

# British Defense Policy and the Logic of Deterrence

A Monograph

by

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In the 2015 Strategic Defense and Security Review deterrence assumed a position of central prominence within British defense policy: this reflected NATO's renewed focus on deterrence following Russia's 2014 invasion of the Ukraine. This monograph examines the logic of deterrence's prominence in, and the way in which it contributes to the wider aims of British defense policy. The traditional understanding of deterrence as a dyadic relationship is inadequate, and leads to a limited appreciation of deterrence's utility. Deterrence should be considered in terms of three faces: a dyadic relationship; a form of group communication; and a social construction. These three faces expand the utility of deterrence, and the strategic possibilities a deterrent relationship offers the state. Considered within the context of British defense policy, the United Kingdom's deterrent posture reduces the likelihood of Russia conducting military action against a NATO member state, but its most important contribution is in the maintenance of the United Kingdom's global influence. Deterrence is necessary to maintain the "Special Relationship" with the United States, and to ensure the United Kingdom has a leading role within international organizations.

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## Abstract

British Defense Policy and the Logic of Deterrence, by Maj David T. M. Welford MBE, British Army, 51 pages.

In the 2015 *Strategic Defence and Security Review* deterrence assumed a position of central prominence within British defense policy: this reflected NATO's renewed focus on deterrence following Russia's 2014 invasion of the Ukraine. This monograph examines the logic of deterrence's prominence in, and the way in which it contributes to the wider aims of British defense policy. The traditional understanding of deterrence as a dyadic relationship is inadequate, and leads to a limited appreciation of deterrence's utility. Deterrence should be considered in terms of three faces: a dyadic relationship; a form of group communication; and a social construction. These three faces expand the utility of deterrence, and the strategic possibilities a deterrent relationship offers the state. Considered within the context of British defense policy, the United Kingdom's deterrent posture reduces the likelihood of Russia conducting military action against a NATO member state, but its most important contribution is in the maintenance of the United Kingdom's global influence. Deterrence is necessary to maintain the "Special Relationship" with the United States, and to ensure the United Kingdom has a leading role within international organizations.

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SAMS has been the most extraordinarily rewarding experience, and ideas and readings from across the SAMS courseware are littered throughout this monograph. That I've enjoyed SAMS so much is due largely to having the most brilliant Seminar Leader in Col Chris McGowan, and having a great group of teammates in Seminar 7. They absolutely made my year.

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Before finger ever hit key, most of the ideas in this monograph were discussed with Majors Jerry Drew and Jason Wiczorek. Usually in a library, when they were completely snowed under, and had far better things to do than listen to me. They never once showed it.

Finally to the three most important beings in the world: my wife Samantha, my daughter Georgina, and our first-born Bertie. I love you more than I can say; I'm sorry I'm so grumpy when I'm writing; I promise never to talk about deterrence ever, ever again.

## Acronyms

EU	European Union
NSO	National Strategic Objective
NSS	National Security Strategy
RAP	Readiness Action Plan
SDSR	Strategic Defence and Security Review

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## Introduction

Night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.  
And some who have just returned from the border say  
There are no barbarians any longer.  
And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?  
They were, these people, a kind of solution.

—Constantine P. Cavafy, “Waiting for the Barbarians”

The end of the Cold War, in one sense deterrence's triumph, was also its point of crisis.<sup>1</sup> With the fall of the Soviet Union, deterrence was robbed of its target. And as it declined from its position of overarching conceptual dominance, it was also, like the emperor, robbed of its clothes. Deterrence's crisis was, primarily, a crisis of confidence. States which had trusted deterrence to secure a global order against nuclear apocalypse, if only out of necessity, did not trust deterrence in dealing with a multiplicity of state and non-state adversaries in a post Cold War world: some actors were, apparently, undeterrable.<sup>2</sup>

But now, in the laconic phrase of Kestutis Paulauskas, “deterrence is back.”<sup>3</sup> Startled by Russia's apparently revanchist tendencies, NATO has re-orientated from a focus on out-of-area crisis response, back to a “paradigm of territorial defense” and deterrence.<sup>4</sup> The 2014 *Wales Summit Declaration* summarized both NATO's concern with Russia, and established the framework of NATO's response: a deterrent posture enabled by the Readiness Action Plan

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<sup>1</sup> The implication of this statement, that deterrence made a meaningful contribution to the end of the Cold War, or at least to it remaining “cold,” is not a universally held view. Challenges range from John Mueller's view that nuclear deterrence was an irrelevance, and a “hot war” was sufficiently antagonistic to the interests of major powers as to have become a practical impossibility, to Richard Ned Lebow's view that peace was maintained despite deterrence. When one considers the degree of antagonism that existed between the two sides in the Cold War, the more generally held view, that deterrence made some contribution to the maintenance of peace, does however seem reasonable. John Mueller, *Retreat From Doomsday* (New York: Basic Books, 1989). Richard Ned Lebow, “Conventional vs Nuclear Deterrence: Are the Lessons Transferable?” *Journal of Social Issues* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 171–191.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 24. The dilemma when faced with non-state actors was that they had “no nation or citizens to defend.” Given the reliance of deterrence on a viable threat, it was therefore difficult to determine what should or could be the object of that threat.

<sup>3</sup> Kestutis Paulauskas, “On Deterrence,” *NATO Review* (2016), accessed August 27, 2017, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2016/Also-in-2016/nato-deterrence-defence-alliance/EN/index.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Paulauskas, “On Deterrence.”

(RAP).<sup>5</sup> The immediate catalyst for this response was the Russian intervention in Ukraine. This seemed to demonstrate consistent Russian tendencies: a disregard for a rules-based international order; a determination to attain a primacy of influence in their near abroad; and a willingness to use hybrid warfare in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives.<sup>6</sup> Given the similarities between Ukraine and the Baltic states—a land border with Russia; a Russian ethnic-minority; and a history of Russian control—these tendencies took on the appearance of a vital threat to NATO member states. NATO’s previous policy towards Russia, one of cooperation and concord, had failed. The RAP sought to meet the perceived implication of Russian actions in two ways. “Assurance measures,” such as Enhanced Forward Presence would increase NATO activity in its eastern region, making NATO’s resolve more obvious, and conventional military deterrence more credible. “Adaptation measures,” such as the creation of a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, would change NATO’s forces and command structures, making them better able to respond to future threats.<sup>7</sup>

British defense policy has reflected NATO’s renewed emphasis on deterrence. While the 2010 *Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR) sought “a renewed emphasis on using our conventional forces to deter potential enemies” as part of a wider focus on conflict prevention, in the 2015 SDSR deterrence achieved a position of much greater centrality, “at the heart of the UK’s national security policy.”<sup>8</sup> As a stratagem, the 2015 SDSR applies deterrence against a range of potential adversaries, both state and non-state. But it is the commitment to the RAP, and therefore the deterrence of Russia, that has really driven this increased centrality and which is the

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<sup>5</sup> NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*, September 5, 2014, accessed February 17, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> NATO, *Readiness Action Plan Factsheet*, July 2016, accessed February 17, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160627\\_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> David Cameron and Nick Clegg, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review* (London: 2010, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office), 17. David Cameron, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom* (London: 2015, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office), 9.

focus of this monograph. It has the most prominence within the 2015 SDSR, and, with the United Kingdom's leadership of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, and the structural changes it has driven, it has had the most tangible effect.<sup>9</sup> The renaissance of deterrence has led to an outpouring of intellectual energy. Both independent and government think tanks have made it the object of focused study, with the question of the utility of deterrence to the fore, while the United Kingdom is, for the first time, producing a joint publication on deterrence; the writing of specific doctrine demonstrating, if nothing else, an awareness of deterrence's importance.<sup>10</sup>

This monograph seeks to make a modest contribution to the growing discussion of deterrence, and in particular the consideration of its utility. It focuses on a fundamental question: how can deterrence contribute to the aims of British defense policy? At first glance this may seem tautologous: if deterrence is an aim, surely its contribution to defense policy is in its own achievement. However, this monograph will suggest that this circular, albeit commonsensical approach to the utility of deterrence rests on both an overly reductive definition of deterrence, and bounds the utility of deterrence in a problematic way. By considering deterrence only as a dyadic relationship, one between a deterring and deterred actor, deterrence becomes inherently difficult both to design and to prove. Its utility remains open to question. This monograph argues that, while there is clear utility in the adoption of a deterrent posture, a full appreciation of this utility

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<sup>9</sup> The major structural changes announced in the 2015 SDSR, the creation of two Strike Brigades as part of A2020 Refine, a wider program of reorganization, were driven by a renewed focus on large scale combat operations, and the requirement to fight effectively at the divisional level. If this change of emphasis from the 2010 SDSR was not caused by the RAP, it has the same origin: Russian aggression, and the growing perceived likelihood of inter-state conventional war. 2015 SDSR, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Two particularly noticeable examples were those produced by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR), the latter the Army's in-house think tank: Peter Roberts and Andrew Hardie, *The Validity of Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century* (London: RUSI, 2015); "Deterrence," special issue, *Area and Athena* 7 (December 2016). While deterrence doctrine has not yet been published, this monograph has benefited from receiving early access to a study draft. Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 06, *Modern Deterrence: The Military Contribution—Study Draft* (Shrivenham: DCDC, August 2017).

relies on both an expanded understanding of deterrence, and an holistic view of the aims of defense policy.

The first section of the monograph, in exploring the concept of deterrence, suggests that deterrence has three faces. It exists as a dyadic relationship, as a means of communication within a wider system, and as a social construction. This expanded view of deterrence leads to a determination of its potential utility. The monograph then considers the aims of British defense policy. Based on the 2015 SDSR, it identifies the National Security Objectives (NSOs) laid down by the government; the activities which contribute to the achievement of these objectives; and the dependencies and tensions which exist between NSOs and activities. By considering these aims against deterrence’s potential utility, the value of deterrence to British defense policy is determined, and therefore the logic of deterrence’s prominence within it. The conclusion summarizes the findings of the monograph: the requirement for an expanded understanding of deterrence; the potential utility this leads to; and the logic of deterrence within British defense policy.

But first, an apology. This monograph uses an algebraic notation to explain and explore deterrent relationships. Table 1 describes this notation, the letters used and their general meaning.

