

Seeking Middle Ground:
Reconciling Political Appeal With Military Distaste
For Gradual Escalation

A Monograph

by

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14. ABSTRACT

The Vietnam War and Operation Allied Force are two examples of coercive strategy characterized by gradual escalation of violence. They both involved significant discord between policymakers and the military leaders called upon to execute the strategy; they stand in stark contrast to Operation Desert Storm, where gradualism was not used and in which there was apparently much greater harmony and integration. This monograph explores the sources of that tension, assesses their compatibility, and proposes some measures to aid the reconciliation. The problem is significant. All of the trends apparent in today's security environment (globalization, ambiguity, reduced time, etc.) drive toward ad hoc coalitions which respond to crises that challenge, not a state's existence or well-being, but its values and idealism. In such an environment, coercion plays an important role in international relations. As coercion and gradualism increase in appeal and likelihood, awareness and reconciliation of the different ways actors in the national security process view them become more important. A broad review of the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Allied Force, coupled with careful attention to terminology and definitions, provides the foundation for the discussion. Standards and criteria are proposed which encompass both the objective and subjective nature of policy analysis. Four relevant viewpoints are identified (those of the academic, warrior, diplomat, and politician) and explored in depth. The criteria are applied to coercion and gradualism as each actor views them to assess their utility and attractiveness. This analysis highlights differences which contribute to tension in policy formulation and execution. The monograph integrates these various outlooks by proposing a conceptual model—that of a pole-vaulter's "high-bar"—within which they might all operate. It has additional utility in visualizing all actions by each instrument of power and their gross effects on the policy's objectives. The model has several limitations, but is quite powerful in the correct context. The monograph makes three additions to the professional discussions about the theory and application of coercion. First, the conceptual model helps integrate all instruments of national power into a coercive policy and details how each affects the enemy's cost/benefit analysis. Second, it shows that there are at least two methods of implementing a coercive policy (one of which is gradual escalation) and that it is this issue which forms the basis of differing views of coercion. This should have two effects. By resolving the issue of implementation, it suggests a more effective method of formulating and executing a coercive policy. It should also make national security actors more aware of their own cultural biases towards coercion, as well as those of their counterparts. This additional sensitivity is the third contribution. Such knowledge should contribute to more successful foreign policy.

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SEEKING MIDDLE GROUND: RECONCILING POLITICAL APPEAL WITH MILITARY DISTASTE FOR GRADUAL ESCALATION by Major R. Christopher Stockton, USAF, 44 pages.

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INTRODUCTION

We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means.

-- Carl von Clausewitz, On War¹

Clausewitz's oft-quoted dictum should not obscure the fact that all uses of military force are not politics by the same "other means."

-- Bruce W. Jentleson, in The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy²

The Vietnam War and Operation Allied Force are two examples of coercive strategy characterized by gradual escalation of violence. They both involved significant discord between policymakers and military leaders called upon to execute the strategy; they stand in stark contrast to Operation Desert Storm, where gradualism was not used and in which there was apparently much greater harmony and integration. These disparities between how different actors regard coercion via gradual escalation inhibit coherent, unified action in war and crisis. This monograph explores the sources of this tension, assesses their compatibility, and proposes some measures to aid the reconciliation.

The different viewpoints are each the rational outgrowth of perspective. Levels of participation in policy and strategy decisions—and responsibility for their outcomes—vary widely. Equally variable are factors like comfort with ambiguity, the drive for decisive outcomes, and underlying assumptions about such ideas as the role and utility of military force in interstate relations. These may be said to be “culturally” based: rooted in the very identity of the group (in the “warrior’s ethos,” for instance). Regardless of how justifiable each is, however, the fact remains that effective statecraft—favorable policy outcomes—requires integration of the instruments of national power. Consequently, exploring the source and level of disagreement (and progressing toward their reconciliation) can pay substantial dividends.

Such investigation is particularly timely and increasingly important. There are several forces acting to increase the frequency of coercive policies. The expanding interconnectedness

1 Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

2 Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (2nd edition) (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 178.

of economies—globalism—guarantees that nearly every major occurrence worldwide somehow affects the interests of either the U.S. or of some nation or region about which it cares. The increasing pressures of time, a characteristic of conflict in the information age, often force states to act quickly or risk missing the opportunity to act at all. In contrast to another of Clausewitz's dictums ("...that with his first move the general must already have a clear idea of the goal on which all lines are to converge."³), leaders often make their "first move" with very little concept of the last one. This lends policy, its objectives, and its endstates an extremely changeable or evolutionary air as crises unfold. Electronic media and nearly instantaneous communication have accelerated the pace of diplomacy, reducing time for reflection, analysis, negotiation, and compromise. Finally, the United States' status as the last superpower substantially amplifies what Bernard Brodie terms the "prestige-credibility" trap.⁴ Globalism mandates *action*; time pressure forces *quick* action; prestige requires *effective* action.

Ironically, as those trends seem to increase the attractiveness of coercion in international relations, others act simultaneously to decrease its effectiveness. The will to employ military forces decisively for less than vital interests is dwindling or is at the least subject to wide fluctuations. The U.S. military is increasingly resource-constrained, a fact reflected in the high operations tempo of every service and an issue recognized as important in the recent presidential election campaign. The burgeoning demand for international legitimacy (perhaps an offshoot of the prestige trap, but also a domestic imperative) brings with it the coalition: unilateral action, except in cases of the clearest vital national interests, is largely infeasible. Finally, political constraints placed on the use of force seem to be on the rise. They stem from our idealism—from our relatively recent propensity to intervene based on our *values* rather than our *interests*. These make coercion more difficult, and typically result in a "lowest common denominator" strategy. Often that strategy is *gradual escalation* or *gradualism*. As coercion and gradualism

³ Clausewitz, 583.

⁴ "Moreover, 'prestige' and 'credibility' were bound to be among the items of cost rather than of gain... As we pointed out in the case of Vietnam, prestige ought itself to be considered a variable in terms of commitment and of sanctions; but too often it is looked upon as absolute: 'The United States has committed its prestige, and therefore *must* prevail!' The whole conception of 'flexible response' thus threatens to founder on the dogma of prestige." Bernard Brodie, War and Politics (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), 354.

increase in appeal and likelihood, awareness and reconciliation of the different ways actors in the national security process view them become more important.

A broad review of the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Allied Force, coupled with careful attention to terminology and definitions, provides the foundation for the discussion. Standards and criteria are proposed which encompass both the objective and subjective nature of policy analysis. Four relevant viewpoints are identified (those of the academic, warrior, diplomat, and politician) and explored in depth. The criteria are applied to coercion and gradualism *as each actor views them* to assess their utility and attractiveness. This analysis also highlights some differences which contribute to tension in policy formulation and execution. Finally, the monograph attempts to integrate these various outlooks by proposing a conceptual model within which they might all operate. Adopting a systems view and “zooming out” for a broader, more global perspective facilitates this step.

The scope of the monograph is limited in several respects. First, only conventional coercion is considered. The logic and behaviors of nuclear coercion, about which a significant body of literature already exists, are different. Second, the monograph focuses on the policies and practices of the United States. While much of the basic theory may hold true for other nations, many of the forces at work and processes discussed may not.

The monograph makes three additions to the professional discussions about the theory and application of coercion. First, the conceptual model helps integrate all instruments of national power into a coercive policy and details how each affects the enemy’s cost/benefit analysis. Second, it shows that there are at least two methods of implementing a coercive policy (one of which is gradual escalation) and that it is this issue which forms the basis of differing views of coercion. This should have two effects. By resolving the issue of implementation, it suggests a more effective method of formulating and executing a coercive policy. It should also make national security actors more aware of their own cultural biases towards coercion, as well as those of their counterparts. Such knowledge should contribute to more successful foreign policy.

The problem of the Cold war was deterrence; the problem of the post-Cold-War era is coercion.

-- Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win*⁵

Precise use of terms is important. This is especially true when the subject matter spans professions and encompasses whole fields of study, as this one does. The definitions that follow are neither comprehensive nor particularly original. Some of the terms are so broad that they are merely related to other terms, rather than defined. They will serve as our “entering arguments,” to be developed in much greater detail later.

Coercion and Deterrence

Coercion is getting what you want at less cost than winning.⁶ Its purpose is to force concessions prior to the full prosecution of military strategy; indeed, ideally no military force would actually have to be used—merely threatened. There are several ways to classify types of coercion, and many models have been proposed to explain it. Nearly all, however, share three characteristics. Coercion involves a *demand* by the coercing state upon its adversary, a *time limit* within which compliance is expected, and a *threat of punishment* for noncompliance. There are also the implicit requirements that the threat be *credible* and potent enough to persuade the enemy to comply. This very broad definition includes nearly all acts of national force.⁷ Regardless of how it is broken down, though, coercion is logically distinct from warfighting; it is very different from “the imposition of demands after complete military victory.”⁸

Coercion is usually defensive in that it is typically employed to persuade the opponent to stop or reverse an action. Alexander George labeled offensive uses of coercive threats as *blackmail strategy*.⁹ Coercion is also different from deterrence, where an opponent is persuaded

⁵ Robert A Pape, *Bombing to Win: Airpower and Coercion in War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 329.

⁶ Pape, 1.

⁷ Pape points out two exceptions: *faits accomplis*, where the status quo is changed so quickly that the opponent has no opportunity to resist, and wars of extermination, in which no concessions would be accepted. Pape, 12.

⁸ Pape, 13.

⁹ George, 7.

to not initiate an action (as opposed to stopping or reversing one already in progress). Although both are defensive in nature and each seeks to manipulate the enemy's cost-benefit analysis, deterrence discourages action while coercion requires some positive action. Deterrence promises the "greatest benefit at the least cost...however, deterrence often requires relinquishing the initiative to the other side." The other side relinquishes the initiative when coercive power is brought to bear. In his seminal work on coercion theory, Arms and Influence, Thomas Schelling used the term *compellance* to encompass coercive diplomacy, blackmail, military (or forcible) coercion, and even deterrence sometimes.¹⁰ Modern scholars have found it useful to break them up, treating each separately.

Gradual Escalation

Gradual escalation (or gradualism) is a method of employing military power for coercive purposes. Called "gradual turning of the screw" or "gradual pressure," it too is designed to stop aggression without excessive application of force. In his book Diplomacy, Henry Kissinger noted that it was conceived as a strategy in nuclear war, where total holocaust was to be avoided by incrementally escalating. He pointed out "its broader purpose of preventing military planning from running away with political decisions" as it did during World War I.¹¹ Gradualism is generally associated with the punishment strategies (that is, those oriented against the opponent's population, rather than his military capabilities) originally proposed by Schelling.¹²

Policy and Strategy

Webster's Dictionary defines *policy* as "a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures to guide and determine present and future decisions."¹³ Another definition, in the more specific context of national security issues, matches that in every particular: "policy means a pattern or patterns of actions designed to attain specific objectives. Policy statements can represent a broad course of action or intent. It can represent a restriction to U.S. foreign policy behavior...[it] represents the 'ways' [within the common "ends-ways-means"]

¹⁰ George, 7.

¹¹ Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy (New York: Touchstone Books, 1994), 652.

¹² Pape, 67.

¹³ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc, 1985), 910.

construct]...of national security strategy.”¹⁴ Policy is clearly (almost by definition) the purview of the highest level decision makers: the President, the Secretaries of Defense and State, and the remainder of the National Security Council.

