Deterrence and Extended Deterrence

Key Terms and Definitions

Jeffrey A. Larsen, Ph.D.

Read Ahead Material for PPNT Presentation, UCSD/IGCC, San Diego

23 July 2010

Deterrence
Prevention of action by fear of negative consequences
A state of mind in one’s adversary, brought about by a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction
   Credibility = capability + will
Purpose: convince a party not to take some action by threatening the destruction of something he considers to be of great value, or by denying him achieving his objectives
   The opposite of compellence (getting another party to do something they do not want to do)

Deterrence by punishment
A doctrine used to deter an adversary by threatening the destruction of something he values, such as population centers, key cultural sites, the leadership, or military forces.

Deterrence by denial
The strategic doctrine used to deter an adversary by denying him the ability to achieve his objectives; this may include a combination of counterforce targeting and active and passive defenses

Mutual assured destruction
The ability of both sides to guarantee the destruction of the adversary even after suffering from a nuclear first strike.

Secure second strike
The forces, planning, and basing to ensure that enough offensive striking power remains after a devastating nuclear first strike to still guarantee the destruction of the adversary’s society. Techniques for ensuring a secure second strike may include hardening, dispersal, camouflage, placing forces on alert, or increasing the number of delivery systems.

Societal vulnerability
The perceived requirement to ensure that both sides’ populations were vulnerable to strategic attack in order to ensure stability between two adversaries. This concept meant that strategic defenses were seen as destabilizing, and therefore to be avoided.

Countervalue targeting
Destroying a society’s economic, social, and population centers. Sometimes called “city busting.”

Counterforce targeting
Aiming at military and industrial targets, such as offensive strike bases or key war-making industries, thereby attempting to control a conflict’s escalation, avoid targeting cities, and minimize civilian casualties

Extended Deterrence
Providing security for another state through the threat of punishment against a third party
A logical extrapolation of deterrence theory
Sometimes called “active deterrence” requiring a clear decision and willful acts by the nation extending its deterrent over another country
Extended deterrence and reassurance are two sides of the same coin. During the Cold War, this concept was typically equated with nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons alone do not ensure the credibility of deterrence, but they may be indispensable. Credibility requires not only forces in being, but the political will to maintain, reconstitute, and if necessary, use those weapons, plus the development of policies and personnel to do all those.

**Nuclear umbrella**

The United States provides military protection—extending its deterrent “umbrella” over its allies—up to and including the use of nuclear weapons.

**Coupling**

Linking the security of allies to that of the United States homeland; they become one and the same. It could be said that the United States is willing to “risk Chicago for Hamburg.”

**Reassurance**

Convincing allies that the United States will continue to be there as their security backstop, thus strengthening allied resolve and enhancing deterrence.

**Shared risks and responsibilities**

All for one and one for all; each ally shares equally in the security of the alliance, and each faces the same risk; primarily used in the NATO context.

**Escalatory ladder**

The United States and its allies must have the capability of dominating each level of increasing violence—from conventional, to battlefield nuclear, to theater nuclear, to intercontinental nuclear conflict. A seamless web up the conflict spectrum. A smooth transition from each level of the escalatory ladder to the next; no adversary should assume it can win by escalating to a higher level.

**Tripwire**

US conventional forces and the large number of military dependents stationed in Europe during the Cold War were seen as a “tripwire” that would bring the United States into the war at an early stage; this guarantee of American involvement enhanced deterrence.

**Forward deployment**

Forces deployed near the border with the adversary can slow any attack, and also serve as a tripwire.

**Deliberate ambiguity**

US (and NATO) nuclear policy does not clarify under what circumstances it will cross the nuclear threshold; this ambiguity increases uncertainty in the mind of an adversary, thus enhancing deterrence.

**Dual key arrangement**

Within NATO, US warheads are stored in multiple countries, and some of those states have a nuclear delivery mission using their aircraft carrying US warheads; this is known as “dual key” and ensures that any such mission reflects a collective allied decision.

**Nuclear sharing**

Another term for the dual key arrangements; more generally, the involvement of all member states in the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, a core concept of the Alliance.