**Table 1. Algebraic Notation.**

Ser	Letter	Meaning
1	A	The deterring actor
2	B	The actor who is being deterred
3	C, D, E etc	Others actors observing the deterrent relationship
4	X	The action that A is seeking to deter
5	Y	The action that A threatens to deter B
6	Z	The action that B threatens in response to Y
7	N...	Not... So NX means that X does not take place

*Source: Author.*

While it is relatively common to use algebra to explain deterrent relationships—perhaps reflecting the prominence of game theory amongst some second-wave deterrence theorists—it is

recognized that some readers may find the notation unwieldy.<sup>11</sup> However, unwieldy as it may seem, it has proved the most effective method of describing deterrence clearly and succinctly, certainly when exploring its theoretical construct. To invoke Lawrence Freedman, “I apologize for the appearance of entities known as A and B, occasionally joined by C, D and even E and F, who are so devoid of character. They are the best device I have found for illustrating points about strategic relations without getting lost in context—and in a short book that’s important.”<sup>12</sup> In a monograph it is even more so.

### The Concept of Deterrence and the Requirement for “Three Faces”

A starting point for thinking about deterrence is to consider its doctrinal definition. “The convincing of a potential aggressor that the consequences or coercion of armed conflict would outweigh the potential gains. This requires the maintenance of a credible military capability and strategy with the clear political will to act.”<sup>13</sup> This definition, adopted by NATO in 1996, and subsequently incorporated into British doctrine, highlights the prioritization of one face of deterrence: deterrence as a dyadic relationship. This is deterrence in its most fundamental form, and it is the face that this monograph will first consider; but to consider deterrence only as a form of communication between two actors leads to a false consideration of its utility. To accurately

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Jervis, “Deterrence Theory Revisited,” *World Politics* 31, no. 2 (January 1979). The concept of three waves of deterrence theorists was popularized by Robert Jervis. Broadly speaking the first wave referred to the deterrence theory propagated in the immediate aftermath of World War 2, and dealing with the new strategic reality of nuclear weapons; this was exemplified by the early writings of Robert Brodie. The second wave was the work that took place in the 1950s and 1960s to build on and elaborate the theoretical underpinnings of the first wave; this was marked by a focus on game theory and the rational actor model to explain deterrence and its application to international relations. The third wave was that work, beginning in the 1960s, but primarily taking place in the 1970s and 1980s, which sought to empirically test deterrence theory using case studies and statistical analysis; third wave theorists were notably more skeptical of the efficacy of deterrence than their second wave predecessors. There is in fact now a fourth wave of deterrence theory, but this fourth wave will be discussed in more detail later in the monograph.

<sup>12</sup> Freedman, *Deterrence*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> JDP 06, 1-1.

determine the potential utility of deterrence, it is also necessary to consider its other two faces: as a form of communication within a wider system; and as a social construction.

## Deterrence as a Dyadic Relationship

The fundamental aspects of deterrence as a dyadic relationship are well captured in the NATO definition: one has the perception of a threat; the communication of a counter-threat based on a credible capability; and the assumption of a rational aggressor, determining his future course of action on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. An objection to the definition is that it focuses solely on armed conflict, and deterrence through military means; it therefore underplays the range of activities that governments seek to deter, and misrepresents the whole of government nature of deterrence.<sup>14</sup> However, these are quibbles, and by representing deterrence algebraically one is able to keep the essentials of the NATO definition while removing the military bias:

- Actor A deters actor B when he convinces him not to do action X by threatening action Y.

This is deterrence in its ideal form, and represents the act of deterrence to which doctrine aspires. Figure 1 reflects this ideal formulation graphically.

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<sup>14</sup> JDP 06, 2-8. This is captured in the British commitment to a “Full Spectrum Approach.” It is emphasized within JDP 06 that the government lead for deterrence activities will in fact routinely fall outside of the Ministry of Defence, with the Cabinet Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, National Security Council and Home Office all named as more likely leads.

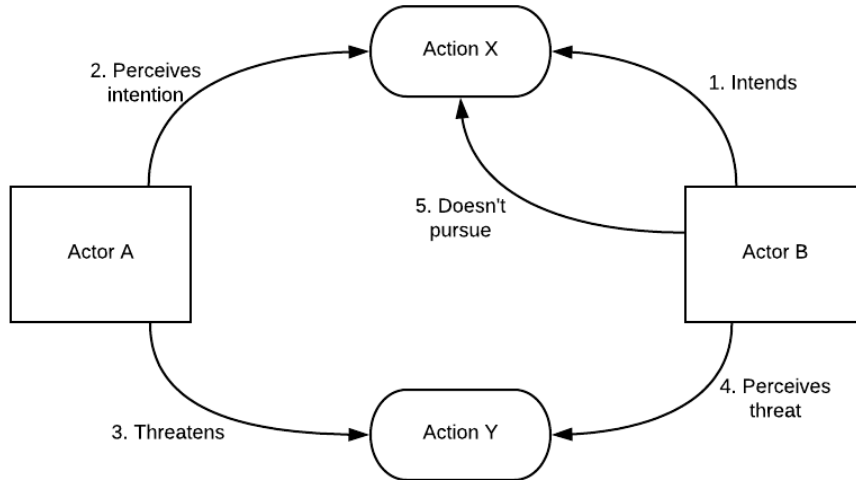


Figure 1. The ideal formulation of deterrence.

Four aspects of deterrence are implicit within this ideal formulation: its trinity; its assumption of understanding; its assumption of rationality; and the extent to which it is internalized.

The first aspect of deterrence, its trinity, refers to its three requirements: capability, credibility and communication.<sup>15</sup> The centrality of these ideas is suggested within the NATO definition’s requirement for a “credible military capability,” and remain implicitly present in the ideal formulation. For B to be deterred he must believe that A has the capability to carry out Y; he must believe that A will carry out Y; and the perception of both this capability and credibility are underpinned by A’s successful communication with B.

This communication forms part of the understanding between A and B within the ideal formulation, but not all. For not only does B know that A threatens Y, a threat which is communicated, but A knows that B intends X and that he can be deterred by Y, pieces of information that B would endeavor not to communicate.<sup>16</sup> If it is unreasonable to assert that the

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<sup>15</sup> William W. Kaufmann, *The Requirements of Deterrence*, Policy memorandum No. 7 (Princeton: Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1956), 6–7. The requirement for capability, credibility and communication—now something of a truism—have been features of deterrence theory from the earliest first wave theorists.

<sup>16</sup> While B may communicate the threat of X to A, it seems sensible to assume that he would not (in most circumstances). For while it is in A’s strategic interest to communicate the threat of Y to B—for it

ideal formulation requires absolute understanding, based as that would be on perfect inter-subjective perception, it does require sufficient understanding.<sup>17</sup>

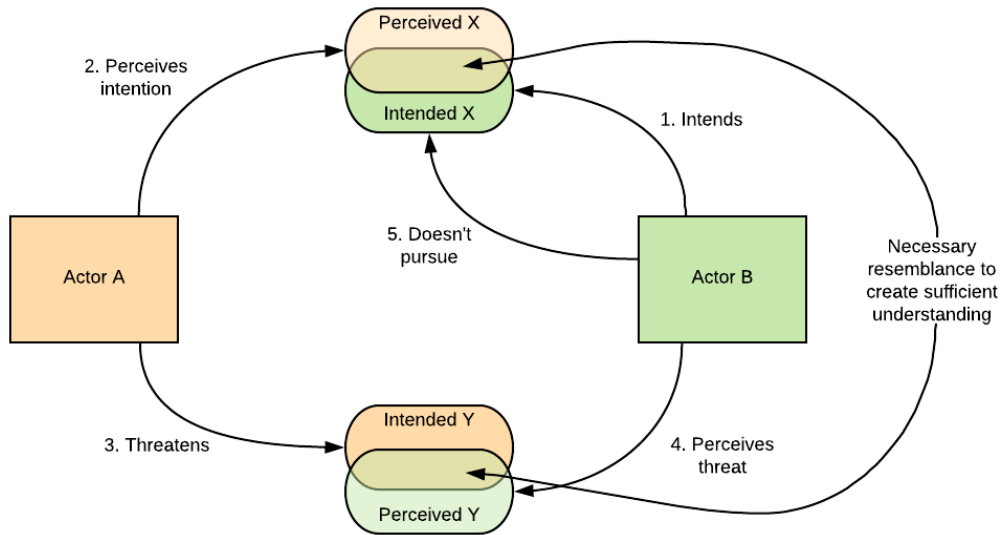


Figure 2. The creation of sufficient understanding for meaningful deterrence.

Acknowledging that there may be a gap between the exact intention of X and Y, and the perception of these potential acts, there is a resemblance between the intended action and the perceived action that must exist, for deterrence to be meaningful: a state of sufficient understanding. In figure 2 A’s perception of X still has a sufficient resemblance to X for his threat of Y to be logical; this sufficient resemblance is represented by the area of overlap between the intended and perceived Xs. Similarly, B’s perception of Y sufficiently resembles Y for his decision not to pursue X to be equally logical. For the ideal formulation of deterrence to be

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is that threat that enables the act of deterrence—it is unlikely to be in B’s strategic interest to communicate the threat of X to A, that communication necessarily presenting A with the opportunity of mounting a response.

<sup>17</sup> Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46. Ironically, absolute understanding, while seemingly hinted at in the ideal formulation, might be inconsistent with the practice of deterrence. Patrick Morgan labels this as one of deterrence’s internal inconsistencies: “No rational challenger would carry a conflict to the point of attack knowing that the deterrer could inflict unacceptable damage and would find it rational to do so.” If both actors have a genuine absolute knowledge of each other, then deterrent situations should not arise, as the actions of one or other party would necessarily be irrational.



meaningful, there must be a causal relationship between X, Y and NX, which is granted by a level of sufficient understanding, and not simply a correlative relationship created by misperception.<sup>18</sup>

Like understanding, rationality—the third aspect of deterrence—cannot be absolute. It is bounded both by the cultural circumstances of the actors, such that a rational act in one culture might appear irrational in another, and by the limits of human cognition, such that some decisions are affected by both rational and irrational cognitive processes.<sup>19</sup> However the ideal formulation does not demand an absolute rationality; it demands only the limited rationality of a decision being made on the basis of a subjective cost-benefit analysis. B intends to perform X; an action which he supposes to be of benefit to him. A's response is to threaten Y, which would impose a cost upon B. B is therefore left to consider the benefit of X, against the cost of Y, and the cost of NX; or, if one prefers, the benefit of action, against the cost of action, and the cost of restraint.

The “deterrence algorithm” proposed in JDP 06 seems accurate:

- Perceived benefit of action – Perceived cost of action > Perceived Cost of restraint = Not deterred.
- Perceived benefit of action – Perceived cost of action < Perceived cost of restraint = Deterred.<sup>20</sup>

There are two observations from this. First, emphasizing the second aspect of deterrence, is the requirement for A to understand B's position. It is not sufficient to understand that B intends to do X, but to understand why he intends to do X; without this aspect of understanding, the cost of NX, of restraint, cannot be judged. Having understood both the threat, and its origin, A

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<sup>18</sup> An example of this correlative relationship is described in the following pages as the first problem of deterrence, that of identification. The simple existence of X, Y and NX does not demonstrate a deterrent relationship (except in the subjective view of one of the actors).