Strategy is subordinate to policy. This point is clearly enunciated in the Department of Defense’s definition: strategy is “the art and science of developing and using political, economic, psychological, and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat.”¹⁵ Strategy in normal usage connotes broad, overarching concepts pertaining to the application of military power; our definition is broader.¹⁶ Hence, in coercive diplomacy, “if force is used at all it is not part of conventional military strategy but rather a component of a more complex political-diplomatic strategy for resolving a conflict of interests.”¹⁷ In each of these definitions there is a definite sense of integration and coordination—diplomacy, force, and economics all have a part to play in coercive diplomacy.

The DIME

An early draft joint publication conceptually divided elements of national power into two categories: “sources of power, i.e., those elements upon which a nation builds its power; and instruments of power, i.e., those elements with which a nation fashions its strategy.”¹⁸ The sources of power are geography, population, economy, national will, and national direction. The instruments are diplomatic, informational, military, and economic: the DIME. This construct permeates joint doctrine as well as the curricula of most of the Services’ schools. Armed Forces Staff College Pub 1, The Joint Staff Officer’s Guide, provides nearly a page of flexible deterrent

¹⁴ Ted Davis, Robert H. Dorf, and Robert D. Walz, “A Brief Introduction to Concepts and Approaches in the Study of Strategy”, [Online] available at <http://www-cgsc.army.mil/djco/core/m500/2000/lsn01/ln1rda.doc>.7.

¹⁵ U.S. Joint Staff, Joint Pub 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 23 March 1994 as amended through 10 January 2000), 430.

¹⁶ Not every author agrees with this differentiation. To Pape, for instance, strategy normally refers to “decisions about whether to stand firm or make concessions, not to different methods for translating force into coercive pressure by attacking different kinds of targets,” exactly opposite of our usage. The “stand firm” decision would be one of policy, the method of translation would be the military strategy. Pape, 8.

¹⁷ George, 10.

¹⁸ Davis, 10-12.

options for each instrument.¹⁹ This very useful model deals exclusively with how states interact with each other; it makes no allowances for domestic policy. Since this has a pivotal role in determining national will—a critical variable in coercion—a “political” instrument must be added to the model for this discussion. It is critical to clearly differentiate between the roles and functions of politicians, diplomats, and policymakers. Often this is difficult since many actors have several “hats,” politician one moment and diplomat the next.

Values and Interests

The four instruments of national power are, in theory, coordinated to attain a nation's policy objectives. A nation's *interests* determine those objectives. Although experts vary widely as to what exactly constitute national interests, there is little disagreement that they are tiered. Generically, survival and security are paramount, followed by political and territorial integrity, economic well-being, and stability and world order.²⁰ Powerful nations are not often fundamentally physically or economically threatened. Consequently, those nations “usually define their national security interests as the maintenance of their values and their way of life.”²¹ This is certainly the case with the United States today. This transition from intervention based on interests to intervention based on moral values is a fundamental shift. It has significantly increased the attractiveness and frequency of coercive diplomacy while simultaneously making it less effective. This trend shows no sign of abating.

Coercion offers a more efficient, less costly way of achieving one's objectives than decisive military victory. Gradual escalation is one strategy by which to implement a coercive policy. Effective policy outcomes of this sort result from proper integration of all instruments of national power. Summoning adequate national will (and thus making credible threats of potent punishment) appears more difficult the further a nation strays from basing its policy on vital national interests.

¹⁹ Armed Force Staff College, AFSC Pub 1: The Joint Staff Officer's Guide, 1997 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 6-18 to 6-20.

²⁰ Davis, 4.

²¹ Davis, 5.

Before diving in to a lengthy treatment of the strain between proponents of the different instruments of national power, it is important to pause and agree on exactly what we are talking about. The first order of business is to establish that such tension indeed exists and to get a feel for its scope and the ways in which it manifests itself. The three conflicts mentioned in the introduction will help set the stage.

The Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Allied Force were chosen for several reasons. First, the objectives pursued in each were essentially coercive: the intent was to persuade the opponent to either stop or reverse an action by threatening use of military force. Second, each involved large-scale application of military power. This is important because the higher stakes involved intensified the pressure on all of the actors, magnified their differences, and increased the likelihood that disparate views would be expressed. Thus, they present opportunities for clearer-cut analyses. Third, all are fairly recent. This is helpful because it minimizes the effect of several exogenous variables. Factors such as national security processes and structures—although continuously evolving—did not change fundamentally during the period between 1960 and 2000. Too, the type of military forces used in each conflict were largely the same, precluding an “apples-to-oranges” problem which might have arisen had the illustrations spanned too much history or involved nuclear weapons. Finally, the examples provide opportunities to compare and contrast situations and outcomes: two cases are typified by significant discord between policy makers and military leaders. Operation Desert Storm, on the other hand, is conventionally presented as a model of political-military solidarity, where strategy merged seamlessly into policy, and ends, ways and means were all balanced.

The following overviews are far from comprehensive. Obviously, there is a significant body of literature surrounding *each* of the examples, so complete treatment is far beyond the scope of this monograph. Rather, the intent is to provide concrete examples that will frame the ensuing discussion. That dissatisfaction with policy existed in Vietnam and Kosovo is common knowledge. The danger in blindly accepting that “fact” is that it is unfocussed and lacks

specificity. A few relevant anecdotes will increase clarity and turn a trite observation into a useful starting point.

Vietnam

There were many reasons to stay out of Vietnam. George Kennan, a Foreign Service Officer now famous for predicting the eventual downfall of the Soviet Union and who first announced the concept of containment, recommended that Asia be omitted from that policy. To him, the U.S. was “greatly overextended in its whole thinking about what we can accomplish and should try to accomplish” in the region.²² The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) agreed, saying the “Indochina conflict was the wrong war in the wrong place”, that “Indochina is devoid of decisive military objectives”, and involvement there “would be a serious diversion of limited U.S. capabilities.”²³ H.R. McMaster, however, in his book Dereliction of Duty, maintains that President Johnson “did not conceive of Vietnam as primarily a national security issue.” “Because Johnson was combining discussions of campaign strategy with Vietnam policy deliberations, he felt he should not include the Chiefs, whose interests and priorities focused on national security issues, in the policy discussions.”²⁴ The president was focused on his Great Society legislation; he “wished to avoid public pressure for policy changes that could destroy domestic political harmony” and interfere with his domestic agenda.²⁵

To some, there were equally compelling reasons in favor of involvement. Secretary of State Dean Rusk viewed Vietnam in a broader context and felt U.S. credibility and global standing were at stake. He foresaw a “progressive unraveling” that would ultimately affect NATO. Rusk “encouraged the president to view the issues as global in impact rather than just in terms of Southeast Asia.”²⁶ Intervention in Vietnam was the literal embodiment of the Domino Theory, the validity of which was the unquestioned foundation of U.S. foreign policy in the region. This is difficult for us to comprehend now. Henry Kissinger wrote, “as time went on, the Domino Theory,

²² Stanley Karnow, Vietnam, A History: The First Complete Account Vietnam at War (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 175.

²³ Karnow, 197.

²⁴ H.R. McMaster, Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the lies that led to Vietnam (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 117.

²⁵ George, 133.

²⁶ George, 138.

the central security premise on which the defense of Vietnam had been based for nearly two decades, was first abandoned and then ridiculed.”²⁷ In 1999, after a seminar spent with former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, one college senior said, “I can’t comprehend why all the intelligent people in the United States would have believed that.”²⁸ The theory logically entailed several significant constraints. Among them were unwillingness to widen the war, limiting alienation of the Soviets, and avoiding both provoking Chinese intervention and premature diplomatic initiatives (the president wanted to first strengthen his bargaining position).²⁹ There was little consensus among the chief actors in the national security process on basic questions: interests at stake, whether to intervene, and who to consult. From the outset the *ends* portion of the *ends-ways-means* equation was ambiguous.

Three competing strategic options were considered. McGeorge Bundy, the president’s National Security Advisor proposed “sustained reprisals,” linked to and justified by the Viet Cong terror campaign. Ambassador Taylor recommended “graduated reprisals” with less direct linkage and increasing severity. Finally, the JCS advocated an eight-week air campaign.³⁰ Each was coercive in nature, but “all differed in their objectives and in the rationales governing tempo and intensity...”³¹ McMaster notes a “persistent lack of consensus... Military and civilian planners had not reached a clear understanding of just what should be hit and how thoroughly, and above all for what objective.”³² Typically, military planners focused on positive aims such as interdicting supplies and destroying North Vietnam’s ability to support the insurrection in South Vietnam. Civilian leaders, on the other hand, emphasized negative aims, such as preventing escalation and preventing erosion of South Vietnamese morale.³³ Continuing failure to agree on the desired *ends* made selection of the *ways* extremely difficult.

The course selected was a mix of the three, haphazardly mixing points of each while incorporating neither their logic nor context. Walt Rostow, State Department Counselor,

²⁷ Kissinger, 667.

²⁸ Julianne Basinger, “Class explores the ‘argument without end’,” The Chronicle of Higher Education 45 no. 35 (May 7, 1999), A14.

²⁹ George, 162.

³⁰ George, 146.

³¹ George, 146.

³² McMaster, 100.

proposed the “Rostow Thesis” in August of 1964, in essence that “limited, graduated military actions, reinforced by political and economic pressures, could reduce greatly, or eliminate altogether, support for the insurgency. The objective of the attacks and pressures is not to destroy the nation’s ability to provide support but rather to affect its calculation of interests.”³⁴ McMaster amplified: “The traditional military precept of using overwhelming force seemed unnecessary, wasteful, and inefficient to these analysts...Rostow wrote that the essence of applying military force would not be ‘the damage we do but the character of our military dispositions and our diplomatic communications.’”³⁵ The selection was made largely by default since the approach dovetailed nicely with the administration’s predilections and perceived constraints—among them a deep-seated distrust of the military and disregard of its advice.

Response to the policy was sharply polarized. Civilian leaders liked it. “To satisfy the conflicting objectives of avoiding escalation and demonstrating resolve to the enemy, civilian leaders felt not only justified but compelled to discount the advice of the Joint Chiefs.”³⁶ This opinion was far from unanimous, however. In April of 1965, John McCone, the Director of Central Intelligence, wrote a contrarian memo. It “provided no easy solutions to the problem in Vietnam and demanded, in effect, that the president make a difficult choice between commitment to a large-scale war and a negotiated withdrawal. Johnson, however, would not make a tough decision...Three weeks [later]...McCone resigned in frustration.”³⁷ Unsurprisingly, military leaders did not like the policy, believing it would have “little useful impact” and “exert limited pressure.”³⁸ They still believed the best way to apply military power was suddenly and overwhelmingly. They abhorred gradualism and its “lesser objective” of persuasion. They warned there was “no basis to be hopeful about the situation...[and they] questioned the idea of using military actions to send ‘messages,’ which would waste both time and resources...”³⁹ They were frustrated by Washington’s “absurd” involvement in daily operations.⁴⁰

³³ George, 146 and McMaster, 286.

³⁴ McMaster, 156.

³⁵ McMaster, 163.

³⁶ McMaster, 160.

³⁷ McMaster, 257.

³⁸ George, 151.

³⁹ McMaster, 100.

⁴⁰ Westmoreland to Wheeler. McMaster, 233.

This overview has highlighted several points important to our discussion. At its root, dissension over U.S. policy in Vietnam flowed from incorrect conceptualization of military coercion. Peter Senge calls these *mental models*, which are “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalization, or even pictures of images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.”⁴¹ Most importantly, the dispute arose over the strategy of gradualism, not the policy of coercion (the intent of the JCS plan was coercion, not decisive defeat). Second, the pro-/anti-gradualism fault line ran largely (although not exclusively) between Departments. This example also demonstrates that the government is far from a “unitary actor:” the bureaucratic model is much more accurate. Finally, policy decisions are rarely entirely “rational,” so the rational actor assumption is highly suspect.

