The Free Press, p. 9.

²³Robert D. Putnam (1988), "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 427-460.

²⁴Herz, J. "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", *World Politics* vol. 2, no. 2 (1950): 171-201, at p. 157.

SIMULTANEOUS DETERRENCE

The UK's recent interest in 'full spectrum' deterrence, regardless of whether it refers to multiple capabilities or threats or both, has proven useful in highlighting the need to re-examine one of the key limitations of extant deterrence research, namely the lack of interest in the problem of simultaneity. Traditionally, deterrence has been talked about in the singular, with one threat deterred, or one threat that failed to be deterred, at a single moment in time. For example, in 1990, the US failed to deter Saddam Hussein from invading and occupying Kuwait. The problem with this approach is that it does not reflect reality, at least not in the majority of cases. It is very rare that there is only one actor or action that is being deterred at any point. In fact, there are often many things that are being deterred simultaneously.

Instead, a more appropriate prism is 'simultaneous deterrence', in which numerous deterrence activities are ongoing simultaneously, often utilising the same overstretched capabilities, and must be managed in such a way as to minimise the risk of both a specific, and more general deterrence failure. In a classic military sense, this scenario might apply to cases where overcommitting military resources in one theatre of operations would expose gaps in other theatres. Thus, adversaries that would otherwise be deterred from taking hostile

action begin to see weaknesses that can be exploited. It is in these sorts of cases where a 'simultaneous deterrence' approach would seek to limit exposure by utilising a range of different means to 'hold the line'.

When thinking about deterrence during the Cold War, from a NATO perspective at least, it was not simply Soviet military (conventional and/or nuclear) aggression against the Alliance that needed to be deterred; the prospect of Soviet expansion and intervention in the Third World was also a major concern. There was also the problem of having to fight wars and defend other national interests at the same time as trying to deter the Soviets in Europe or the Chinese in Asia. From 1965 through the early 1970s, with the Americanisation of the Vietnam War, hundreds of thousands of US troops, and all the military resources associated with this commitment, were deployed in Southeast Asia, and always to the detriment of the US presence in West Germany that was intended to contribute to the overall NATO conventional deterrent against the Warsaw Pact. Similarly, in the 1970s and 1980s, the strength of the British Army of the Rhine was undermined by the need to deploy troops to Northern Ireland. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that while NATO was trying to deter the Soviets, the Soviets were trying to deter NATO. Moreover, by the late 1960s, the Soviets were simultaneously trying to deter both NATO and China.

There have also been many cases where both the US and UK recognised the need to fight and/or deter multiple adversaries



simultaneously in the same region and undertook certain measures to compensate for their weaknesses. For the Americans, the decision to intervene in South Korea following the North's invasion on 25 June 1950 was taken with wider regional interests in mind. In addition to sending US forces to fight in South Korea, Washington also dispatched the Seventh Fleet to the Formosa Straits to deter Chinese aggression against Taiwan. Likewise, the British government only had limited resources in Asia available to send troops to Korea, fight an insurgency in Malaya, and also deter Chinese aggression against Hong Kong. To achieve this latter objective, and lacking sufficient military resources, British policymakers relied on a strategy of bluff, as well as seeking US military protection.

Simultaneity in deterrence can operate on several levels either individually or in conjunction with others. One aim of deterrence may be to prevent the outbreak of war against one or more adversaries whilst fighting or deterring another adversary. For example, with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, both of which involved large-scale sustained commitments, the ability of the US or UK to deter other conflicts was reduced. In the British case, the ability to deter an Argentine attack in the Falklands was more limited than would otherwise have been the case. Another aim of deterrence is to prevent certain activities from occurring in the midst of fighting a conflict. Having failed to deter the conflict itself, it may still be possible to ensure that both sides respect

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the 'rules of the game'. One notable example of this type of deterrence during the Second World War was the unwillingness of either the Allies or the Axis to use chemical weapons against the other, albeit with some limited exceptions on the Eastern Front and in Japan's war on China. The British and Americans communicated threats to the Germans and Japanese that chemical use against any of the Allies would result in a chemical retaliation. Another example of 'deterring whilst fighting' occurred during the Yom Kippur War. Despite its nuclear arsenal and strong conventional forces, Israel was unable to deter a combined Egyptian-Syrian attack in 1973. However, it did deter the Egyptians and Syrians from waging anything other than a limited war. Neither the Egyptians nor the Syrians intended to wage a military campaign to destroy Israel – in contrast to the beliefs of some Israeli leaders at the time, such as Moshe Dayan, that this was their objective. Thus at one level Israeli deterrence succeeded but at another it failed.