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011), 411–412. Irrational is a loaded word, which is why Daniel Kahneman recoiled from using it in his work. It should be understood here in a quite restricted sense: those cognitive processes which are not adequately explained by a rational actor model. Much System 1 thinking, to use Kahneman's nomenclature, could, in this limited sense, be reasonably described as irrational.

<sup>20</sup> JDP 06, 1-5.

then needs to frame costs in such a way that lead to B being deterred within his own subjective analysis. This psychological understanding of B, which may be quite profound in order to overcome the inherent inter-subjective gap between two actors, is again not absolute; but sufficient. The second observation, which leads to the fourth aspect of deterrence, is the extent to which all deterrence is fundamentally internalized.<sup>21</sup>

Within the ideal formulation, an emphasis is placed on A; it is A that deters. This is reinforced by the dual meaning of deterrence: the noun describes both the relationship as a whole, and the deterrent act. B is rendered a passive participant, with A's threat prioritized over B's subsequent cost-benefit analysis. Yet this emphasis is, in one sense, entirely the wrong way round. For deterrence is a choice that is held by B; B is the actor who weighs up the costs and benefits of action and inaction, and so B is the one who ultimately chooses to be deterred. This is even clearer when the subjective nature of deterrence is re-emphasized. For it is B's subjective perception of costs and benefits that he weighs up. A's threat of Y might be entirely incredible; but if B's perception imbues Y with a capability and credibility, its objective reality does not matter. This internalized nature of deterrence presents opportunities in the design of deterrence—such as bluffs—but, as will be seen, substantial difficulties in its analysis.<sup>22</sup> One is left to determine an internal process from external signals.

To summarize the ideal formulation and its four aspects:

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<sup>21</sup> Freedman, *Deterrence*, 29–32. This is related to, but slightly distinct from, the way that Freedman describes internalized deterrence. He used the concept to refer to those instances where internalized deterrence took place despite the lack of any external intent to deter: in his example, the large man entering the bar who, despite in fact being timid and gentle, succeeds in deterring rowdy behavior. The point made in this monograph is that even in those instances where there is an external intent to deter, deterrence is still internalized.

<sup>22</sup> Amir Lupovici, “The Emerging Fourth Wave of Deterrence Theory—Toward a New Research Agenda,” *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (September 2010), 709. This is the basis for some of the objections to those—primarily third wave—theorists who have employed a case study methodology. It is comparatively easy to identify those occasions when deterrence fails, though why it fails may be a cause for some debate, but it is very difficult to be certain of all those occasions when deterrence succeeds. The historic efficacy of deterrence may therefore be underestimated in quantitative studies through something approaching a case selection bias.

- Actor A deters actor B when he convinces him not to do action X by threatening action Y.
  - There is an implicit and necessary trinity of deterrence: communication, capability, and credibility.
  - Without sufficient understanding between A and B, deterrence ceases to be meaningful.
  - Actor B performs a cost-benefit analysis to determine his future actions; actor A must have sufficient understanding of B's perception of costs and benefits for deterrence to be meaningful.
  - Deterrence is an internalized process on the part of the deterred.

## The Problems of Deterrence

There are three problems with this first face of deterrence: features which limit its utility, and which lead to the requirement of a wider understanding of deterrence.

### Identifying Deterrence

The first problem lies in identifying acts of deterrence. When considering the facets of the first face of deterrence earlier in the monograph it was decided that for deterrence to be meaningful—that is, to be able to say accurately that A has deterred B—then understanding between the actors had to be sufficient. But how, in practice, is it possible for A to know that deterrence has actually taken place? With the exception of explicit statements from B bemoaning his thwarted ambitions, all that A can know, and on which he can base his perception of success, is that X has not taken place. However, there are at least four paths to NX.

- The first is the described act of deterrence, and what A assumes happened: B intended to perform X, became aware that A would therefore perform Y, and, after conducting a cost-benefit analysis, changed his mind.

- The second is relatively simple: B never intended to perform X. A misjudged B's intentions and was therefore seeking to deter an action that would never take place. There are variations of this path based on B's perceptions of A's actions.
  - He might be entirely unaware of them.
  - He might be aware of them, and realized that they were provoked by a false fear of X.
  - He might be aware of them, but believe they were provoked by something else.
  - Or, most dangerously, he might believe that they are an unprovoked threat, and indeed might feel the need to design his own piece of deterrence in return.
- The third is that B intended to perform X, but did not for reasons external to his relationship with A. Again there are variations of this path based on B's perceptions of A's actions. He could be unaware of them, aware of them and their focus, or aware of them but incorrect as to their intent.
- The fourth is that B intended to perform X, was deterred by A, but was deterred by a misinterpretation of Y. Rather than action Y, B thought that A's response to X would be to perform action Z, and it was on this basis that the cost-benefit analysis was performed that resulted in NX.

These multiple paths to NX demonstrate a fundamental problem in examining the utility of deterrence within a dyadic relationship. For they renders any quantitative analysis of the situations within which deterrence has worked almost impossible. All one can say is either X took place, in which case deterrence failed, or NX took place, in which case it might have succeeded.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> This difficulty in identifying deterrence can lead to a bias tending to both extremes. From the perspective of the deterrer, he may assume that every time he sought to deter and NX resulted, successful deterrence took place. From the perspective of the researcher, there is a danger that an outcome bias leads

## Paradox of Deterrence

The second problem of deterrence lies in one of its paradoxes, shown at figure 3: the degree to which, as demonstrated within the second path to NX, deterrence may be perceived as a threat.

- A perceives B as intending X; this is a misperception.
- A threatens Y.
- B does not realize that A is seeking to deter X, and perceives Y as a threat.
- B responds to the threat by launching a counter-threat Z.
- B considers this deterrence; A considers it as an escalation and demonstrative of B's continued aggressive intent.

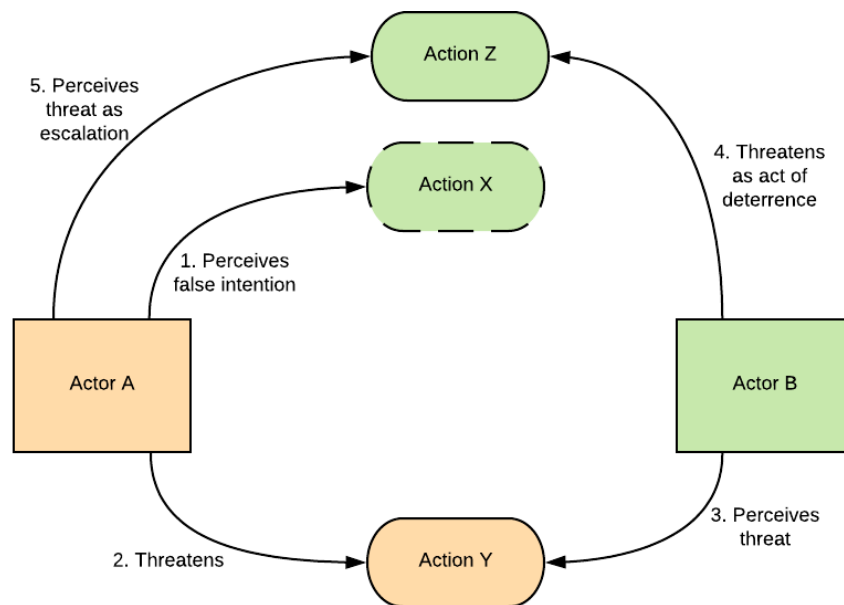


Figure 3. The second paradox of deterrence: misunderstanding leading to escalation

There is a resonance here with the security dilemma, A's attempt to prevent conflict instead driving the two actors closer towards it.<sup>24</sup> The likelihood of this kind of misunderstanding

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to an over-emphasis on those occasions when deterrence fails, and therefore the actual utility of deterrence is understated. These difficulties are discussed at length in Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, 116–122.

<sup>24</sup> A security dilemma refers to those instances where a state's attempts to increase its security actually lead to insecurity because of the reaction of other actors. "Because there is a background level of possible insecurity even in an international order where the majority of states are unaggressive and broadly

may vary between different types of deterrence. It seems less likely to take place in true instances of immediate deterrence; A's perception of the crisis which instigated the deterrent posture should at least be explicable, even if misinterpreted. However with general deterrence, if the degree of understanding between A and B is low, then this kind of misunderstanding of A's actions seems more likely. To avoid this, in addition to a constant effort to increase understanding, force dispositions could be tailored so as to appear non-threatening, while still providing a reasonable deterrence. A preference in design for deterrence by denial rather than by punishment might also contribute to a lowering of the apparent threat.<sup>25</sup>

### Inadequacy of the Dyadic Relationship

The third problem with deterrence as considered in its first face is the most important one, and the one which necessitates a wider conception of deterrence: deterrence, described as a dyadic relationship, is inadequate. This reductionist understanding of deterrence, still dominant in doctrine, both neglects the impact of other actors—ie beyond A and B—within a system; and also overemphasizes the extent to which A and B can or should be considered unitary actors at all.

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satisfied with life, states feel obliged to preserve the means of self-defence and to do so in a cost-efficient but also effective way, which sometimes involves enhancing this capacity. However, the capacity to defend oneself is also, most of the time, a capacity to act offensively... A second state may see this as a potentially hostile act... If the second state reacts to these capabilities by expanding its own coercive capacity this is likely to be perceived as potentially hostile, and so the spiral sets in." Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 4th ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 103–104.

<sup>25</sup> Deterrence has been described through the framework of various types: usually antithetical pairs. Immediate and general, and punishment and denial, are two of these. Immediate deterrence can be considered as a response to a crisis. Actor B has a clear intent to perform X, therefore actor A needs to deter him. General deterrence, a theoretical innovation of Patrick Morgan, describes a longer term, more stable relationship between A and B; A assumes a posture such that B is deterred from seriously countenancing X, which itself may not be clearly defined, or may cover a range of threats to A's strategic interests. Deterrence by punishment seeks to change actor B's cost-benefit calculus through the threat of retaliation; it therefore focuses on the costs that actor B will be made to bear after X has taken place. Deterrence by denial makes it harder for actor B to achieve X in the first place, by defending against the initial attack. These types of deterrence, along with the other two main pairs of extended and central, and narrow and broad, are discussed at greater length in Freedman, *Deterrence*, 32–42. The best discussion of general deterrence takes place in Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, 80–115. This is the most mature version of the original theory that he expressed in Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence, A Conceptual Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1983).