Operation Allied Force

The arguments against involvement in Kosovo were just as compelling as those aired before Vietnam. Two bedrock principles conflicted: the Westphalian presumption of national sovereignty and the Wilsonian right of self-determination. Many struggled to identify any substantial national interest at stake and pondered the implications of going to war based on *values* rather than important *interests*.⁴² The precedent set by intervention was potentially dangerous; even if it proved successful in Kosovo, “how would it play out against other nations and issues, for example Turkey [and its Kurdish minority]?”⁴³ For this reason, Russia, China, and India were against NATO action. Arguably, ill treatment of these countries severely damaged our relationships with them and forced them closer together—something perceived as not in our best interests.⁴⁴ From the outset, there was concern of a basic mismatch between ends sought and means utilized.⁴⁵ There is, even after the fact, significant continuing disagreement as to cause

⁴¹ Peter M. Senge, The Fifth Discipline: the Art And Practice Of The Learning Organization (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 8.

⁴² This was “...the kind of war a nation fights when it wants to, not when it must, when values rather than survival are on the line...when commitment is intense but also shallow.” Michael Ignatieff, Virtual War (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 2000), 4.

⁴³ Milan Vego, “Wake up call in Kosovo,” Proceedings 126, no. 10 (October, 2000), 14.

⁴⁴ Michael Rust and Timothy W. Maier, “Politics of War,” Insight on the News 15 (May 3, 1999), 12. Also William D. Hartung, “Preventive Diplomacy: Beyond Kosovo,” The Nation 268 (May 10, 1999), 2, and Owen Harries, “First Kosovo. Then Russia. Now China,” New York Times, May 16, 1999, sec 4, 17.

⁴⁵ Vego, 2 and Ignatieff, 7.

and effect: did ethnic cleansing provoke NATO bombing, or vice-versa?⁴⁶

The decision to intervene in Kosovo was a logical extension of the Clinton administration's concept of globalism ("liberal communitarianism" as one author put it)⁴⁷ and reasons favoring intervention were phrased in its terms. Prime Minister Tony Blair said, "Kosovo is every bit as much about our values as it is about strategic interests. Kosovo was about extending the concept of active community from the nation to the globe."⁴⁸ They scorned foreign policy "based solely on narrow national interests rather than on the attempt to create a democratic community of nations."⁴⁹ Much of their rhetoric, however, was framed in very traditional, realist terms. "Serb repression has long since passed the point of legitimate self-defense,"⁵⁰ Kosovo is strategically placed "in the center of a combustible region" and threatened European stability—an important U.S. national interest. Reaching back to Vietnam, President Clinton referred to a Balkan variation of the domino theory, "implying that if events there go unchecked, the repercussions for all of Europe could be disastrous."⁵¹ Many believed that in Kosovo, the moral and strategic interests coincided.

US and NATO objectives were clearly stated early in the conflict. Disparaged by some for changing over the course of the war⁵² and challenged for their lofty nature and concomitant dubious achievability, they were nevertheless constantly reiterated by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, President Clinton, and NATO spokesman Jamie Shae. NATO's goals were: an end to repression in Kosovo, withdrawal of Serbian forces from the province, insertion of an international military presence, safe return of refugees, and willingness to work toward a political framework agreement.⁵³ Secretary Albright also enunciated U.S. diplomatic objectives to support the overall objectives: NATO solidarity, public diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and constructive

⁴⁶ "Clinton entered the war to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, but that's exactly what he's produced." Rust, 12.

⁴⁷ John B. Judis, "TRB From Washington," The New Republic 220 (May 24, 1999), 6.

⁴⁸ Judis, 6.

⁴⁹ Judis, 2.

⁵⁰ Ignatieff, 21.

⁵¹ John A. Tokar, "Vietnam, the Cold War, and Kosovo: Irony and confusion over foreign policy," Parameters 30, no. 1, 4.

⁵² Vego, 2.

⁵³ Madeleine Albright, "US and NATO policy toward the crisis in Kosovo," U.S. Department of State Dispatch 10, no. 4 (May 1999), 2 and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Press Release M-NAC-1(99)51

engagement of Russia to “bring them back into the mainstream of international opinion.”⁵⁴ Implicit, unwritten, goals were postulated, as well. They included “breakup of the current regime, reduction of the Serbian military threat, strengthening the anti-Milosevic regime in Montenegro, and domestic stability in Macedonia and Albania.”⁵⁵

Always intent upon coercion, the approach was heavily constrained. “From the outset, U.S. and NATO officials maintained that either of two desirable military approaches—introducing ground forces, or beginning with a massive air campaign...—would have splintered the alliance.”⁵⁶ There was no shortage of choices. Before hostilities began, over 40 separate campaign options had been generated, “including some that were highly critical of using air power without a supporting ground element.”⁵⁷ In the end, no overarching campaign plan—one that integrated political, diplomatic, economic, and military measures—was agreed upon, a fact attributed to NATO leaders’ belief that the conflict would be short and military action symbolic in nature. This belief, coupled with the military constraints and the widely disparate interests of coalition members, resulted in the selection of gradual escalation as the *de facto* strategy.

As in Vietnam, this approach sparked controversy. Critics charged that diplomacy was never given a chance, that instead NATO presented Milosevic with an ultimatum that it knew he could not accept in order to justify the war it had already decided to begin.⁵⁸ Military dissatisfaction was pointed. Comments such as “...seen to be at odds with accepted military principles,” and “...remains an example of how not to fight a war” were typical.⁵⁹ Reporters soon perceived a rift between General Wesley Clark, NATO’s commander, and the White House. There was certainly tension between General Clark and his air commander, Lieutenant General Michael Short, who disagreed sharply with the focus of the air effort—privately during the war,

The situation in and around Kosovo: Statement Issued at the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (Brussels, Belgium: 12 April 1999), [Online] available at <http://www.NATO.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-051e.htm>.

⁵⁴ Albright, 3.

⁵⁵ Vego, 1.

⁵⁶ James Kitfield, “A war of limits,” National Journal 31, no. 30 (July 24, 1999), 5.

⁵⁷ Benjamin S. Lambeth, The Transformation of American Air Power (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 218.

⁵⁸ Hartung, 1 and Rust, 12.

⁵⁹ Kitfield, 7.

publicly afterward.⁶⁰ For the military, it almost comes down to an “I told you so”: “NATO commanders admitted from the very beginning that bombing from great heights was not way to protect the civilian population of Kosovo.”⁶¹

Politicians and diplomats were much less sanguine about gradualism in Kosovo than they were in Vietnam, but they recognized it as the lesser of two evils: better to do something, even if ultimately inadequate, than do nothing at all. Attachment to the concept was short-lived. Early in the operation, “a consensus had begun to form in Washington that ground forces might be needed, if only to salvage the increasingly shaky credibility of NATO.”⁶² Again, the political-military relationship appeared strained. “Impervious to military and intelligence advice that bombing would not produce the desired results, the President ordered bombing anyway. He had no clear idea of what to do next.”⁶³ Domestic pressures—impeachment—are also cited as important considerations (as they were to President Johnson), as is the Administration’s frequent recourse to “cruise missile diplomacy,” which may have decreased the credibility of its threats.

Despite the many obvious differences, Operation Allied Force bore a striking conceptual resemblance to the Vietnam War. Several themes are reiterated, and several new issues emerged. At its root, dissension over U.S. and NATO policy in Kosovo flowed from the very practical consideration of conflicting interests of coalition partners. As Admiral James Ellis, Allied Force commander, noted: “The imperatives of consensus politics within NATO made for an ‘incremental war’ rather than for ‘decisive operations’.”⁶⁴ Again, and most important, coercion was an acceptable approach; gradualism was the lightning rod of controversy. Too, the nature of the underlying reasons for intervention remains troubling. The conflict of “*realpolitik* against high principle...sovereignty against human rights”⁶⁵ is unresolved. “Hawk” and “dove” are no longer synonymous with “conservative” and “liberal”: the Cold War deck has been reshuffled.⁶⁶ Finally,

⁶⁰ Lambeth, 221 and John A. Tirpak, “Short’s View of the Air Campaign,” Air Force Magazine 82 no. 9 (September 1999), [Online] available at <http://www.afa.org/magazine/watch/0999watch.html>.

⁶¹ Charles Krauthammer, “The short, unhappy life of humanitarian war,” The National Interest 57 (Fall, 1999), 3.

⁶² Lambeth, 186.

⁶³ Tokar, 3.

⁶⁴ Lambeth, 227.

⁶⁵ Ignatieff, 22.

⁶⁶ Rust, 12 and Tokar, 4.

Kosovo provides little vindication of the Clinton Doctrine (perhaps too couched in caveats to be useful), yet fails equally to reaffirm the Powell doctrine.⁶⁷

Operation Desert Storm

The 1991 Gulf War contrasts with the other two examples in nearly every way. The interests at stake for the U.S. and the objectives sought, for example, were much clearer and more achievable. Equally important were the clarity with which they were stated and the degree to which they helped the administration garner public support. Gradualism was eschewed in favor of overwhelming force. Consequently, there was very little of the tension between warriors and the other groups that marked Vietnam and Kosovo.

The U.S. had several important interests at stake in the Persian Gulf. In contrast to Kosovo and Vietnam, they were simple and concrete. Explicitly stated goals included continued access to Persian Gulf oil, preserving America's credibility with her allies,⁶⁸ and protection of the principle of self-determination. Secretary of State Baker said, "From a strategic standpoint, we must show that intimidation and force are not successful ways of doing business in the volatile Middle East—or anywhere else."⁶⁹ Regional stability facilitated access to oil. This soon came to mean stripping Iraq of its military capability to threaten its neighbors.⁷⁰ All of this had to be done "without giving Iraq any auxiliary concessions on the issues of Gulf security or Israeli-Palestinian relations;"⁷¹ that is, there could be no concessions to Iraq.

⁶⁷ Both the Clinton and Powell doctrines are attempts by policy makers to define when and how military power should be used. Powell's statements are widely considered to have evolved from the Weinberger Doctrine. Both are discussed in great detail in Richard N Haass, Intervention: the use of American military force in the post-Cold War world (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994). Weinberger's speech to the National Press Club is found in Appendix C. The Clinton Doctrine was clearly expressed in his National Security Strategies. See, for instance, White House, National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1999). Some authors believe that these doctrines reflect a "profound reluctance" to use force in the post-Cold War era. See Kenneth J. Campbell, "Once burned, twice cautious: Explaining the Weinberger-Powell doctrine," Armed Forces and Society 24 no. 3 (Spring 1998).

⁶⁸ Thomas Pickering, U.S. ambassador to UN, "argued that American credibility in the Middle East would be damaged if it acquiesced in the invasion of Kuwait." This is the course of action General Powell initially advocated: that the U.S. concede Kuwait to Iraq, but draw the line at the Saudi Arabian border. Michael R Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, The General's War (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 36.

⁶⁹ George, 232.

⁷⁰ Pape, 219.

⁷¹ George, 233.