Finally, in addition to the aforementioned ways of approaching 'simultaneous deterrence', one can view the subject not only in terms of how the UK is attempting to deter others, but rather how others are attempting to deter the UK and/or its allies/partners. Regrettably, the interactive nature of deterrence amongst two or more actors is not sufficiently appreciated, yet more attention to this subject might yield useful rewards for UK policy.



Air supremacy: Two Royal Air Force Tornado F3s patrol the skies over the Falkland Islands. © Crown copyright

TAKING RUSSIAN LESSONS: KEEPING DETERRENCE DYNAMIC

Deterrence has become one of the most important themes for the Euro-Atlantic security community. This has been driven in large part by concern about a possible Russian attack on NATO, particularly the Baltic States and Poland. Numerous measures are being devised and implemented, from the establishment of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) to the deployment of four battalions as an enhanced forward presence. Such moves are often cast in terms of dealing with a ‘new’ type of Russian warfare, often represented as the ‘Gerasimov doctrine’, after an article published by Russian Chief of General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov in February 2013.

Yet thinking about a potential Russian threat often appears to be anchored to the events of 2014 and scenarios often envisage a replay or adaptation of what happened in Ukraine. While it is valid and important to integrate lessons from this experience, this runs a real risk of both misunderstanding those who are to be deterred (the debate about whether Russian ‘hybrid warfare’ actually exists, for instance), and preparing to fight the last war. But deterrence will only be effective if it is conceptually dynamic and keeps pace with changes in the international environment and with how adversaries to be deterred are adapting. Understanding the latter is important, and doing so will depend on observing how Russian military thinking and capabilities are evolving.

Reflecting on what lessons the Russians are learning from their experiences – and those of others – is particularly important because the Russian armed forces themselves take seriously the lesson learning process. The changing nature of war and assessments of future war are an important part of Russian military thinking, at the heart of which is their approach to military science, the search for law-governed patterns and the identification of what is relevant from past combat experience and what is in the process of being radically transformed.

For the Russian authorities, recent events offer a rich educational environment. They have provided ample opportunity to test and observe how formations, tactics and equipment (new and old) can be used to best effect in contemporary warfare and what this may mean for the future. That they have been watching and drawing conclusions from the activities of other forces in action in Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza, Libya and Syria is evident from articles written by senior officers, including Andrei Kartapolov, recently appointed to command the Western Military District, and Gerasimov himself, who, in an article published in spring 2016, wrote of the development of a “21st century blitzkrieg” by Western states²⁵.

Similarly, the effectiveness of Soviet-era and more modern Russian equipment (including against US/Western



Sergei Shoigu suggested that this experience shows that UAVs are essential in combat, and pointed to the practical implications: in 2011, Russia had 180 modern drones, in 2015 it had 1,720

technology) in Yemen and Ukraine against even the most modern weaponry has been noted²⁶, as has the evolution of tactics and balance between ammunition and armour. Russian experts have noted the vulnerability of the most modern armour even to obsolete equipment (tank losses have been very heavy), and in consequence how tactics were adapting during the war in Ukraine. Though lessons may not be easily transferred from this war to one between opponents with more modern capabilities, they do appear to have relevance in Eurasia: Russian observers note that in its short war in April 2016, Azerbaijan adopted the same ‘salami tactics’ that Ukrainian armed forces had used to good effect in Donbass earlier that year²⁷.

Russia’s own forces themselves have learned much from thousands of exercises, both in Russia itself and in coordination with regional partners. These have provided practice for Russia’s combat deployments: the ‘Centre 2015’ strategic exercise included preparation for the intervention in Syria²⁸. But, as President Putin has noted, they have also “revealed certain problems and shortcomings which are no surprise for us, but which need to be carefully analysed in terms of how everything works”. Such problems include command and control and the coordination of military and civilian authorities and between federal, regional and local levels of power.

Furthermore, the Russians have gained experience from active duty deployment. As President Putin noted “we have gained good combat experience lately”, and Defence Minister Sergei

²⁶ Lyamin, Yu. “Use of Soviet/Russian Arms in the Yemeni Conflict”, *Moscow Defence Brief (MDB)*, No.3, 2016.

²⁷ See detailed discussion in “Modern Wars and Conflicts: Lessons Learnt”, *MDB*, No.3, 2016.

²⁸ “Blizhniy Vostok na Yuzhnom Urale”, *VPK*, 4 November 2015.