## Deterrence as Communication

The inadequacy of the first face of deterrence necessitates the consideration of its second face: a form of communication within a wider system. However, in saying that the first face of deterrence is inadequate, it is not asserted that it is wrong. Deterrence as a dyadic relationship has an essential validity: there is, indisputably, an actor who deters, and an actor who is the object of that deterrence. It is just that they are not the only actors. In the event that actors A and B are both states, then there are multiple other state and non-state actors who are in a position to observe both A and B's actions, and with whom A and B have a relationship. It is not accurate to portray this in and of itself as representing a change from the Cold War: even in that dyadic confrontation there was a multiplicity of actors. However, and certainly from a US perspective, all interactions in the Cold War tended to be viewed through a single prism: how they affected the prioritized dyad of the United States and the Soviet Union. This prioritization, contained within a framework of enduring general deterrence, meant a focus on the first face of deterrence was practicable.<sup>26</sup>

However, for the majority of state-actors, and certainly for the United Kingdom, this is no longer the case. The state seeks to influence a multiplicity of actors, and cannot prevent interactions with one actor affecting the perceptions of others: one cannot not communicate. Therefore in seeking to deter one actor, one must consider the manner in which ones actions will be interpreted by ostensibly non-target actors, and design ones actions accordingly; the same considerations hold for the actor who is being deterred. This expansion of the targets of deterrence leads to an expansion in deterrence's cost-benefit analysis: ones perceptions of costs of

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<sup>26</sup> For example, Thomas Schelling demonstrated significant concern with other countries perception of the United States, therefore demonstrating cognition of a multiplicity of actors and viewpoints that were open to influence, but the purpose of these other interaction was the central dyad of US-Soviet relations. "'Face' is merely the interdependence of a country's commitments; it is a country's reputation for action, the expectations other countries have about its behavior. We lost thirty thousand dead in Korea to save face for the United States and the United Nations, not to save South Korea for the South Koreans, and it was undoubtedly worth it. Soviet expectations about the behavior of the United States are one of the most valuable assets we possess in world affairs." Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 124–125.

action and restraint must include the reactions of actors outside the A-B dyad. It follows that for both A and B, the value of a deterrent relationship may lie less on the impact it has within the dyad, than on the impact it has on actors external to it. A cost can be borne within the dyadic relationship, because of a benefit that is accrued within the wider system.

### Multi-Level Games and the Fallacy of Unitary Actors

In describing deterrence the monograph has used, algebraically, the notation of single actors, “actor A deters actor B.” This reflects the way in which deterrent relationships are commonly described: “the United Kingdom will deter Argentine aggression in the Falklands.” However, referring to actors in such a way can only every be a short-hand. A more accurate description is that a decision-making coterie in the United Kingdom has decided to deter a decision-making coterie in Argentina. The importance of this is that a decision-making coterie is motivated not only by the dyadic relationship that is being asserted, or by a consideration of the impact of deterrence on other actors, but by domestic considerations to which they have to respond.

Robert Putnam’s concept of two level games explained the impact that domestic considerations could have on diplomacy.<sup>27</sup> The domestic level-two game that a leader was playing established the win-set of possible outcomes for the international level-one game that he was playing simultaneously. Domestic pressures therefore bounded, and to some extent drove, the course of international diplomacy. This same pressure could apply to deterrence, Actor A’s domestic opinion of Actor B necessitating, or alternately preventing, the assumption of a deterrent posture. That a two level game is a necessary simplification introduces additional complexity. If one considers the United Kingdom’s posture towards Russia, the win set to be achieved is bounded variously by opinions within the Cabinet, within the House of Commons,

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<sup>27</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 427-460.



within the Conservative Party, within a section of the news media, and within a section of the voting public. To these opinions are added bureaucratic pressures from the Armed Forces and the Foreign Office. The great challenge that this poses for deterrence is not only the extent to which it bounds ones own actions, but the extent to which an inadequate understanding of another actor's domestic pressures may make their actions unintelligible.

The Falklands conflict exemplifies how this kind of inadequate understanding can lead to a failure of deterrence..<sup>28</sup> The United Kingdom did not treat the threat of invasion as credible because of a failure to appreciate the strength of Argentine domestic pressure, and the extent to which General Galtieri needed a foreign policy “win” to secure the junta. Galtieri similarly failed to appreciate the blow to national pride the loss of the Falklands would represent and the political pressure that would be placed on the British government to retake them: in the public mood at the time, *les îles Falkland, ce sont l'Angleterre*.<sup>29</sup> Domestic considerations led to both states constructing an importance for the Falkland Islands entirely disproportionate to their intrinsic economic or geopolitical value.

## Deterrence as Social Construction

Clearly, the subjective meaning that an actor attributes to an object becomes important; and one's understanding of that meaning impacts on one's ability to successfully deter. With

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<sup>28</sup> JDP 06, 2-5.

<sup>29</sup> The allusion to François Mitterand's statement as Minister of the Interior that “L'Algerie, c'est la France” is more than tongue in cheek. British reaction to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands was motivated by the same sentiment that animated French attitudes to Algeria: the Falklands were more than just a British possession, they were in every sense British. As the international community struggled to understand the depth of French feeling in the Algerian conflict, they struggled to understand the depth of British feeling with regard to the Falklands. A sense of the political pressure that was brought to bear on the government can be judged by Enoch Powell's remark about the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, in the House of Commons. Powell, a deeply controversial, but almost Messianic figure within the ruling Conservative Party, was by this stage sitting in the House of Commons as a member of the Ulster Unionist Party. “The Prime Minister, shortly after she came into office, received a sobriquet as the ‘Iron Lady.’ It arose in the context of remarks which she made about defence against the Soviet Union and its allies; but there was no reason to suppose that the right hon Lady did not welcome and, indeed, take pride in that description. In the next week or two in this House, the nation and the right hon Lady herself will learn of what metal she is made.” Simon Heffer, *Like the Roman: The Life of Enoch Powell* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1998), 856.

deterrence hinging on a shared stock of knowledge, and failures in deterrence attributed to a fracture in inter-subjective understanding, it is sensible to talk about deterrence in terms of its third face: deterrence as a social construction. This has two aspects: first, the extent to which an actor's social construction both of himself and of another actor informs, and is informed by, deterrence; second, the extent to which deterrence is itself a product of social construction, and so becomes an habitualized activity in which actors engage. In considering the role that social construction plays in deterrence the ideal formulation of a dyadic relationship will be used, largely for the sake of simplicity.<sup>30</sup>

The ideal formulation of deterrence does not specify the conditions that existed within A and B's relationship before the act of deterrence. It does not necessarily suggest any relationship existed at all: A could have never met B and, perceiving a threat, their first reciprocation of expressive acts—the foundation of social construction—could be that of a threat and counter threat.<sup>31</sup> However, this is unrealistic. In describing an act of deterrence between two actors, certainly when they are states, one is describing a reciprocation of expressive acts that takes place in an already established relationship. Both A and B have constructed an idea of the other, a typification, based on a succession of reciprocal actions; and these have, over time, become socialized.<sup>32</sup> When A perceives B's intent, that perception is based on A's typification of B, and the range of actions that is reasonable for A to expect B to perform. A's typification of B might be very effective, allowing a high level of inter-subjective understanding, and meaning that both his perception of X is sufficiently accurate, and his threat of Y is sufficiently well designed. The

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<sup>30</sup> The existence of multiple actors and multiple audiences does not deny the importance of social construction; it simply means that one's impression of all those other actors, of the relationships that exist between them, and those other actors' own impressions are all socially constructed.

<sup>31</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 9. In considering deterrence as social construction, the technical language of construction, so for example here the "reciprocation of expressive acts" accords with that used by Peter Bergman and Thomas Luckman in their seminal book.

<sup>32</sup> The pattern of typification, and how it informs and is informed by social interaction is discussed in Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 30–34.

quality of A's social construction of B impinges directly on the effectiveness with which he is able to deter. With an emergent non-state actor, there may not have been the same enduring relationship that exists between states, and the act of deterrence might be the first reciprocal action. Again, however, both actors rely on typifications. Even if B has not engaged with A as a unified actor before, the various individuals that make up B will have their idea of A, and this will contribute to the typification of A that B arrives at. And A, while it has no enduring relationship with which to arrive at a specific typification of B, can still typify it; simply at a greater level of abstraction. Rather than being typified as B, it is typified as a terrorist group, as an Islamist organization, as a hacktivist cell, and this more abstract typification becomes the typification of B until it is amended through a reciprocal exchange of acts with the specific actor.<sup>33</sup> One can see how the deterrence of a non-state actor in the early stages of a relationship, or the deterrence of a generic type of non-state actor, might immediately be less well directed.

But actor A, certainly when it is a group or society, does not merely construct its idea of B; it constructs an idea of itself. Through an enduring relationship with B, or with actors like B, the more abstract typification, A constructs an idea of itself partly determined by that relationship. So in an enduring pattern of deterrence, whether general or a succession of immediate instances, just as the typification of B comes to include the idea of "an actor who must be deterred," A becomes "a B deterrer." When A perceives B's intention to perform X, while it might threaten A's strategic interests, it also acts to legitimate A's social construction. Existing typifications of both A and B are reinforced, and A's universe of meaning is girded from challengers.<sup>34</sup> From the

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<sup>33</sup> Every typification is necessarily an abstraction. A "more abstract typification" means a reduction of the specificity of that typification to that of the wider sets within which it sits. As an example, one can move from a typification of the author, to a typification of a King's Royal Hussar, to a typification of a cavalryman, to a typification of an officer in the British Army, to a typification of an Englishman.

<sup>34</sup> "Specific procedures of universe-maintenance become necessary when the symbolic universe has become a problem. As long as this is not the case, the symbolic universe is self-maintaining, that is, self-legitimizing by the sheer facticity of its objective existence in the society in question." Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 105. While a state that exists in opposition (of whatever degree) to another can never have an entirely self-maintaining symbolic universe, the very existence of another state introducing a "problem," one could argue that a deterrent relationship becomes an apparently

perspective of the society this legitimation is clearly healthy; however it does influence the objective rationality of the act of deterrence.<sup>35</sup>

However while a repeated pattern of deterrence, and A and B's reciprocal typifications of each other, might harm the objective basis of the individual act, there is also the potential for deterrence itself to become a useful habitualization, and be subsumed into the institution of social conduct. For if both actors come to have a shared understanding of the concept of deterrence, then they are able to engage in deterrent behavior—either as the deterrer or the deterred—with recourse to a common body of knowledge. When B threatens X, he may do so in the expectation of A threatening Y in return, and he already anticipates that he will be “deterred;” his action may still have value either in the degree to which it messages another actor, is perceived internally, or reinforces B's understanding of the institutional system. Similarly A in threatening Y may feel that he too is playing a customary role, and has no real expectation that B might after all go through with X. Once each step in deterrence is viewed by the actors not in isolation, but as a part of a potential whole, then further possibilities are realized. Threats are able to take on the role not of genuine threats per se, but rather of ritualized expressions of antagonism; the large scale exercising of troops, or the practicing of missile drills, becomes a symbol of a status quo relationship, rather than a threat to that status quo. This tendency may explain the apparent paradox by which deterrence became more stable the longer the Cold War continued; all actors came to institutionalize the concept of mutual deterrence, which in turn meant that mutual deterrence was more likely to work.<sup>36</sup>

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objective facticity. While produced by, it also reinforces the status quo relationship between the two states, and therefore the status quo nature of those states. It is its own form of universe-maintenance.