Ironically, the phrasing of the objectives—the spin—was the converse of those in Kosovo. In Kosovo, *idealistic* goals (divert or reverse a humanitarian disaster) were couched in terms with which a political *realist* would agree (refugee flows destabilizing the region and affecting European allies). With respect to Iraq, however, realistic goals (free access to oil) were wrapped in idealism (“this aggression will not stand...”). Nevertheless, they were clearly articulated and easily understood as important. No nation, wrote Henry Kissinger, should “stake its international standing and domestic cohesion unless its leaders can describe their political goals and offer a realistic strategy for achieving them—as President Bush did.”⁷²

Vietnam was the defining life experience for many of the senior leaders—especially the military ones—and it was very much in mind as they shaped the policy and strategy of Desert Storm. Instant Thunder, for instance, the initial plan to coerce Saddam by strategic bombing, “was so-named to distinguish it from the graduated and failed Rolling Thunder” of Vietnam. Several concepts were considered early on because “...the shadow of Vietnam discouraged political leaders from rejecting any military strategy that did not have insuperable political costs.”⁷³

Interestingly, as in both Kosovo and Vietnam, the military was reluctant to intervene. “The lineup ran counter to what most of the public would have expected. The civilians were looking for a way to roll back the Iraqi gains while the military was urging caution.”⁷⁴ Civilian leaders were the hard-liners: Secretary of Defense Cheney “search[ed] for a way to reverse the invasion” and the State Department “want[ed] to demand unconditional surrender.”⁷⁵ Once the decision to apply military force was made, however, the military was granted substantially more leeway than in the other two conflicts. Overwhelming force was the clear choice of politicians, diplomats, and warriors. There was very little friction or tension between the groups. Again hearkening back to Vietnam, “the administration promised that if force had to be used, it would be used suddenly, massively, and decisively...no murky outcomes.”⁷⁶ Gradual escalation was out.

⁷² Kissinger, 659.

⁷³ Pape, 220.

⁷⁴ Gordon, 31.

⁷⁵ Gordon, 33 and Pape, 217.

⁷⁶ George, 243.

Not all went perfectly, however. Senior leaders did a poor job of planning for conflict termination. “The undermining of the post-Gulf War Hussein regime...was contradicted by the impulse to quickly withdraw, disengage...The disconnect between the military and political aims resulted in a confusing end.”⁷⁷ President Bush reinforced this impression two days after the ceasefire. He noted his lack of “euphoric feeling” and attributed it to a lack of a “definitive end” to the conflict: “And now we have Saddam Hussein still there—the man that wreaked this havoc upon his neighbors.”⁷⁸ Military triumph that it was, the war appears to have been less decisive than desired.

In sum

The Vietnam War and Operation Allied Force provide many examples of strain between warriors, diplomats, and politicians. It is fairly clear that this conflict centers on disparate views the groups hold regarding *gradualism*, not *coercion*. The nearly complete lack of this tension throughout the conceptualization and execution of Operation Desert Storm lends additional weight to this assertion. In spite of this observation, however, gradual escalation continues to be adopted as a strategy—and doubtless will continue to be—when concerns about military efficiency or optimization are outweighed by higher-order interests. The Gulf War illustrates that sometimes even overwhelming force proves less than decisive. All three examples point out that policy decisions are made and influenced by people and large bureaucracies, operating under stressful time constraints for large stakes. These cast doubt on theories of coercion based on unitary rational actors. Each of these points will be discussed in greater detail later. It is enough now that there be a common understanding as to the existence, frequency, type, and severity of intergroup stress surrounding the concept of gradualism.

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Coercion is a strategy as well as a policy option and it amenable to analysis and evaluation based on objective criteria. One such criteria set is the FAS test, which stands for

⁷⁷ Gordon, xv.

⁷⁸ Gordon, xv.

Feasibility, Acceptability, and Suitability. It is used in United States joint and service doctrine at the tactical and operational levels to evaluate competing courses of action (COAs). The approach has equal utility at the political/military level where a military strategy is optimized and (hopefully) synchronized with other instruments of national power in order to accomplish policy objectives. Strictly speaking, the FAS test is the Army's version and is discussed in Field Manual (FM) 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations.

For a COA to be **feasible** “[t]he unit must have the capability to accomplish the mission in terms of available time, space, and resources.”⁷⁹ The Joint definition views the same criteria from the perspective of the plan (rather than the unit); it adds “within the time frames contemplated by the plan” and speaks very broadly of resources, which include “the personnel, the transportation, the resupply, the facilities, etc.”⁸⁰ Air Force Doctrine Document 2-1 Air Warfare, presents another approach to COA development. It does not deal explicitly with feasibility, but does indicate that “all courses of action should include logistics considerations.” It urges planners to “compare each friendly course of action with each enemy course of action given above and determine if it is workable...”⁸¹ Logistics and “workability” are aspects of feasibility. In essence, feasibility answers the question “Can we do it?”

To be **acceptable**, “[t]he tactical or operational advantage gained by executing the COA must justify the cost in resources, especially casualties.”⁸² Again, the joint definition mirrors the Army's, albeit with a generally broader focus. Considerations of cost are expanded to include “personnel, equipment, material, time, or position,” and the issues of consistency with law of war and political supportability are added.⁸³ AFDD 2-1 does not address acceptability, except that it requires the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) and the Joint Force Commander

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 101-5: Staff Organization and Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 May 1997), 5-11.

⁸⁰ Armed Force Staff College, 6-40 and U.S. Joint Staff, Joint Pub 5-0, I-13.

⁸¹ U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-1, Air Warfare (Maxwell AFB, AL: Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Center, 22 January 2000), 77 and 81.

⁸² U.S. Department of the Army, FM 101-5, 5-11.

⁸³ Armed Force Staff College, 6-40.

(JFC) to approve the COA, which implies their cost/benefit considerations.⁸⁴ Acceptability answers the question “Do the expected benefits outweigh the potential costs?”

There is less agreement on **suitability**. FM 101-5 states that, to be suitable, a plan “must accomplish the mission and comply with the commander’s guidance.”⁸⁵ Joint doctrine uses the term **adequacy**, which “determines whether the scope and concept of planned operations **satisfy the tasking and will accomplish the mission** [emphasis in original].”⁸⁶ The Joint Staff Officer’s Guide provides a useful amplification: “Will the course of action actually accomplish the mission when carried out successfully? In other words, is it aimed at the correct objectives?”⁸⁷ Air Force doctrine outlines the criteria, although it does not label it as suitability: “For each friendly course of action assess its chance of success, whether it would accomplish the strategic objectives if successful, and whether it would favor future action from the air commander and supporting forces.”⁸⁸ While accomplishing the strategic objectives is the essence of suitability, assessing chances of success and posturing for follow-on operations are attempts to optimize the plan, or aid in its comparison with others. This comes later in the decision making process and is misplaced here. Suitability answers the question “Does it accomplish the mission?”

The FM 101-5 test has two additional criteria: *distinguishability* (the Joint Staff Officer’s Guide uses *variety*) and *completeness*. Neither is applicable to our present discussion of coercion and gradualism. The previous section clearly established the differences between them (they are distinguishable), and since our discussion will remain at the conceptual level, no answers will be provided to questions of Who, What, When, Where, and How which determine “technical completeness.”⁸⁹ JP 5-0 includes yet another test, *compliance with joint doctrine*, which is equally inapplicable to this discussion, since issues of national policy and coercion theory transcend joint doctrine.

⁸⁴ The Air Campaign Planning Handbook requires that “all feasible and acceptable COAs open to the commander that can potentially accomplish the mission” be considered. However, it does not define any of these terms. (pg. 56).

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 101-5, 5-11.

⁸⁶ U.S. Joint Staff, Joint Pub 5-0 Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 13 April 1995), I-13.

⁸⁷ Armed Force Staff College, 6-40.

⁸⁸ U.S. Department of the Air Force, AFDD 2-1, 81.

⁸⁹ Armed Force Staff College, 6-40 and U.S. Department of the Army, FM 101-5, 5-11.

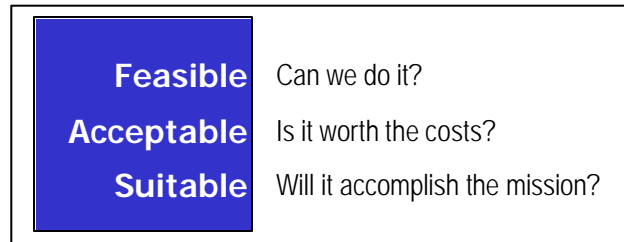


Figure 1: Objective Criteria (the FAS test)

The FAS test will provide the core *objective* criteria by which to evaluate the utility of coercion. There is, however, a substantial *subjective* element that is central to the discussion of tension in policy making. The subjective portion of the analysis will be much more comparative, less absolute. In his book Revolution and World Politics, Fred Halliday phrased it thus: “It is this possibility for comparison, without inappropriate scientific [sic] or quantitative aspirations, that underlies the following study.”⁹⁰

The subjective criteria start on “common ground.” At least three of the four groups (all but perhaps the academics) have a stake in the policy outcome. Being patriots and professionals, all parties desire **effective** policies. This is subtly different from suitability. There are degrees of effectiveness, from “marginal” through “optimal” and perhaps including “fortunately successful beyond wildest expectations.” Not so for suitability. Either a policy or course of action or strategy will accomplish the mission, or it will not. Either it is suitable, or it is not. There is no sliding scale of suitability. Since the best course may not be possible for a host of reasons, policymakers may have to make the best of a poor deal. In this sense, the FAS test is the ante required to even get in the game; effectiveness attempts to judge the hand.⁹¹ Effectiveness addresses the question, “How favorable will the outcome be?”.

Secondly, each actor wishes to minimize **risk**, of which there are many types. In addition to the obvious risk of failure (the complement of the question “What is the probability of success?”), there is the additional consideration of what business analysts call “the down side.” Some options, for instance, while promising high likelihood of very desirable ends, may bring with

⁹⁰ Fred Halliday, Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 21.

⁹¹ To be fair, the Army’s MDMP also grades or ranks options. However, it does so later in the process: after COA analysis (or wargaming). To make it to that step, though, each COA must have passed the FAS test during COA development.

them the possibility of extremely negative outcomes. Other options may aim at somewhat lesser objectives, preserve the possibility of the very desirable endstate (albeit with lower probability), yet not entail exposure to the extremely negative outcomes. Nuclear brinksmanship provides a good hypothetical example. Threatening use of nuclear weapons has the possibility of reaping significant concessions. On the other hand, having that bluff called would result in either large-scale devastation if employed, or significant loss of prestige if not. Threats of military action shy of the nuclear threshold are not as powerful (they have far less chance of achieving those same significant concessions), but they shield the coercing government from the equally significant downside risks. For our purposes, the criterion of **risk** encompasses confidence in the desired outcome as well as the likelihood and magnitude of the worst case.

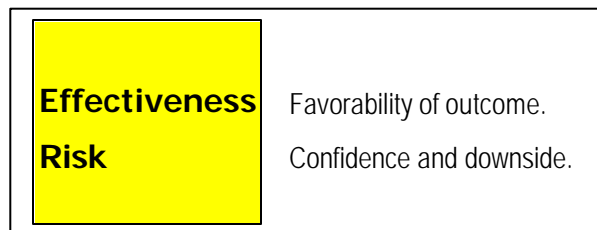


Figure 2: Subjective Criteria

The overall approach will be to apply the FAS test to coercion and gradualism from the point of view of each relevant group. Next, the subjective criteria of effectiveness and risk are examined—or, more specifically, each group's method of measuring those characteristics. Finally, in the analysis section these responses will be compared, the differences highlighted, and their roots explored.