²⁵ Kartapolov, A. “Uroki voennykh konfliktov, perspektivy razvitiya sredstv i sposobov ikh vedeniya. Pryamie i nepryamye deystviya v sovremennykh mezhdunarodnykh konfliktakh”, *Vestnik Akademii Voennykh Nauk*, No.2, 2015; Gerasimov, V. V. “Po ohytu Syrii”, *Voenna-promyshlennyy Kurier (VPK)*, 9 March 2016.

Shoigu has stated that Syria was particularly important because it has provided the first instance that Russia had performed a range of activities, from mass-scale, long-range strikes to large-scale cargo movement. “For the first time in 25 years, Russian armed forces had practically resolved the task of creating and using a powerful strike aviation group²⁹.” He has also suggested that this experience shows that UAVs are essential in combat, and pointed to the practical implications: in 2011, Russia had 180 modern drones, in 2015 it had 1,720. Finally, the Russian deployment to Syria has included the first ever combat use of long-range cruise missiles, and several systems and coordination procedures have been trialled in combat.

Adaptability is a mantra of armed forces in the Euro-Atlantic area. The same is true for Russia; indeed, the

²⁹ *Rasshirenoe zasedaniye kollegi Ministerstva oborony*, *Kremlin website*, 11 December 2015.

CONCLUSIONS

In convening the two workshops covered by this edition of *Ares & Athena*, the CHACR acknowledged that the theme of deterrence is once again occupying many minds within UK Defence, and indeed well beyond. However, the fact that others, including the Ministry of Defence, Defence Academy and Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), have been active on this theme in the past six months was, for the CHACR, not a reason to steer clear of a crowded space. Quite the reverse, it was a compelling reason for the subject of operationalising deterrence in the Land domain to deserve our attention.

The reasons for this resurgence in interest have been amply explored in the preceding pages, as have many of the complexities and challenges of achieving effective deterrence in a multi-polar world that appears to present us with an increasingly diverse range of dispersed and disparate threats. Given that this inherent complexity, drawing together simple conclusions that may guide our future thinking is, in itself, difficult; but the following four broad points certainly appear to have resonated with the participants both in Cambridge and in Camberley.

- **Just as the character of conflict has changed since the Cold War, so has that of deterrence. The theories of deterrence established from 1945 to 1990 cannot simply be applied or adjusted to a new era; there is an urgent need for new thinking to offer a hand-rail for strategic decision-makers and promote better understanding: i.e. ‘the new rules of the game’. Therefore this new enthusiasm for the subject in Western capitals must be sustained, rigorous and, above all, productive.**

- **Credible capability is the sine qua non of any deterrent posture. Hence, the collective effort across NATO and in its member states to restore capacity**

Russian military is undergoing an important period of experimentation as reforms are implemented, old equipment modernised and new equipment integrated. Creating an effective deterrent to Russia will require incorporating a sophisticated understanding of how this experimentation is changing Russian military thinking, to understand what lessons are being learnt and why, and how this is affecting how they operate – and whether problems are being fixed. Undoubtedly, accurately identifying what lessons the Russians are learning and the practical impact this is having will be very difficult. But, complicating the task further, this will then need to be sewn together with a nuanced understanding of how the wider Russian state system works and the implications of the decade-long transition and modernisation process due for completion in 2020. This difficult process is essential to understanding the practical implications of what Gerasimov meant when he stated the well-known truth that no two wars are the same.

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and readiness is timely, but these efforts must be substantive and be communicated clearly if they are to be effective.

- **However, like war, deterrence is about minds just as much as capability. Consequently, there was consistent emphasis upon the critical importance of cognitive faculties: perception, calculation, understanding, communication and apprehension (and, more dangerously, the inverse of each).**

- **For all the recognised need for resolute action and clear communication, there was a strong note of caution. Since Thucydides it has been accepted that foreign policy is driven by fear, interest and honour, so it follows that these motives play directly into deterrence. Actions that appear, or are perceived as, aggressive, may merely be manifestations of insecurity or infringed honour – there is good reason for interpreting some recent Russian actions in this way. In this light, responding by upping the military ante as an act of deterrence may simply exacerbate, provoke or just provide a pretext. In this light, NATO must ensure that ‘enhanced Forward Presence’ is an effective trip-wire and does not provide an inadvertent trip-hazard.**



CHACR MISSION STATEMENT

To conduct and sponsor research and analysis into the enduring nature and changing character of conflict on land and to be the active hub for scholarship and debate within the Army in order to develop and sustain the Army's conceptual component of fighting power.