<sup>35</sup> As viewed in the ideal formulation. An act of deterrence which has ceased to be meaningful within this formulation could remain objectively rational when viewed through the lens either of deterrence as a form of wider communication, or as a social construction.

<sup>36</sup> Lupovici, “Fourth Wave of Deterrence Theory,” 710.

## The Four Aspects of the Utility of Deterrence

Having considered deterrence in its three faces it is possible to suggest four ways in which deterrence might be considered useful; in view of the focus of this monograph it will be assumed that it is the utility of deterrence to a state actor that is considered.

The first aspect of deterrence's utility is the extent to which it is able to lead to NX; when X is considered by A to be to its strategic disadvantage. The complication with this first aspect of utility—and the only aspect that is highlighted in either doctrine or policy—is the requirement it has for a sufficient inter-subjective understanding between A and B, both to realize the need for deterrence, to design the act, and to recognize its efficacy. The paradox at the heart of this aspect is that if understanding was genuinely sufficient then deterrence itself would be unnecessary; B would understand that A would respond to X with Y, and would view the threat of X as pointless.<sup>37</sup>

The second aspect of utility is its efficacy as a means of communication to multiple audiences: the benefit that A accrues through C's perception of the act of deterrence between A and B. This could be in addition to be the benefit of the first aspect: A might hope to improve his strategic position with C, in addition to achieving NX. Alternately, it could be in tension: A might not believe in X at all, or if he does may believe that any attempt at deterring X is futile. In either case A might come to the conclusion that the cost of deterring B—either in terms of A's relationship with B, or the cost that A will be forced to bear through a failed act of deterrence—is outweighed by the benefit accrued with C. In the event of both A and B recognizing their shared interaction as a game of deterrence this cost is minimized; A can focus on the external messaging of deterrence, while confident that the act of deterrence will not itself provoke a conflict.

The third aspect of utility relies on deterrence's role in social construction: deterring B serves as a form of institutional legitimation, reinforcing an understanding of a system in which B

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<sup>37</sup> As described, for example, in Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, 46.

is an aggressive actor that must be deterred, A is self-defined as a “B deterrer,” and in which deterrence remains a method of upholding a status quo. This may be in B’s interest as much as A’s; there is a degree of kudos in being worth deterring, and A’s actions can always be interpreted by B as an expression of fear and evidence of B’s superiority.

The fourth aspect of utility also rests on deterrence as a social construction, as it requires both actors to understand that the existence of deterrence as an habitualized action. In considering the first aspect of utility, the requirement for sufficient understanding was identified; what has not been considered so far in this monograph is the extent to which deterrence allows one to establish greater understanding. From the perspective of B, if he is desirous of establishing the boundaries of A’s sphere of interests, and understanding the limits of his own freedom of action, then the explicit threat of X can achieve this effect. B understands that if X sufficiently degrades A’s strategic position then A will seek to deter it; Y will therefore be interpreted as an attempt at deterrence—and not as a threat—and both actors have gained from the situation. A has achieved NX; B has achieved a greater appreciation of A’s subjective understanding of his own interests. Having established the four aspects of deterrence’s utility, these can inform the consideration of the utility of deterrence to achieving the aims of British defense policy.

### **British Defense Policy: the Pursuit of Security, Prosperity and Influence**

The 2015 SDSR provides a holistic view of British defense policy: ends, ways, and to a limited extent means. Defense policy’s single overarching aim is described succinctly as: “A secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence.”<sup>38</sup> To achieve this position of continuing advantage the SDSR establishes three National Strategic Objectives (NSOs): NSO 1, the protection of the British people; NSO 2, the projection of global power and influence; and NSO 3, the promotion of prosperity.<sup>39</sup> There is an enduring quality to these aims;

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<sup>38</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 9.

<sup>39</sup> “Thus strategy, in its simplest form, is a plan for attaining continuing advantage. For the goal of strategy is not to culminate events, to establish finality in the discourse between states, but to influence

they would remain relevant even given a dramatically different strategic context. Specificity to a strategic context is provided by the ways chosen to meet them; each NSO is associated with a bundle of activities, the outline of which is summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. United Kingdom National Strategic Objectives**

NSO	NSO 1: Protect the People	NSO 2: Project Global Power and Influence	NSO 3: Promote Prosperity
Activities	Meet NATO defense spending target: 2 percent of GDP	Spend 0.7 percent of GDP on international development	Champion rules-based international trading environment
	Invest in forces capable of projecting power globally	Maintain position as world’s greatest soft power	Maximize opportunities generated by defense, security and diplomatic activities
	Through capabilities and allies respond to re-emergence of state based threats	Invest more in alliances—particularly NATO and United States— and build new partnerships	Support UK defense industry
	Deter potential adversaries	Strengthen rules based international order	Deepen relationships with emerging economies: especially China and India
	Fight extremism and terrorism at home and abroad		
	Deter and prevent cyber-threats		

Source: Information adapted from David Cameron, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom* (London: 2010, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office), 11–13.

These activities seek to meet the four major security challenges identified in the SDSR: the threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability; the resurgence of state-based threats, and intensifying inter-state competition; the impact of technology, especially cyber threats; and the erosion of the rules-based international order.<sup>40</sup> In examining these activities and challenges,

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states’ discourse in such a way that it will go forward on favorable terms.” Dolman’s description of strategy is echoed consciously here, as British defense policy shares the virtue of not being tied to a particular strategic context. If the strategic situation were to change significantly the ends of policy would not need to alter, only the ways used to achieve them. Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 6; Cameron, SDSR 2015, 11–12.

<sup>40</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 18.

three features should be emphasized. First is the shadow cast by Russia. Concern regarding the resurgence of state-based threats and the erosion of a rules-based international order is linked specifically to Russian activity in Eastern Europe; threats within the cyber domain, while not associated exclusively with Russia, are also given added currency through the emphasis that Russia appears to place on these activities.<sup>41</sup> Second, the SDSR espouses an explicitly liberal ethic; international institutions and a globalized economy are considered as inherent goods which work to the United Kingdom's advantage.<sup>42</sup> Third, deterrence activities contribute only to NSO 1, and so appear to be understood, at least explicitly, only in terms of the first face.

### Interdependence and Tension within British Defense Policy

However, the treatment of activities and NSOs in the SDSR, reflected in Table 2, whereby activities are neatly firewalled, and contribute only to their allotted NSO, is mistaken. This treatment misrepresents the relationship between activities and NSOs in two ways: first, it underplays the degree of interdependence and overlap between the activities; second, it fails to recognize the tension that arises between activities, such that activities and objectives can be seen as, at times, competing goods.

A failure to explicitly identify the interdependence of activities within the SDSR is surprising, for the interdependence of NSOs is very strongly emphasized. The SDSR insists both that without sufficient economic prosperity, a well-equipped and trained military is unaffordable, so NSO 1 depends on NSO 3; and that a military is most effective when operating within alliances, so NSO 1 is enabled by NSO 2.<sup>43</sup> However, the SDSR does not then apply this kind of systemic cognition to its consideration of activities: of ways, rather than ends. In doing so, three features can be identified: the extent to which activities are able to achieve multiple objectives;

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 20, 53.

<sup>42</sup> The tendency of liberal internationalism to support global governance and institutions is described in Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 141–148.

<sup>43</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 9.



the extent to which activities within an NSO may become competing priorities; and finally the extent to which activities to achieve one NSO may hinder the achievement of another.

The ability of activities to achieve multiple objectives is most evident in the consideration of NSOs 1 and 2. The British commitment to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense is grouped under NSO 1; but, meeting as it does a NATO pledge, it clearly contributes to the investment in the NATO alliance and the support of a rules based international order, both planks of NSO 2. The deterrence of state threats, an NSO 1 activity, similarly contributes to NSO 2, delivered as it is through NATO's RAP and the United Kingdom's commitment to, and leadership of, NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.<sup>44</sup>

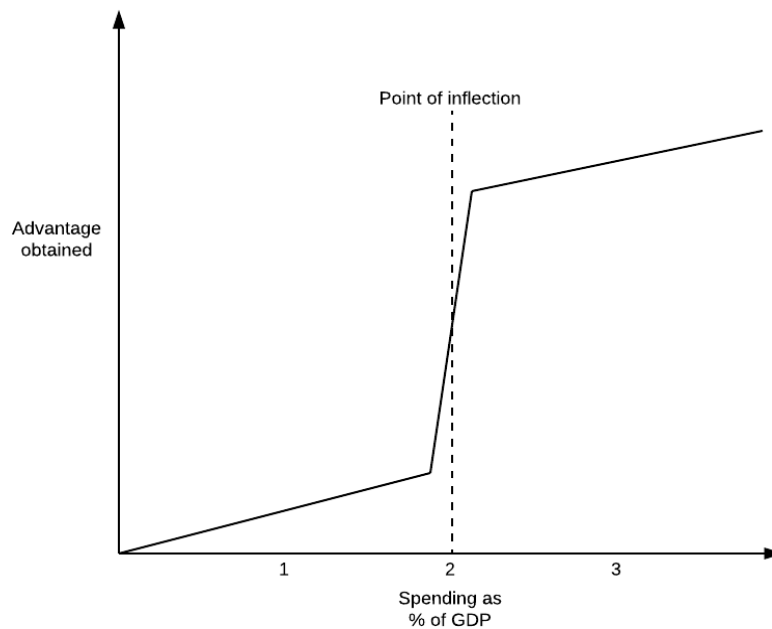


Figure 4. Relationship between spending on defense and position of advantage obtained.