PERSPECTIVES

Four groups of people are postulated whose knowledge and perspectives bear directly on the conceptualization, execution and ultimately the outcome of foreign policy. Military leaders (warriors) and diplomats are senior leaders within their respective arm of the DIME. They are professionals in their field, and bring to the table years of study and experience. Politicians, on the other hand, may be elected for many reasons other than their foreign policy expertise; consequently, it can vary widely. Grouped with the politicians, for the purposes of this study, are

their appointees. Although one might argue that many political appointees are subject matter experts who enter the foreign policy arena from academia or the private sector, for the duration of their term they have much more in common with their sponsors (politicians) than their erstwhile colleagues. Academics, finally, *inform* the national security and foreign policy processes rather than participate in it. Consequently, they play a unique and important role by proposing the theoretical bases for coercion as well as analysis and critiques of prior decisions. The academics are largely responsible for the mental models the other three groups have formed.

Academics' Viewpoint

There are many models of coercion. One of the most prevalent derives from Thomas Schelling's seminal book Arms and Influence. His very structuralist view treats the interstate system (actors, interests, and defined methods of interaction) as the primary consideration in explaining coercion. Its basic approach is that governments make decisions based on rational cost/benefit analysis and usually assumes that governments are unitary, rational actors. This view was most clearly presented by Robert Pape in his book Bombing to Win. Although Pape restricts his study to examples of air power as a coercive instrument, the first section of his book provides a useful theoretical background. The construct is simple and powerful.

Pape describes the logic of coercion by a simple equation (see Figure 3). The value of resistance [R] is merely the difference between the benefits of resisting and the costs of resisting. The benefits of resisting are calculated by multiplying the benefits themselves [B] by their likelihood—the probability of attaining those benefits, or p(B). The same is true of the costs: outcomes times likelihood.

Coercion thus involves manipulating one of the four variables in this equation. Actually, Pape points out, the first term—the potential benefits—remains constant over the course of a conflict and thus is not really subject to manipulation. Most interstate conflict is about territory, and attachment to territory springs from either nationalism or security concerns (or both). These forces can change, but only over long periods. That leaves three approaches to coercion. Pape calls them *punishment*, *risk*, and *denial*. Punishment strategies raise the societal costs “to levels that overwhelm the target state's territorial interests, causing it to concede to the coercer's

demands.”⁹² Risk strategies slowly raise the probability of civilian damage. The emphasis is on timing: “The coercer puts at risk essentially the same targets as in punishment strategies, but the key is to inflict civilian costs at a gradually increasing rate...to convince the opponent that much more severe damage will follow...”⁹³ Thus, to Pape, this strategy is *by definition* characterized by

$$R = B_r p(B_r) - C_r p(C_r)$$

R	Value of resistance
B _r	Potential benefits of resistance
p(B _r)	Probability of attaining benefits by resisting
C _r	Potential costs of resistance
p(C _r)	Probability of suffering costs

Concessions occur with R<0

Figure 3: Pape's Cost-Benefit Equation⁹⁴

gradualism. Finally, denial strategies “target the opponent’s military ability to achieve its...objectives, thereby compelling concessions in order to avoid futile expenditure of further resources.”⁹⁵ Pape concluded that denial is the most effective method.

Several incremental improvements might be made to Pape’s scheme to incorporate other authors’ findings. First, buried in the “cost” term of the equation are those associated with submitting. Dragging that term out, placing it front and center, and treating the coercer’s demand explicitly would increase clarity. In his book The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, Alexander George maintains that the demand is the central determinant of success. “[T]he strength of the adversary’s disinclination to comply is highly sensitive to the magnitude of the demand made by the coercing power.”⁹⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, author of the classic treatise On War agrees. “[T]he smaller the penalty you demand from your opponent, the less you can expect him to try and deny it to you...Moreover, the more modest your own political aim, the less importance you attach to it and the less reluctantly you will abandon it if you must.”⁹⁷ Clausewitz obviously understood coercion and where it fit in the spectrum of conflict. He noted that “...we must also be willing to

⁹² Pape, 18.

⁹³ Pape, 19.

⁹⁴ Pape, 16.

⁹⁵ Pape, 19.

⁹⁶ George, 15.

⁹⁷ Clausewitz, 81.

wage such minimal wars, which consist in *merely threatening the enemy*, with *negotiations held in reserve*.”⁹⁸ Along with explicit treatment of the coercer’s demand, it is equally useful to identify the benefits of conceding. Often, coercers will offer incentives for compliance even as they threaten punishment for noncompliance. These “carrots” will be discussed in greater detail later.

A second change is recognition that there are usually several costs and benefits to be weighed: multiple possible outcomes, each with their own likelihood. Consequently, the cost and benefits terms are actually summations of all of these outcomes. These two improvements are incorporated in Figure 4.⁹⁹

$$R = \dot{a}[B_r p(B_r)] - \dot{a}[C_r p(C_r)] + C_c - B_c$$

C_c Costs of conceding: **the demand**
 B_c Benefits of conceding: **the incentives or “carrots”**

Figure 4: Improved Cost Benefit Equation

Although Pape clearly associated gradualism with risk strategies, others do not. George, for instance (with his emphasis on the diplomatic instrument) felt that this gradual escalation could be replaced by a credible threat communicated to the enemy. Consequently, the threat of escalation plays a much more substantial part in George’s view than its application. The difference is subtle, but important: the effect Pape seeks is primarily physical; George’s mechanism is exclusively psychological.¹⁰⁰ Instead of conceiving gradualism as a branch or type of coercion, most authors consider it a method of implementing any of the various types of coercion.¹⁰¹ This is the third suggested modification of Pape’s model.

Several authors do not subscribe to Pape’s rational actor assumptions, which (they argue) the Vietnam War and Operation Allied Force show to be fragile. Engelbrecht proposes

⁹⁸ Clausewitz, 604. The emphasis was his.

⁹⁹ These are only rudimentary steps at improving the basic cost/benefit model. For, as he phrases it, “a longer and more tediously detailed discussion of the coercion calculus,” see Karl Mueller, Strategy, Asymmetric Deterrence, and Accommodation (PhD Dissertation, Department of Politics, Princeton University, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ George, 10. “...if force is used at all it is not part of conventional military strategy but rather a component of a more complex political-diplomatic strategy for resolving a conflict ...” Credibility is situational, however. “[C]oercers tend to bolster their credibility by favoring threats that can be fulfilled in progressive stages and to rely on coercion in wartime when doubts about hostile action are moot.” This logic helps explain the appeal of gradualism, discussed in greater detail later. Pape, 7.

¹⁰¹ George and Engelbrecht, for instance.

“second-order change” as the mechanism by which coercion works. Second-order change operates by threatening a more important value than was formerly at stake. This changes the context within which the conflict takes place and forces the target state to reevaluate its actions. Success occurs when “the war ceases to be a means to achieve benefits, but becomes the problem.”¹⁰² Too, there is prospect theory, a behavioral model that examines the activities of individuals making decisions in high-risk, time-constrained environments. Prospect theory holds that actors are inclined to engage in risky behavior to defend a status quo position but be risk averse in seeking improvements to their position. There are others. However, all agree that coercion is an attempt to “win cheaply” and is accomplished by varying the opponent’s perception of risk and/or cost; they merely disagree on how it occurs. If more sophisticated, they are also more complex than cost-benefit analysis. More importantly, they are largely descriptive. As such, they are of less practical use to policymakers, who naturally favor prescriptive theories that help them make decisions today, not analyze yesterday’s.

The academic perspective should be subjected to the analysis criteria. Although (as stated previously) the theoreticians do not directly participate in the national security process, the other three groups (who *are* participants) base preconceptions on their recommendations and analysis. The results of the FAS test are predictable. The body of literature on coercion is huge. This fact alone reflects a significant amount of time invested in the study of coercion, acknowledging that coercion is a reality and that studying it is worthwhile. Furthermore, virtually every author proposes a model, identifies a particularly successful type, or postulates a set of variables which lead to its success. By showing that it can be done, that it can be worth the costs, and that it sometimes results in useful concessions, they at least tacitly approve of—often explicitly advocate—coercion. Academics, not surprisingly, support coercion based on the objective criteria.

Nearly all case studies reviewed for this paper indicated that the coercive policy was the best option available *even in cases where it was unsuccessful or less successful than desired*. This would certainly be an ambiguous endorsement were the analysis to end there, but in

¹⁰² Mark P. Sullivan, The Mechanism for Strategic Coercion: Denial or Second Order Change? (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1995), 29.

reviewing historical examples, researchers usually have the luxury of assessing a “bottom line.” If the analyst believed that the opponent altered his behavior to more suit the coercing state and did so at a cost to both sides less than complete military victory, she could conclude that the policy was effective. Most authors are quite pessimistic. Pape showed that, while denial strategies of coercion (his “best case” or most effective variant) were successful in four of five cases where it was attempted, “in all but one instance the gains were minor.”¹⁰³ Pape and George agree that coercive diplomacy failed in the Gulf War; Pape added, “this case shows that sometimes coercers must come exceedingly close to complete defeat for coercion to succeed.”¹⁰⁴ There is guarded agreement that coercion can be an effective policy to pursue.

All the theorists significantly bound the region within which they feel coercion is effective. Since characteristics of actual crises may place them outside these carefully crafted borders, significant risk of failure is nearly always present. This risk is mitigated by the fact that, where interests are significant, states rarely rely on coercion as the sole approach, adopting instead a dual track of attempting coercion while preparing for war. The preparation for war has the salutary effect of bolstering the credibility of the coercive threat, thus further increasing probability of success. In no case, though, were authors confident that coercion offers a low-risk method of attaining one’s maximum objectives. This is a sentiment of mixed blessings and ties in with the issue of potential downside. In exchange for low likelihood of complete success, case studies showed a trend of also not exposing additional, higher-order interests to risk. The one possible exception (the purported threat to NATO and national prestige after several weeks of perceived ineffective bombing), will be discussed later. The academic viewpoint supports coercion based on the objective criteria, and cautiously endorses it based on the subjective criteria.

Beliefs about gradualism are more ambiguous. The strategy is definitely feasible and (if it works) equally acceptable. Starting small and working one’s way up to big is easier to support than having to start off on a higher rung of the conflict ladder, and the theoretical benefits far outweigh the (by definition) minimal costs. This, in fact, lies at the heart of gradualism’s appeal: one can take relatively minor, inexpensive military steps and rely upon them to convey the intent

¹⁰³ Pape, 315.

¹⁰⁴ George, 229 and Pape, 252.

to take further steps if required. Ironically this exact fact is also the crux of gradualism's frequent ineffectiveness. The logic involved is the converse of a statement made above. Just as preparation for war increases the credibility of coercive threats, *lack of preparation* (or perceived *lack of commitment*) can reduce the credibility of those same threats and completely negate the combined effect of token or symbolic strikes coupled with implausible promises of more. Pape was explicit: "Risk strategies will fail."¹⁰⁵ Clearly he has a low estimation of the suitability of gradual escalation. Academics are ambivalent on the objective utility of gradual escalation.

It is telling that no author offered a case study demonstrating successful implementation of gradualism. George, with his focus on method of implementation (as opposed to Pape's differentiation based on which variable in the cost-benefit equation is targeted), showed several where "gradual turning of the screw" was used as a step in a process of increasingly severe coercive strategies. One subsection of the chapter on the Cuban Missile Crisis, for instance, is titled "From Turning of the Screw to Ultimatum and Carrot and Stick," which clearly shows the progression of strategies. This argument would stand up equally well in the case of Kosovo, where coercive diplomacy gave way to gradually escalating military force that was later displaced by much more overwhelming force and—in the end—complemented by talk of a possible ground invasion. Gradualism was itself ineffective, but was only one step on the path. Both authors appear skeptical on the question of effectiveness, and seem to agree on the topic of risk: there is significant risk of failure where the strategy of gradualism is employed.

Academics generally support coercion and eschew gradualism as an inferior variant of implementation. Their condemnation is qualified because of the many cases where gradualism was attempted and can be interpreted as ultimately effective. If the measure is the "bottom line," gradualism may appear to work. Academics are the only group, however, with this luxury of looking back and assessing *final* outcomes. The others must deal with an uncertain future and issues of current feasibility and political supportability, which sometimes preclude any option other than gradual escalation: it is that or nothing, and nothing is often unacceptable.

¹⁰⁵ Pape, 20.

Warriors' Viewpoint

"War's very objective is victory—not prolonged indecision. In war, indeed, there can be no substitute for victory."
--Douglas MacArthur¹⁰⁶

"This is not Instant Thunder, it's more like Constant Drizzle."
--Pundit's critique of Operation Allied Force¹⁰⁷

Warriors are preoccupied—some might say obsessed—with decisive, conclusive terminations. Rather than framing the position in realist/idealist terms (although that is a valid dialectic), Morris Janowitz labels this position *absolutist* and contrasts it with *pragmatism*.¹⁰⁸ Experience has made warriors absolutists in war; they believe themselves to be pragmatists in other domains. They are unable to see that insistence on "black and white" is fundamentally irreconcilable with an ambiguous "gray" world. In this respect, they are actually absolutists militarily and politically.

The emphasis on decisive outcomes has a long heritage. It typifies Napoleonic warfare, whose concepts were interpreted by Jomini and Clausewitz. The shadows of these theorists extend quite clearly over the U.S. Civil War and WWI (arguably even farther than that) with the quest for a decisive victory a common thread. In his book The American Way of War, Russell Weigley noted that "...the strategy of annihilation became characteristically the American way in war."¹⁰⁹ This concept is firmly rooted in current U.S. military doctrine. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 maintains that "The integration of all U.S. military capabilities...is required to generate decisive joint combat power" and that "JFCs gain decisive advantage over the enemy through leverage"—a facet of operational art.¹¹⁰ The U.S. Air Force posits a new view of conflict in which a "decisive halt" forces the enemy to culminate "through the early and sustained overwhelming application of air and space power."¹¹¹ The opening sentence in the Army's soon-to-be published Field Manual (FM) 3-0 reads: "Army forces are the decisive component of land warfare in joint and multi-

¹⁰⁶ *Congressional Record*, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 19 April, 1951, 4125.

¹⁰⁷ Lambeth, 218.

¹⁰⁸ Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 303. Chapter 15 dwells extensively on this dichotomy and its derivation.

¹⁰⁹ Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), xxii.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Joint Staff, Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1 February 1995), II-4 and III-15.

¹¹¹ U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document 1, Air Force Basic Doctrine (Maxwell AFB, AL: Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Center, 1 September 1997), 42.

national operations,”¹¹² and FM 100-7 is titled Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations. Finally, at the strategic political-military level, the Weinberger and Powell doctrines reflect a clear bias in favor of situations where political objectives can be created which overwhelming force can bring to a clear resolution. Warriors prefer to win big.

Warriors are also acutely aware of the costs of war in lives. This professional awareness of unlimited liability interacts heavily with the demand for conclusive outcomes; each reinforces the other. In The Art of War, Sun Tzu alludes to this several times—making it clear that war is to be used only as a last resort.¹¹³ General Short testified before Congress that “The litmus I felt I had to pass every night was if my son were killed in Kosovo, I needed to be able to tell his mother and his wife that he was killed doing something that I thought generally would help bring the war to a close and bring Milosevic to the table.”¹¹⁴ Note that this is different from casualty aversion. Warriors, realists with respect to war, understand that application of military force entails death and injury. Their concerns are that the loss of life be minimized and worthwhile.¹¹⁵ Unlimited liability is important to this study because it shapes warriors’ views on various strategic options as well as on the utility of military force and significance of its use.

Warriors like coercion. There is perhaps a touch less faith in this belief in the Army (with its focus on fighting and winning the nation’s wars) than in the other services. Belief in coercion, however, is a fundamental underpinning of the Airman’s view, and the Navy has used blockades countless times throughout history, an expressly coercive low-level application of military force. It is clearly something the military can do and is actually included in nearly every military concept of operations (at least implicitly). Consequently, coercion is quite feasible. The focus on lives as the currency of war manifests itself in issues of acceptability. Coercion, or any other path that

¹¹² U.S. Department of the Army, ST 3-0: Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1 October 2000), 1-2. Called a “Student Text” (ST) in its pre-publication format, FM 3-0 will replace FM 100-5—the heart of Army operational doctrine.

¹¹³ Sun Tzu, The Art of War, trans. Samuel B Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 142 footnote 6.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Congress Senate Armed Services Committee, Senate Armed Services Committee Holds a Hearing on The Lessons Learned From The Air Campaign In Kosovo (106th Congress, 1st session, 21 Oct 99), [Online] available at <https://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/>, 24.

¹¹⁵ Krauthammer contends that casualty aversion “is not, as some have argued, a blanket aversion to casualties, stemming variously from a decadence produced by prosperity, or a higher valuation placed on children of the smaller families of a low-fertility West. It is an aversion to casualties incurred purely for the benefit of foreigners.” Krauthammer, 3.

might accomplish the mission with less loss of life, is attractive. However, the lowest cost alternative in this respect is not necessarily the most favored—especially in cases where mission accomplishment is threatened. The perceived stakes drive this tension. Thus, national interests at stake inextricably link acceptability and suitability. Coercion is nearly always suitable because it might accomplish the mission, and do so cheaply. Pape pointed out that discriminating between coercion and “pursuit of military victory is ambiguous... [M]oreover, coercers themselves often do not distinguish; instead, they pursue both options, hoping to attain their goals by coercion if possible and by decisive victory if necessary.”¹¹⁶ Therefore, coercion is suitable even where it appears to have little chance of success because it can be pursued in parallel with decisive military victory. The military favors coercion based on the objective criteria.

The subjective criteria yield results that are more mixed. The prospect of negotiation and compromise reduces the possibility for clear, decisive terminations. In effect, the price paid for potentially reduced casualties is accomplishment of more limited objectives. Thus, the effectiveness of coercion may be viewed somewhat skeptically.¹¹⁷ The greater the degree of compromise, the less clear cut the “victory.” Similarly, more definitive victory implies less effective coercion. That is, the closer the coercing state must get to actually defeating its enemy before the latter gives in, the fewer benefits it reaps from that coercion, thus making it appear less effective. There are risks associated with adopting a coercive strategy. There may be low confidence of favorable outcomes, although this risk is mitigated in those cases where coercive results are sought along the road to outright victory. Operation Desert Storm is an example of significant results which, although they required substantial effort to achieve, were accomplished well short of annihilation of Iraqi forces. Conversely, the military’s concern at the early removal of the ground option in Kosovo shows concern for the much reduced possibility of favorable outcomes in those cases where coercion is attempted without preparing for decisive victory.

¹¹⁶ Pape, 14.

¹¹⁷ The degree of this skepticism, as mentioned above, breaks down fairly cleanly along service lines. Generally speaking, it is an article of faith among airpower proponents that coercion is fundamentally effective. The naval view is that it can be effective in some circumstances, while ground power advocates are doubtful.

Perceptions of downside risk also vary. Pape noted that "unsuccessful coercion can be costly for the victim but disastrous for the instigator."¹¹⁸ He offered as an example the German U-boat campaign in World War I, which not only failed to compel England to withdraw but led to the U.S. decision to intervene. However, the modern capabilities of the U.S. military relative to those of the rest of the world point to relatively low military downside risk associated with coercion. Warriors favor coercion.

Their regard for gradualism is exactly the opposite. They draw their justification from history, theory, and—most importantly—experience. Sun Tzu and Clausewitz both explicitly eschew drawn out operations.¹¹⁹ Pape's research reinforces the impression. He concluded that "...truces for the purpose of facilitating negotiation or as rewards for partial concessions are likely to be counterproductive" and that "traditional theories of coercion which emphasize carefully timed pauses for signaling and negotiation have it exactly backward..."¹²⁰ The feasibility of gradualism is unquestioned: it is easier (and cheaper) than nearly any other strategy to implement. In fact, therein lies its chief appeal. The nature of gradualism, however, runs counter to "rapid decisive outcomes." It can prolong the conflict and ultimately end up costing more in blood, treasure and prestige than other approaches. Gradualism provides opportunities for the enemy to adjust tactics or regenerate losses. Thus, it is rarely perceived (by the military) as acceptable. Suitability, too, is questioned. The basic mechanism of gradualism—that the enemy state can focus on the prospect of future damage in the absence of any substantive pain already inflicted—is suspect. In short, warriors feel that the credibility gap inherent in gradual escalation is too great and that it has little chance of succeeding. It is not suitable.

These concepts bleed over into the subjective criteria. The suitability discussion strongly hints at ineffectiveness: a very low likelihood of any favorable outcome. As to downside risk, military professionals mutely point to Vietnam and the mutually reinforcing and destructive cycles

¹¹⁸ Pape, 1.

¹¹⁹ Clausewitz, 598. "...no conquest can be carried out too quickly, and that to spread it over a *longer period* than the minimum needed to complete it *makes it not less difficult, but more*," and on the next page: "Our belief then is that any kind of interruption, pause, or suspension of activity is inconsistent with the nature of offensive war." From Sun Tzu: "Hence what is essential in war is victory, **not prolonged operations**." Sun Tzu, 76.

¹²⁰ Pape, 30 and 31.

of increasingly large indecisive operations coupled with increasing investment of national credibility and prestige. We are all products of our life-shaping events. For today's military leaders, that was the Vietnam War. Their reaction to gradualism is mostly visceral, but genuine and logically justifiable nonetheless. General Short testified that "I'd have gone for the head of the snake on the first night...Milosevic and his cronies would have waked up the first morning asking what the hell was going on."¹²¹ This reflects an unambiguous rejection of gradualism.

Diplomats' Viewpoint

If the mantra of the warrior is "decision," the diplomat's watchword would be "negotiation." The basic role of diplomacy is communication and negotiation with both enemies and allies. With enemies, diplomats facilitate "the reorientation of targeted leaders"¹²² and help overcome various impediments to information transfer. These range from governmental bureaucracy (where subordinates are unwilling to pass bad news or leaders unwilling to hear it), to damage caused during the conflict (where leaders are unable—not necessarily unwilling—to receive or process important information).¹²³ Diplomats do not just convey threats, of course. Alexander George noted that it is equally important that they convey their government's commitment "to keeping its promises if a political settlement is reached."¹²⁴ Their role is to encourage compliance or acceptable compromise, but their view is longer term: beyond merely resolving the current crisis or conflict. Michael Howard posed the central question: "How to persuade the adversary to come to terms without inflicting on him such severe damage as to prejudice all chances of subsequent stability and peace?"¹²⁵ Theirs is the "Big Picture." Strobe Talbot provided an excellent example in an article he wrote about diplomatic efforts in Kosovo. "That does not mean we support Kosovo's independence. Quite the contrary: we feel that secession would give heart to separatists and irredentists of every stripe elsewhere in the region...Greater Albania would be no less anathema to regional peace and stability than Greater Serbia."¹²⁶ Clearly, he—and by

¹²¹ U.S. Congress, 14.

¹²² Sullivan, 58.

¹²³ George, 15.

¹²⁴ George, 85.

¹²⁵ Sullivan, 55.

¹²⁶ Strobe Talbot, "The Balkan Question and the European Answer," U.S. Department of State Dispatch 10, no. 7 (Aug/Sep1999), 4.

extension, the State Department—viewed the Kosovo conflict in a much larger context.