The extent to which activities within an NSO can become competing priorities is most obvious in NSO 1, wherein activities must compete for a finite resource. The tension between guns and butter, so well-worn as to be clichéd, contains an essential truth: that a point is reached

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<sup>44</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 49.

where the opportunity-cost of spending on defense outweighs its benefits.<sup>45</sup> Identifying that inflection point, or a state's perception of that inflection point is challenging, but the SDSR's focus on the 2 percent target is suggestive. The decision to spend 2 percent rather than 1.98 percent of GDP on defense gains a reputational advantage entirely disproportionate to the physical capability an additional 0.2 percent spending provides.<sup>46</sup> The totemic nature of the 2 percent target means that this threshold must be met for the United Kingdom to seem sufficiently committed to NATO and defense, but spending beyond this point yields little advantage beyond any additional physical capability acquired. This relationship between spending and advantage is described in Figure 4. It is reasonable to posit that 2 percent spending would tend to represent the United Kingdom's inflection point from benefit to cost; the 2 percent representing not only a "floor" on spending, but something of a "ceiling" as well. Given this ceiling on funding, activities within an NSO can be considered competing priorities. As an example, the commitment to deter and prevent extremism and cyber attacks is delivered in part by an increase of £2.5 billion of funding for the United Kingdom's security and intelligence agencies.<sup>47</sup> As much as the activities this increased budget enables complements those activities conducted by the Armed Forces, it also represents resource that will not be used to fund conventional forces, and so cannot be used to either project force globally or meet resurgent state threats in any domain other than cyber.

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<sup>45</sup> On the basis that the advantage achieved at a certain point by increased spending on defense is negligible, while the same amount invested in health, education, infrastructure etc, could still achieve significant advantage.

<sup>46</sup> While 1.98 percent was originally chosen as a purely illustrative figure, it matches the claim of the International Institute for Strategic Studies that British defense spending fell to 1.98 percent of GDP in 2017. This claim, which prompted a succession of rebuttals and counter-rebuttals from the International Institute of Strategic Studies and the UK Ministry of Defence, was based variously on differing calculations of GDP, projected growth, and the fall of sterling against the US dollar. There was no disagreement about the actual amount of money being spent or what it would be able to achieve. This illustrates as well as anything the extent to which the 2 percent target can become detached from consideration of capabilities, and becomes a matter of debate on accounting procedures. "UK missed 2% defence spending target, report claims," *The Financial Times*, February 13, 2018, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/c4005130-10dd-11e8-8cb6-b9ccc4c4dbbb>.

<sup>47</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 6.

With an effectively fixed budget, every new activity or increase to an activity must be funded by a compensating reduction.

This tension between competing activities can at least be mitigated through intelligent prioritization; the tension of opposed activities is a harder circle to square. The United Kingdom's desired relationship with the United States and China is one such tension. The SDSR clearly considers the United States to be the United Kingdom's most important ally, and the relationship with the United States one to be nurtured and guarded; but the United Kingdom also attaches growing importance to its relationship with China. The potential benefit of increasing economic cooperation with China is strongly emphasized in the SDSR, while the threat posed by activities like cyber-espionage appears rather downplayed.<sup>48</sup> Some contentious issues, for example the disputed claims to the South China Sea, are not even mentioned. The contrast to the United States' treatment of China, which is to consider it primarily as an adversary, appears stark.<sup>49</sup> This exposes the risk of tensions, a concrete example of which is the two states' attitude to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. While the United Kingdom is a member of this Chinese backed initiative, and lauds it as an example of international cooperation in the SDSR, the United States' is significantly more skeptical as to Chinese intentions, and publicly rebuked the United Kingdom for its involvement.<sup>50</sup> So the potential exists for one activity in support of NSO 3—the pursuit of closer economic and diplomatic ties with China—to damage the United Kingdom's relationship with the United States, striking at the achievement of NSO 2, and indeed at arguably the central plank of the United Kingdom's entire foreign policy.

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<sup>48</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 10.

<sup>49</sup> The most recent *National Security Strategy* is particularly stark. "For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China's rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others. China gathers and exploits data on an unrivaled scale and spreads features of its authoritarian system, including corruption and the use of surveillance." Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, December 2017), 25.

<sup>50</sup> "US attacks UK's 'constant accommodation' with China," *The Financial Times*, March 12, 2015, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/31c4880a-c8d2-11e4-bc64-00144feab7de>.

This is not insoluble; indeed, it is not even unexpected. But, along with the wider discussion of interdependence and tension, it demonstrates the fallacy that one can simply do one thing. Activities—including deterrence—will have multiple impacts, positive and negative, across NSOs; the judgement as to whether their impact is an overall positive or negative is a qualitative and subjective one.

## The Search for Global Influence

So what informs this subjective judgement? What is the measure by which impact tends to be judged? While it would be reductionist—and itself subjective—to assert the prioritization of a single consideration, the SDSR’s emphasis on global influence is significant.

For while every state would wish to be secure (NSO 1) and prosperous (NSO 3), not every state would aspire to global power and influence. That the United Kingdom does so is, at least part, a reaction to its post-imperial legacy; but it is the manner in which it does so which is instructive. When Dean Acheson quipped that “Great Britain has lost an empire, and not yet found a role,” he was already wrong; for in the post-WW2 period the United Kingdom gradually committed to the emergent, and latterly explicit, policy of “punching above its weight.”<sup>51</sup> This was to be achieved not by raging against the dying lights of empire, but by prioritizing influence, and a foreign and defense policy which maximized that influence. This consistent policy has two main planks: the relationship with the United States, and with a multiplicity of international institutions.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This quote, and the context of Acheson’s wider speech are discussed fully in Douglas Brinkley, “Dean Acheson and the ‘Special Relationship’: The West Point Speech of December 1962,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 33. No. 3 (September 1990), 599–608. The desire for the United Kingdom to punch above her weight is now so oft expressed as to become clichéd; while the first use of the expression in this context is unclear, its most celebrated use was by Douglas Hurd: Douglas Hurd, “The New Disorder,” speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, January 27, 1993.

<sup>52</sup> John Le Carré, *Three Complete Novels: Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy; The Honorable Schoolboy; Smiley’s People* (New York: Wings Books, 1996), 80, 242. Le Carré’s *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* is, amongst other things, an extraordinary testament to the psychic shock that the loss of Empire caused in a certain section of the United Kingdom’s governing class, and the options it appeared to leave them with. “Poor loves. Trained to Empire, trained to rule the waves. All gone. All taken away. Bye-bye world.” The question posed by this loss, drunkenly expressed by Connie Sachs, was provided an answer of sorts by Bill

Whether expressive of Winston Churchill's belief in the deep cultural ties of the Anglosphere, or Harold Macmillan's more cynical, and patronizing, insistence that the United Kingdom could act as Greeks to the United States' Romans, the "Special Relationship" has been the centerpiece of British foreign policy in the post-war period.<sup>53</sup> The 2015 SDSR emphasizes the absolute importance of this relationship, stating that "The Prime Minister and the President of the United States have recently reaffirmed the essential nature of our special relationship. The US is our pre-eminent partner for security, defence, foreign policy and prosperity."<sup>54</sup> While this relationship may come into conflict with competing aims, as was seen with the United Kingdom's desire to achieve an improved relationship with China, the importance that the United Kingdom places on this relationship, and on the United States viewing the United Kingdom as a strategic partner of first choice, cannot be in doubt.

The importance that the United Kingdom places on its relationship with, and membership of, international institutions appears to have two facets. First, membership of such institutions reflects and amplifies British pretensions to being a major power. "The UK is the only nation to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council and in NATO, the EU, the Commonwealth, the G7 and G20, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OECD, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank."<sup>55</sup> One can question the logic that views a state's importance as proportional to the number of international institutions it belongs to, but this is largely irrelevant. If other actors in the international system determine a state's importance by this metric, then it remains logical to pursue and prize membership of such

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Haydon's betrayal. Recognizing the comparative impotence of the United Kingdom, he saw full alignment with either the Soviet Union or the United States of America as representing the only two viable paths for British strategy. Unfortunately, "He hated America very deeply."

<sup>53</sup> David Blagden, "Global Multipolarity, European Security and Implications for UK Grand Strategy: Back to the Future, Once Again," *International Affairs* 91, no. 2 (March 2015), 342.

<sup>54</sup> Cameron, SDSR 2015, 51.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

institutions regardless of the direct benefit that that membership creates. The status of being “in the club” is its own reward. The second facet though, is a belief that there is a direct benefit that is conferred through membership of international institutions. To an extent this is incontestable. If international institutions have growing power and make decisions of increasing import, then membership of those institutions confers the ability to influence those decisions so that they are more attuned to one’s own perception of advantage: one has to be in the tent to have any effect. However, there is a more pessimistic strain to this logic, again the hangover of the loss of Empire. The United Kingdom, a small, insignificant power, adrift off of the coast of Europe, cannot possibly hope to prosper on its own: glorious isolation would have injurious consequences. This position is overstated for effect; but barely.

The public discourse provoked by the United Kingdom’s decision to secede from the European Union (EU), the most dramatic rejection of an international institution in the United Kingdom’s post-war history, can be seen to display both of these facets. There is a sense amongst some politicians and commentators, that the United Kingdom is simply “smaller” as a result of leaving the EU; that membership of that organization conveyed a status on the United Kingdom that is now lost, and that the United Kingdom has therefore abandoned the pretence to being a major power.<sup>56</sup> However, there is a genuine belief, one which animated the “Remain” campaign before the Referendum, and which has provoked such public wailing and gnashing of teeth since, that the United Kingdom will suffer real and lasting harm from economic isolation. The EU will make decisions to the United Kingdom’s disadvantage; the United Kingdom will lose economic access, and will fail to create or sufficiently expand non-EU markets. A dominant narrative of British economic history, that the United Kingdom, the sick man of Europe, was rescued by its

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<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Powell, “Britain Once Punched Above its Weight: Now We Are Irrelevant,” *The Guardian*, November 13, 2017, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/13/britain-irrelevant-world-transatlantic-brexite>. As Chief of Staff to Tony Blair, one of the most explicitly internationalist Prime Ministers of recent years, Jonathan Powell is an exemplar of this tendency.

accession to the European Community in 1973, informs this belief. Isolation, which led to such hardship before, will, on this account, lead to great hardship again.<sup>57</sup>

The “Leave” campaign clearly rejected this analysis. But a consideration of the case made for leaving the EU is instructive. With regard to foreign policy, the “Leave” campaign did not make an isolationist case. Instead, it was claimed that the United Kingdom’s continued membership of the EU eroded the “Special Relationship”, damaged commitment to NATO, and hindered the United Kingdom in pursuing economic and diplomatic ties with emerging states.<sup>58</sup> The extent to which any of these claims are true is irrelevant. The importance is that the pursuit of international influence is so central to British policy, so accepted as an inherent good, that is evoked on both sides of a constitutional debate. The decision to either leave or remain within the EU was framed and justified within the context of increasing the United Kingdom’s international influence and therefore the United Kingdom’s position of advantage.