Among allies, diplomats build and bulwark coalitions, enunciating common interests and objectives. Ironically, resolving crises “depends as much on controlling the behavior of one’s allies as it does on influencing the behavior of one’s opponents...[L]esser versions of diplomatic or economic coercion may be necessary to obtain needed compliance.”¹²⁷ Allies, with different interests at stake, are “likely to suffer from the difficulty of achieving multilateral unity on all but the most pressing issues.”¹²⁸ As Kosovo illustrated, this gives rise to the “lowest common denominator” approach. Diplomacy among friends is as important as between enemies.

It is easy to forget the obvious fact that diplomacy usually works. The number of crises resolved by force is far outnumbered by those resolved by negotiation and compromise—those that degenerate to outright war are far fewer still. However, diplomacy by itself is often insufficient. Writing about the Cuban Missile Crisis, George noted that “a purely diplomatic U.S. response might have been interpreted by the Soviet leader as demonstrating irresolution...”¹²⁹ Several authors have written that both the Gulf War and the Kosovo conflict are examples of diplomatic failures, baldly stating that the “Clinton administration never really gave diplomacy a chance in Kosovo” and that the Gulf war “was a stunning failure of America’s policy of trying to deter war.”¹³⁰ In both cases, they argue, diplomatic overtures were not supported by sufficiently credible military or economic coercive power. The traditional view that war begins where diplomacy fails has given way to a much more integrative approach. Contrast Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s comments a few days before Pearl Harbor with those of former Secretary of State George Shultz. Hull, speaking to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, said “I have washed my hands of it, and it is now in the hands of you and Knox- the Army and Navy.”¹³¹ Shultz felt differently. “I am a great believer that strength and diplomacy go together; it is never one or the other. Today foreign policy is a unified diplomatic, military, and intelligence effort that must be tightly integrated- a team approach. It is wrong to say we have gone as far as we can with

¹²⁷ George, 106.

¹²⁸ George, 219.

¹²⁹ George, 112.

¹³⁰ Hartung, 1 and Gordon, xiii. See also Rust, 12 and Christopher Layne and Benjamin Schwarz, “For the Record,” *The National Interest* 57 (Fall 1999), 3.

¹³¹ Donald F. Bletz, *The Role of the Military Professional in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 30.

diplomacy and it's now time for the military option. To do so is to fail.”¹³² The contemporary view is that diplomacy must be tightly coupled to other instruments of power.

This unique worldview often puts the needs of diplomats at odds with those of warriors. Precise mission statements and explicit objectives—the *sine qua none* for military planners—are anathema to diplomats. They prefer flexible bargaining positions and abhor “lines in the sand.” To resort to ultimatum is to border on diplomatic failure. Too, as mentioned above, they have a finely tuned sense of context. The “symmetry hypothesis” proposed by Alan Alexandroff holds that “the behavior of one State may be a major determinant of the behavior of another State in the international system.”¹³³ This means that crude attributes of a state (power, status, and alliance—the three characteristics typically dealt with in the structuralist model of international relations) are much less meaningful than its actions. Diplomats are not exclusively concerned with ends (i.e., resolving any given crisis), but gravely consider ways and means in light of the relationship which will follow regardless of the crisis’ outcome.

This tendency toward relativism has some cultural implications. As the authors of the excellent essay “Defense is from Mars, State is from Venus” put it, “Planning is anathema to most Venutians [diplomats]. They see so many different paths, depending upon how future events will play out, that they are hard-pressed to come up with one plan that they feel has any validity. They generally prefer a more fluid approach that is event-driven.”¹³⁴ Diplomats are comfortable with ambiguity to an extent that most warriors are not. Michael Ignatieff pointed out that “[Richard] Holbrooke rejects the Kissingerian idea of diplomacy as chess. It’s more like jazz, he says, improvisation on a theme.”¹³⁵ The Venutian’s world “is painted gray—very little in it is black or white.”¹³⁶ Finally, rarely are diplomatic issues resolved in a “quantifiable, pragmatic way. Rather, the process of diplomacy is messy, time consuming, chaotic, and the results might be left a bit murky on purpose...”¹³⁷ Bosnia is an excellent case in point. In the Mar/Venus essay, the

¹³² George P. Shulz Secretary of State, 1982 to 1989, Interviewed 13 Apr 1998. See “Defense Is From Mars State Is From Venus: Improving Communications And Promoting National Security” (Anonymous unpublished paper apparently written at the National War College), 2.

¹³³ Alan S. Alexandroff, The Logic of Diplomacy (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), 16.

¹³⁴ “Defense...Mars”, 5.

¹³⁵ Ignatieff, 17.

¹³⁶ “Defense...Mars”, 5.

¹³⁷ “Defense...Mars”, 10.

authors allude to the “constant refrains” heard in Washington and Bosnia that the military mission was a great success, but the civilian side was not. Much of this is attributable to the differing degree of ambiguity in each of the actors’ tasks. Aggregated, these sometimes obvious differences are significant. The desire for policy flexibility, a general disdain for planning, comfort with ambiguous environments and contexts, and ready toleration of inconclusive terminations: in every sense diplomats appear diametrically opposed to warriors.

How, then, do diplomats regard coercion? Objectively, diplomatic coercion is quite attractive. It is certainly feasible—all the more so for diplomats representing “the last remaining super-power” who almost always get to negotiate from positions of strength. This strength includes not only ability to threaten and follow through, but also to induce and follow through. And it spans the DIME. For similar reasons, coercion is acceptable. Since it is so frequently successful (the U.S. does not often resort to force—although some authors note with alarm the apparent increasing frequency over the last decade), it usually entails only modest costs. Even in the recent cases of large-scale hostilities, the costs in treasure (and arguably prestige), while tremendous, were quite bearable and the costs in lives—at the risk of sounding callous—were almost nonexistent. Finally, diplomatic coercion is suitable almost by definition. It accomplishes the mission. Where it fails, either the mission is changed (lesser objectives are sought through negotiation) or—where such changes are impractical or impossible—recourse is made to economic and/or military coercion.

Coercion is equally attractive subjectively. The number of possible outcomes is acknowledged. They can range from the Dayton Accords in Bosnia, generally regarded as a diplomatic triumph, to Desert Storm, equally a military triumph but a failure of diplomatic coercion (although it was complemented by a wonderful case study in coalition building). Nevertheless, each of these outcomes is perceived to be favorable. It is here that the diplomats’ pragmatism and acceptance of compromise and inconclusivity become most evident. Success breeds confidence, and this historically successful approach (typified, in the diplomatic community, by the Cuban Missile Crisis) in most cases shows every indication of producing favorable results in the

future. Confidence is thus high, and the perceived downside is slight. Coercion, for the US, is a low-risk approach.

In transitioning to a discussion of gradualism, it is important to note that there is no diplomatic analog to gradual escalation as there is with coercion in general; “gradual diplomatic escalation” is a meaningless term except to the extent that it indicates increasingly virulent rhetoric. This is more properly classed as use of the informational instrument of power, not diplomacy. Furthermore, such rhetoric is usually directed inward, the intent being to build domestic support for actions or policies. This is politics, not diplomacy. Although, as Holbrooke admitted, “public spin is integral to modern diplomacy,”¹³⁸ it is important to differentiate between actors and their functions or roles, which can change from minute to minute. The Secretary of State emerging from a tense meeting to make a press statement has just transitioned from wielding diplomatic power to informational power. The fact that most high-level actors wear many “hats” makes this task of discernment important, but often difficult. In short, the term “gradualism” refers strictly to the gradual escalation of military power.

Gradualism appeals to diplomats from an objective standpoint. It is certainly feasible: as noted in the last section, almost no strategy is easier to implement. It is definitely worth the costs (especially when confidence in a favorable outcome is very high); in fact, gradualism has the greatest potential to reap huge benefits all out of proportion to effort expended. Diplomats, with their bias toward negotiation, consider gradualism a suitable strategy because it provides more time to explore settlement short of outright defeat. This outlook struggles in a form of cognitive dissonance against conclusions of unsuitability. These were spawned by the Vietnam experience, where “each limited commitment involved the danger of being interpreted as inhibition rather than resolve, thereby encouraging the adversary to continue his climb along the ladder of escalation.”¹³⁹ Although sentiment is somewhat mixed, the utility of gradual escalation in concept is generally accepted by diplomats.

The subjective criteria are less flattering. The range of possible outcomes is immense: the strategy itself does little to constrain enemy options. Since the enemy seeks favorable

¹³⁸ Ignatieff, 27.

¹³⁹ Kissinger, 652.

bargaining positions just as we do, and gradual escalation allows him greater time to wait for one to materialize, the strategy is only marginally effective.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, the downside risks (exemplified by Vietnam) are significant. It is interesting to note, however, that Operation Allied Force may eventually be regarded as an opposing case—one in which gradualism worked. Additional scholarship will provide additional insight into defeat mechanisms (several are currently postulated). The sum of objective and subjective criteria make for an ambivalent, cautious advocacy of gradualism which contrasts sharply with the very favorable standing in which coercion is held.

Politicians' Viewpoint

The policy maker's worldview is one step larger than the diplomat's. He continues the gradual expansion detailed in the past two sections: from myopic focus on a specific crisis (warrior), through crisis in light of prior and subsequent international relations (diplomat), to crisis in its broadest context—one which includes (for U.S. decision makers) the domestic and global economy, domestic and global security considerations, legitimacy, bureaucratic politics and inertia, and public sentiment, just to name a few.¹⁴¹ Three things distinguish this perspective from the others.

First, as the nation's leader, the politician is responsible for determining the thrust of its basic policies. At least two problems complicated this. Contemporary U.S. foreign policy represents a balance of two opposing forces: interests and values, or as Ignatieff phrased it "*realpolitik* against high principle...sovereignty against human rights."¹⁴² This dilemma has characterized every U.S. intervention in recent history. Is it right to force our values on another

¹⁴⁰ George, in his analysis of the Gulf War, wrote that "Even if Saddam Hussein had concluded that Iraq would eventually have to retreat, it was too early to begin to haggle. He could wait to see whether politics in the Arab world would swing to his side..." George, 234.

¹⁴¹ Perhaps the process continues even further. The academic or theoretical viewpoint places crises and their outcomes in a historical context—one even broader than the politicians'. Since the academics have substantial input to the mental models the other actors have (and use) about coercion they can be said to "close the loop," thus creating a system of increasingly broader perspective that ultimately furnishes each actor with feedback (via historical study and new theoretical constructs). This type of broad "systems view" is what Senge advocates in his book. Interestingly, Pape explicitly excluded nearly all of these considerations: "Nonmilitary variables, such as domestic political, organizational, and psychological factors—which can also affect outcomes—are treated as exogenous in order to study the specifically military elements of coercion." Pape, 9.

¹⁴² Ignatieff, 22.

nation? Are human rights *per se* grounds for intervention—even absent UN sanction (and thus, arguably, international legitimacy)? Taking forcible action without such blessing may signal that force, not law, governs. On the contrary, Ignatieff replies, “there are occasions when if force is not used there is no future for law.”¹⁴³ Such a decision presupposes that interests are clearly discernable in a given situation. In the post-Cold War era, such is often not the case, and the ambiguous geo-strategic environment slows decision making. This is nothing new. Joseph Nye pointed out that “Before WWII, confusion was more often the rule.”¹⁴⁴ Leaders now, though, grew up during the Cold War. Consequently, the stability inherent in that bipolar, super-power dominated system forms their experience base. Confusion—ambiguity—is still fairly new to them. The clearest manifestation of this uncertainty is found in the evolutionary nature of policy. Rarely is the “right answer” seized upon, implemented, and stuck to unchanged over a policy’s life span. Instead, as the situation changes, so does the policy. These changes may range from incremental (as with President Johnson’s slide into the Vietnam War) to upheavals (Nixon’s recognition of China).