### The Logic of Deterrence: Russian Aggression and the Maintenance of Influence

Given the aims of British defense policy, one can justify the United Kingdom’s commitment to deterrence in two ways. First, as an effective response to a perceived threat: potential Russian aggression against NATO. It therefore contributes to NSO 1, though the validity of the underlying threat perception must be considered in order to determine the true

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<sup>57</sup> Robert Tombs, “The English Revolt: Brexit, Euroscepticism and the Future of the United Kingdom,” *The New Statesman*, 24 July 2016, accessed February 2, 2018, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/07/english-revolt>. The idea that the United Kingdom’s economy was rescued by joining the European Economic Community is in fact mistaken. “[The idea is] based on a fundamental misconception: that European growth rates were permanently higher than in a supposedly outdated and declining Britain. In reality, faster growth on the mainland in the 1950s and 1960s was due to one-off structural modernisation: the large agricultural workforce shifted into more productive industrial employment. From the mid-1940s to the early 1970s this gave several European countries “windfall growth” at a higher rate than was possible in Britain, which since the 19th century had had no large agricultural sector to convert. By the early 1970s, once that catching up was finished, European growth rates became the same as, or slightly lower than, Britain’s.” However, the falsity of received opinion does not reduce the potency of the narrative.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Hannan, “The Case for Brexit (5) Global Engagement,” *Conservative Home*, 17 July 2015, accessed February 2, 2018, <https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2015/07/daniel-hannan-mep-the-case-for-brexit-5-global-engagment.html>.

utility of the deterrent posture. Second, as a means of reinforcing the United Kingdom's influence within NATO and with key partners, contributing to NSO 2. This is deterrence's major contribution to British defense policy, and underscores the requirement to consider deterrence outside of the first dyadic face.

## Achieving NX

Turning to the first justification, the United Kingdom's deterrence posture, as part of the RAP, has an implicit assumption: that there is something to deter. Specifically that, irrespective of the immediacy of the threat, there is a credible Russian intent to launch military action against NATO member states; especially those bordering states who were previously either part of the Soviet Union, or members of the Warsaw Pact. This assumption offers the potential for clear divergence: one either believes it, or one does not. But even if one does believe it, it is necessary to be cognizant of the impossibility of perfect understanding, and the potential that one is wrong. For deterrence to have optimal utility, it must both contribute to the achievement of NX, in a world where X is intended; and not lead to strategic harm in a world where it is not.

Assuming first that X does exist—that Russia holds aggressive intent—the present deterrent posture has been criticized as ineffective. A RAND study on NATO's posture within Europe, "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics," asserted that the NATO force was not sufficient to prevent a rapid overrun of the Baltic states.<sup>59</sup> Using detailed force-ratio calculations the authors established what they believed was the minimum force necessary to prevent this rapid overrun, therefore dragging Russia into a more prolonged war, and sought to demonstrate that the RAP was not sufficient to achieve this. While the accuracy of these calculations has been questioned, a defense of the NATO deterrence

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<sup>59</sup> David A. Shlapak, Michael W. Johnson, and Rand Corporation, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016).



posture, and therefore of the United Kingdom's contribution to it, does not need to rest on mathematics.<sup>60</sup>

The RAP fundamentally changes Russia's strategic position were they to attack NATO, even if such an attack was successful. For if there is an acknowledged category difference between killing Georgian and Ukrainian troops and killing troops belonging to a NATO member state, there is certainly a category difference, from the perspective of the United States or United Kingdom, between killing Estonian or Lithuanian troops, and killing British or American.<sup>61</sup> Enhanced Forward Presence means Russia cannot launch military action against an East European member state without risking the engagement of troops belonging to other NATO members. Thinking back to the "deterrence algorithm" on page nine, the cost of action that would have to borne by Russia has fundamentally changed. In addition to the international opprobrium for launching military action, they would risk military action against other NATO member states, and therefore an entirely unpredictable escalation of conflict. Whether Russia can defeat forward based NATO troops is almost irrelevant; it is the fact that they have to defeat them that changes the strategic calculation.<sup>62</sup> If X exists, the current deterrent posture can be assumed to contribute

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<sup>60</sup> One criticism is that calculations, while they include all forces allotted to the RAP, do not include those host nation forces in Eastern Europe who could presumably be utilized in an emergency. Andrew Breach, "Binary Thinking in a Complex World: The Failure of NATO Deterrence since 1994 and Implications for the NATO Readiness Action Plan" (SAMS Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2017), 41–42.

<sup>61</sup> While Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine have been seen as failures of deterrence, it is unclear to what extent the Partnership for Peace program was intended as a deterrent; it certainly had no formal mechanism which would compel NATO members to come to the defense of Partnership for Peace states in the event of their being attacked. If Russia were to attack a NATO member state rather than a Partnership for Peace state, a Rubicon really would have crossed.

<sup>62</sup> The same point was made, in relation to the apparently inadequate US presence in Berlin, by Schelling. "The garrison in Berlin is as fine a collection of soldiers as has ever been assembled, but excruciatingly small. What can 7,000 American troops do, or 12,000 Allied troops? Bluntly they can die heroically, dramatically, and in a manner that guarantees that the action cannot stop there. They represent the pride, the honor, and the reputation of the United States government and its armed forces; and they can apparently hold the entire Red Army at bay. Precisely because there is no graceful way out if we wished our troops to yield ground, and because West Berlin is too small an area in which to ignore small encroachments, West Berlin and its military forces constitute one of the most impregnable military outposts of modern times." Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 47.

to NX. The United Kingdom's contribution to this posture is therefore meaningful: deterrence has utility in protecting other NATO member states, and therefore contributes to both NSO 1 and 2.

If X does not exist, there are two considerations. First, that deterrence is not perceived as an act of aggression. Returning to the paradox of deterrence, a deterrent posture which relies on changing the strategic implications of an offensive, rather than on developing an unassailable advantage in force ratios, should be better directed. Without absolute assurance of Russian intent, which is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve, then 30,000 troops may be better than 300,000, despite their apparent inadequacy.<sup>63</sup> The extent to which this posture exists within a shared social construction of deterrence may also be helpful: an echo, intentional or not, of Cold War dispositions, reinforces the RAP as a move in a deterrence game and makes it more likely that Russia will perceive it as an act of deterrence rather than as an act of aggression. A second consideration is that by focusing on conventional aggression, NATO, and therefore the United Kingdom, fails to deter more likely Russian intentions.

This was the conclusion made by Andrew Breach, who stated that the RAP's focus on military deterrence failed to meet the challenge of Russia's cross-domain coercive approach.<sup>64</sup> Examining the Russian operational approach, Breach noted that of the six phases the first three did not use military means, suggesting that Russian actions could precipitate a crisis within a NATO member state without activating the tripwire imposed by the RAP and instigating a military response.<sup>65</sup> While this is a valid criticism, the RAP should not be considered in isolation.

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<sup>63</sup> Ben Hodges, speech to the Association of the United States Army, July 14, 2015, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.ausa.org/news/army-europe-making-30000-troops-look-300000>. LTG Ben Hodges' aspiration to make 30,000 troops look like 300,000 is well directed, focusing as it does on integration and achieving qualitative superiority. However, the fundamental premise, that 300,000 would be "better" than 30,000 can be challenged. There are advantages to a force posture that cannot be perceived as a credible invasion force.

<sup>64</sup> Breach, "Binary Thinking," 44.

<sup>65</sup> Dmitry Adamsky, "Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy Dmitry Studies Center," *Proliferation Papers*, no. 54 (November 2015): 23, accessed March 28, 2018, <http://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pp54adamsky.pdf>. The six phases are: an informational-psychological struggle, to reduce the adversary's decision-making ability; actions in the political, economic, informational, and technological realms to neutralize the adversary's military; non-military

Outside of the confines of the RAP the United Kingdom have used economic and diplomatic sanctions against Russia, while vigorous attempts are made to combat Russian information operations.<sup>66</sup> The military focus of the RAP does not preclude the use of other elements of national power; however, it does complicate the coordination of their effect. Therefore, it perhaps imposes a cost to efficiency, requiring the separate design and coordination of multi-domain deterrence outside of existing NATO structures.

## Communicating with Multiple Audiences

However, regardless of this efficiency cost, even a misdirected deterrent posture, in terms of deterrence's first face, hardly leads to strategic harm. In terms of its second face, it leads to marked advantage: through a deterrent posture the United Kingdom is able to communicate to ostensibly non-target audiences and reinforce a position of global influence. Three audiences can be prioritized: NATO; the United States; and EU nations.

When NATO refer to a "paradigm of territorial defense" the use of "paradigm" is apposite, even if its implications are unintended. To adopt Thomas Kuhn's language of scientific revolutions, NATO are a community of practitioners operating within a certain paradigm: a model of international relations based upon deterrence.<sup>67</sup> Through agreement with, and full

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actions to downgrade the adversary's ability to employ military force; deception and disinformation to conceal time, scope, scale, and the character of the attack; subversion-reconnaissance activities conducted by SOF; and finally the kinetic phase, starting with establishment of space-aerial dominance.

<sup>66</sup> Patrick Wintour, "UK Sanctions Against Russia: What Impact Will They Have?" *The Guardian*, March 14, 2018, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/mar/14/the-uk-sanctions-imposed-on-russia-by-theresa-may> The attempted murder of Sergei Skripal on 4 March 2018, which was assumed to have been sanctioned by the Russian government, was followed by a series of diplomatic and economic sanctions: most notably the expulsion of twenty-three Russian diplomats from the United Kingdom. These sanctions have been accompanied by an ongoing "Twitter War" between official Russian and British feeds.

<sup>67</sup> "[Paradigms] I take to be universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners." Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), x. Deterrence is that achievement for NATO, and it provides a framework within which international relations can be conducted. The idea that deterrence is not just an occasional stratagem, but can become the model through which relationships are routinely conducted was explored by Patrick Morgan in his discussion of deterrence as global security management, and the extent to which the Cold War did not represent a balance-of-power system, but rather a deterrence-dominated system. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, 88.

participation in the RAP, the United Kingdom legitimizes NATO, and reinforces its own position of influence within the institution. To demur from the RAP, to choose not to adopt a position of deterrence, would place the United Kingdom in a very difficult position: that of the heretic.<sup>68</sup> The United Kingdom would stand in opposition to NATO's understanding of itself, of deterrence, and of Russia. Not only would the United Kingdom, by dissenting from a deterrent posture, damage its position of influence, it would also weaken perceptions of NATO's solidarity. Given the United Kingdom's commitment to a rules based international order and the institutions which support it, this is, in and of itself, contrary to the best interests of the United Kingdom.

With regard to the United States, the United Kingdom is, to a certain extent, tied to another's construction of reality. The United States appears to view Russia as a threat to European security that must be deterred militarily; given historical antagonism between the United States and Russia, and the extent to which the current Russian regime could be viewed as an emergent autocracy, this is unsurprising.<sup>69</sup> Given this, and the importance the United Kingdom places on the "Special Relationship," its strategic position is best served by the adoption of a similar position.<sup>70</sup> Failing to support deterrence risks damaging the United Kingdom's relationship with the United States, weakening its global influence. A secondary, but clearly linked advantage, is the demand deterrence makes on British military structures and capability. It is impractical to maintain a credible deterrent, at least within the paradigm established by NATO,

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<sup>68</sup> "Heretical groups posit not only a theoretical threat to the symbolic universe, but a practical one to the institutional order legitimated by symbolic universe in question." Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 107. Given the danger the heretic poses to the established symbolic and instituted orders, he risks ostracism, or at least a life on the margins. To remain at the center, and in a position of significance within in any group, the position of a heretic is an impossible one to adopt.

<sup>69</sup> Trump, *National Security Strategy* 2017, 51. The statement that "Russia continues its failed politics of the Cold War" betrays at least some sense of an historical continuity between the Soviet Union and the modern Russian state.

<sup>70</sup> Tim Dunne, "'When the shooting starts': Atlanticism in British security strategy," *International Affairs* 80, no. 5 (October 2004): 893–909. Dunne referred to a "reflexive belief" that British interests were best served by military alignment with the United States. The utility of this bandwagoning, particularly with regard to 21st century conflicts, has been questioned, eg Mark Beeson, "The declining theoretical and practical utility of "bandwagoning": American hegemony in the age of terror," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9, no. 4 (November 2007): 618–35.

without maintaining a significant deployable capability and the ability to fight large scale combat operations. Two risks identified by the United States, that the United Kingdom would make further reductions to the Armed Forces, and lose the ability to deploy at the divisional level, are effectively mitigated by the commitment to deterrence. The deterrent posture drives a military structure that keeps the British Army a relevant partner for the United States.<sup>71</sup>

A final consideration is the impact that deterrence of Russia has on EU nations' perception of the United Kingdom; this has become of greater importance since the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU. Three advantages are achieved through the United Kingdom's contribution to the RAP. The first is the extent to which the United Kingdom's support of deterrence within Europe reinforces the narrative that while the United Kingdom is leaving the EU, it is not leaving Europe; it remains committed to European security and will act as a guarantor of such.<sup>72</sup> The second is the extent to which a British commitment to European security becomes an implicit bargaining chip; if the EU heeds certain siren voices and "punishes" the United Kingdom for leaving the EU, then it is difficult to see how British commitment to European defense can be assured.<sup>73</sup> This is less a matter of reprisals than of practicality. A weaker economy would make comparatively high levels of military spending more difficult, while the commitment to a less Euro-centric economic model would seem to demand a less Euro-centric

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<sup>71</sup> Con Coughlin, "US fears that Britain's defence cuts will diminish Army on world stage," *The Daily Telegraph*, March 1, 2015, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11443204/Britain-is-becoming-a-friend-who-cant-be-trusted-says-top-US-general.html>. Before the publication of the 2015 SDSR, GEN Odierno, then the Chief of Staff of the US Army, gave an unusually frank interview, in which he expressed his fears of reductions to the British Army leaving the United Kingdom unable to fight effectively at the divisional level, and reducing the United Kingdom's importance as an ally to the United States. It was assumed that these comments were made with the tacit approval of senior figures within the British Army.

<sup>72</sup> Philip Oltermann, "Theresa May wants new security treaty with the EU next year," *The Guardian*, February 17, 2018, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/feb/17/theresa-may-wants-new-security-treaty-with-eu-next-year>. Theresa May's speech to the Munich security conference on 16 February 2018 is a good example of this emphasis on the United Kingdom's commitment to European security.

<sup>73</sup> James Forsyth, "The EU shouldn't punish Brexit. They'd soon regret it," *The Spectator*, March 10, 2018, accessed March 11, 2018, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2018/03/the-eu-shouldnt-punish-brexit-theyd-soon-regret-it/>.

military posture.<sup>74</sup> The third advantage is the impact British commitment to the RAP has on those European nations most concerned with perceived Russian aggression: former Soviet and Warsaw Pact states. East European nations have historically maintained a British alignment within the European Union. The explicit British commitment to deterrence, and its effect in reassuring East European nations, can encourage the continuation of this British bloc, a group of states grateful to and sympathetic towards the United Kingdom. Useful in a potentially poisonous negotiating period.

### Conclusion: the Value of an Expanded Definition of Deterrence

The introduction to this monograph asserted that to consider deterrence only in terms of its first dyadic face was overly reductive, and would lead to an underestimation of its potential utility. By considering some of the problems associated with this first dyadic face, the requirement to consider deterrence in a wider sense was identified. This monograph has hopefully demonstrated that by doing this, and considering deterrence in terms of its three faces, as a dyadic relationship, as a form of communication in a wider system, and as an expression and form of social construction, it achieves a wider utility. Beyond the simple deterrence of an action, deterrence can be used to improve one's standing with other actors in a system, to bolster and legitimate one's own social construction, and to improve one's understanding of the other actor in a dyadic deterrent relationship

However, it is not only in expanding deterrence's utility that the three faces of deterrence are useful. Figure 5 shows a representation of the ideal formulation, introduced in the first section of the monograph, and shows how this reductive formulation is enriched through a consideration of all three faces of deterrence. A's perception of the threat of X hinges partly on his construction

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<sup>74</sup>Jeevan Vasager, "Britain revives military engagement east of Suez," *The Financial Times*, December 22, 2016, accessed February 1, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/3477fe5a-c809-11e6-8f29-9445cac8966f>. This has to an extent already happened, the United Kingdom committing to an enduring presence "East of Suez" as a means of securing and furthering the United Kingdom's political and economic influence in non-European areas

of B; A's threat of Y is bounded by how that threat will be perceived by internal and external actors; and B's eventual decision to reject X is similarly informed by a consideration of internal and external actors, and by his construction of A. Even if the utility of deterrence is restricted to its first aspect, the achievement of NX, a consideration of deterrence across its three faces is still useful.

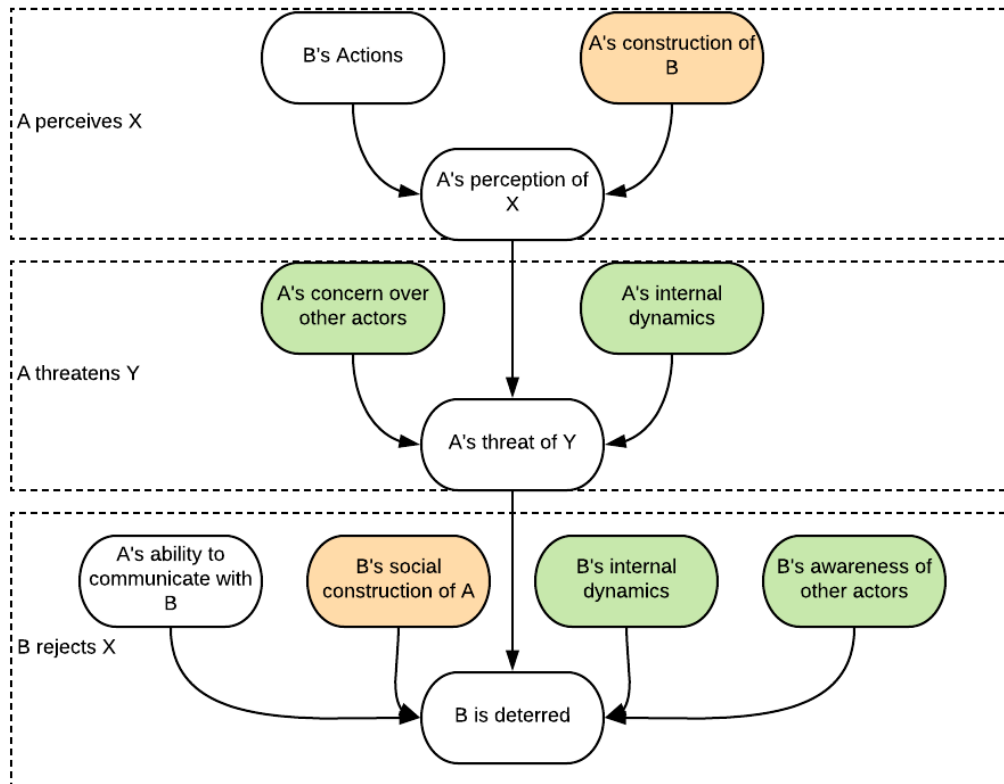


Figure 5. The ideal formulation with interplay of other faces.

The contribution of deterrence to British defense policy, the logic of its prominence, is two-fold. First, it is an effective means of deterring at least one type of Russian aggression within Europe, thus contributing to NSO 1. Importantly, its design does not appear to lead to one of the key paradoxes of deterrence, its perception as an aggressive act, thus preventing strategic harm in the case of the RAP's perception of Russian aggressive intent being mistaken. Criticism of the RAP, that it is not optimized against Russia's cross-domain coercive approach may well be valid; however, the United Kingdom's contribution to deterrence does not prevent it responding to this

cross-domain approach, it just means that any response is initially national, and requires additional coordination outside of extant NATO structures.

Deterrence's second, and possibly most important contribution, is to the achievement of a position of global influence, thus contributing to NSO 2. The United Kingdom's position of influence has two main planks: its relationship with the United States and its position of prominence within international institutions. The adoption of a deterrent posture serves both. For the United Kingdom to not support the RAP would likely damage its relationship with the United States, leave it as an effective heretic within NATO, and lead EU nations to question its commitment to European security. The adoption of a deterrent posture would have to profoundly damage the United Kingdom in other ways for this degree of strategic harm to be countenanced. Other actors, and their apparent social constructions, matter in one's decision to adopt, maintain or reject a deterrent relationship.<sup>75</sup>

The consideration of British defense policy demonstrated the way in which deterrence, leveraging its various faces, can contribute to multiple aims. This poses a challenge for the way in which deterrence is designed. For to achieve a position of optimal advantage deterrence must be considered across its three faces, its four aspects of utility, and in view of a nation's holistic defense and foreign policy goals. Its contribution can and should be more than stopping someone you don't like doing something you don't want.

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<sup>75</sup> There is little doubt deterrence is of wider utility to the United Kingdom. The very existence of NSO 2 seems bound up with a certain construction the United Kingdom has of itself as a "major power," and deterrence is a means of asserting that and assuring oneself of one's importance on the world stage. Also, given the requirement that the RAP places on the United Kingdom's maintenance of a relatively large conventional Army able to conduct large scale combat operations in armored and mechanized formations, there are no doubt bureaucratic pressures that drive the United Kingdom to a deterrent posture, and in which terms deterrence could also be viewed as "useful." However, as the focus of the monograph is on the logic of deterrence within British defense policy, and these are not stated goals within that policy, they have not been explored at length.



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