The second distinguishing characteristic of the politician’s view is its preoccupation with public support. The ubiquity of nearly instantaneous global media complicates the politician’s prioritization process. As Nye put it, “The so-called CNN effect makes it hard to keep items that might otherwise warrant a lower priority off the top of the public agenda.”¹⁴⁵ This is one of several constraints that bound politicians’ actions. Another phenomenon that concerns policy makers is the prestige gap, or “blowback.” Governmental efforts to “sell” foreign policy commitments can lead to “inflated images of the importance of foreign policy interests [which] can trap governments into maintain commitments long after they would have preferred to abandon them.”¹⁴⁶ Building domestic support can drive diplomacy. George identified several functions of ultimatums, which have nothing to do with the bilateral international issue at hand. For instance, an ultimatum might “mobilize domestic opinion, demonstrate bravado, [or] posture at home to improve bargaining

¹⁴³ Ignatieff, 74 and 79.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph S. Nye, “Redefining the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1999), 22.

¹⁴⁵ Nye, 26.

¹⁴⁶ Pape, 22. Alexander George warned that “coercion could backfire and quickly escalate to dangerous levels of even to unanticipated war” if a government failed to take into sufficient account its opponent’s disinclination to yield to demands and motivation to resist. George, 25.

position...”¹⁴⁷ Thus might domestic imperatives drive a sub-optimal diplomatic strategy.

Third, politicians must contend with a system characterized by bureaucratic politics. Governments are not monolithic actors, and “bureaucratic politics and organizational routines can greatly reduce their ability to manage the use of diplomatic and military tools with precision.”¹⁴⁸ There can be a tremendous amount of inertia to overcome, yet compromise—an inescapable reality in politics—risks watering down actions to the point of ineffectiveness. Granted, warriors and diplomats face some of the same challenges, but their organizations are typically more unified (and thus responsive) than the system of competing bureaucracies which characterizes the U.S. national security system. Navigating this process can negatively affect the desired policy. For example, to be effective, coercion requires high levels of credibility. Yet public debate can signal low commitment and significantly reduce credibility. This was the case in 1991, where “important policy makers in the administration were concerned that a divisive congressional debate could persuade Saddam that Washington did not have the political staying power to use force effectively.”¹⁴⁹ The requirement to compromise (and its role in generating support) is illustrated by both the Gulf War and the Kosovo crises, where “the implementation and failure of the sanctions” were “a necessary prelude to rallying the more restrained members of the administration behind more forceful measures.”¹⁵⁰

These factors do little to shape the politician’s view of coercion. His analysis based on the objective criteria is identical to that of the diplomat, with the added weight that domestic factors lend. Coercion is almost always feasible for a superpower and its position of strength. It is nearly always successful at modest cost (especially modest in lives, a fact which has the biggest effect on the public sentiment which is his dominant concern). The same strength that makes coercion feasible makes it suitable. Kosovo showed that prestige, once put at risk, may well be followed by “whatever it takes.”¹⁵¹ Furthermore, the perceived worst case—coercion’s

¹⁴⁷ George, 38. Later, George wrote that “although statesmen may want to choose actions that maximize the likelihood of diplomatic success, domestic political concerns and alliance considerations can constrain the range of tier practical choices.” George, 57.

¹⁴⁸ George, 57.

¹⁴⁹ George, 246.

¹⁵⁰ George, 208.

¹⁵¹ “The spectre of NATO’s military might is made flesh...their determination founded on a simple axiom which is no. less powerful for being a truism: NATO will win because, both corporately and at the level of

abject failure—would leave a nation worse off than had it not tried coercion.¹⁵² Subjectively, the politician's perception of effectiveness and risk hinge on the requirement to compromise. Much as the U.S. presidential election process forces candidates toward the middle, bureaucratic politics force most policies into the main stream. This fact simultaneously constrains the criteria against which effectiveness is measured, increases confidence in eventual attainment of those reduced goals, and mitigates significant downside risk. By precluding unreasonable goals ("shooting for the stars") and requiring "buy in" by all major actors, the structure of the U.S. national security system makes coercion subjectively attractive.

Politicians face difficulty conceptualizing, prioritizing, and implementing virtually every policy decision. Moreover, each of these forces pushes the politician toward gradualism. Ambiguity and the constantly evolving policy it forces, CNN and the prioritization challenges it causes, demonization of the enemy with its risk of blowback, and politics with its requirement to try every other alternative prior to resorting to force—all of them countenance a gradual, cautious approach.¹⁵³ The Vietnam experience is illustrative. "From the standpoint of closely integrating U.S. military and political action," George wrote, "the targeting arrangements offered many advantages."¹⁵⁴ Cruise-missile diplomacy is another more recent example. Gradualism is objectively attractive.

Interestingly, gradual escalation also appeals to politicians subjectively. The most pragmatic of people, they are quite comfortable with the constraints placed on them by the structure of the system in which they operate. They are content to let the national security process define "effective" and rely on it to minimize risk—the same arguments used to support coercion. In cases where the need for action is not obvious and dire, decision-makers are forced to, if not advocate, at least acquiesce to a gradualist strategy. Politicians utilize coercion because they want to. They often adopt gradual escalation as their method because they have to.

individual countries, it can't afford not to." Sion Simon, "Mr Blair does have the will to win," The Spectator 282, no. 8905 (April 10, 1999), 2.

¹⁵² This perception is not necessarily correct. "Unsuccessful coercion can be costly for the victim but disastrous for the instigator" (The German U-boat example). Pape, 1.

¹⁵³ Especially true in cases where tertiary interests are at stake, this observation also applies where higher order interests are involved.

¹⁵⁴ George, 152.

Summary

Each of the stereotypes discussed explored above are necessarily broad and inadequate. There are, of course, different personality types in both the military and the diplomatic corps, for instance. Nevertheless, the dominant characteristics affect the nature of each of those organizations. This exploration into the four actors' views on coercion and gradualism illuminated some important points. First, coercion is favorably regarded by all actors; it is useful and used. It also helped clarify that gradualism is not an *alternative* to coercion, it is a *subset* of it: a method of implementing a coercive policy. Finally, contention hinges on gradualism, which is not favorably regarded by all actors, yet continues to be implemented.

ANALYSIS

Figure 5 portrays the aggregated data from the last section.¹⁵⁵ It highlights a very interesting trend: increasingly favorable regard for gradual escalation shown by the “Y”s creeping across the matrix as one moves down it. Academics cautiously endorse coercion and are ambivalent about gradualism. Warriors advocate coercion but stridently oppose gradualism. Diplomats support coercion and ambivalent about gradualism. Politicians support both coercion and gradualism.

	Coercion		Gradualism	
	Objective	Subjective	Objective	Subjective
Academics	Y	M	Y	N
Warriors	Y	Y	N	N
Diplomats	Y	Y	Y	N
Politicians	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y Yes: indicates support **N** No: does not support

M Maybe: marginal or conditional support

Example: Upper-left “Y” answers
“Do Academics favor coercion objectively?”

Figure 5: Consolidated Results

¹⁵⁵ The raw data is provided in tabular format in the Appendix.

Explanation

The trend maps nicely to the groups' perspectives (that is, the "size of their pictures") presented in the first paragraph of the Politician's section (see page 38 and note 141). Warriors focus on the here and now. They wish to resolve the problem at hand quickly and permanently. Diplomats are concerned with the post-hostilities relationship. Consequently, minimizing application of military force is extremely attractive. Time and lives are less important than not "prejudic[ing] all chances of subsequent stability and peace."¹⁵⁶ Politicians are well aware of the relative power advantage they wield in most situations, understand the imperative for leadership and action, yet are comfortable with the systemic constraints placed on their span of action. This often leads to their supporting gradualism as the only practicable alternative. Focus shifts from specific crisis, to crisis in context of relationship, to crisis in context of domestic and global economies and security. Academics place decisions, policies, and outcomes in time and have a much finer sense of history: what has worked, what hasn't, and how often. That explains their lukewarm support for coercion where the others believe firmly in its efficacy.

Since academics provide the theoretical underpinnings for, and feed the mental models of, the other three groups, it is logical to ask about the wide variance in the gradualism model. All groups have access to the same theoretical material, they share essentially the same formative historical experiences; each group is composed of intelligent, dedicated professionals. Why the differences? Cultural bias has a substantial role. The dominant characteristics outlined in the last section act as filters. Just as different people can look at the same painting or read the same book and walk away with different messages, so it is with members from these groups reading or talking about gradual escalation. In the case of the military, its cultural bias (born primarily of the Vietnam experience) is so strong that it overcomes the more objective and somewhat less negative data that Pape and others provide. Warriors are largely unwilling to change their opinion on gradualism. Politicians, on the other hand, can read and internalize and advocate and believe what they want; restrained as they are by the process they manage, they are unable to change their views. More precisely, politicians are *unable to impose their views* on the system. The disparities are attributable to cultural biases and structural limitations.

Reconciliation

Knowing the source of the disparities, however, does little reconcile them. To help do that, a visual model—that of a high-jumper's or pole-vaulter's bar—is introduced which will carry through the remainder of the monograph. In any conflictive situation, each party faces a range of possible options. They may range from “do nothing” all the way to “annihilate the enemy” and include every gradation in between.¹⁵⁷ This spectrum is portrayed in Figure 6A. For our

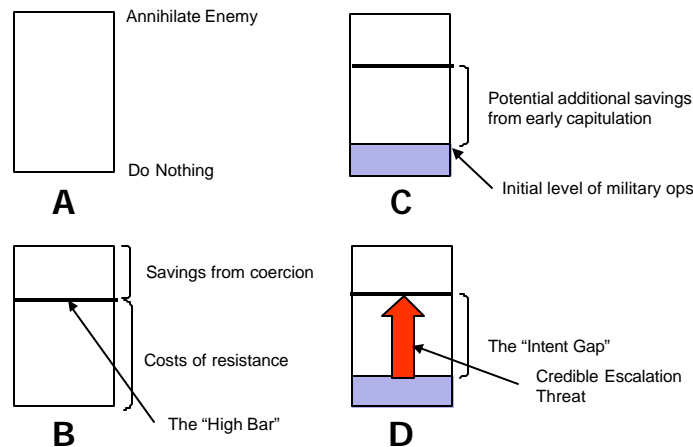


Figure 6: The High-Bar Model

purposes, “do nothing” is ground level; increasing elevation equates to increasing pain inflicted on the enemy. The fundamental decision to be made while formulating a coercive policy is how high to set the “high-bar.” That is, assessing how much pain—death, damage, deprivation, loss of prestige, etc.—the coercer will have to inflict *or threaten to inflict* on the enemy in order for him to bend to its will. Intelligence about the enemy is obviously pivotal. The high-bar, once set, allows visualization of the *minimum* savings realizable by coercion, as well as the costs (to both sides) of resistance. Figure 6B shows these. Setting the high-bar is one of the two major decisions required to formulate every coercive policy.

The life span of a coercive policy may be said to have at least three phases: analysis, implementation, and follow-up. The foregoing discussion focused on analysis, the result of which is the initial high-bar setting. To tie back to our study, it is essential to note that each group would

¹⁵⁶ Sullivan, 55.

¹⁵⁷ Note that not every action may be feasible or practical, but each is possible.

agree with the process so far. Warriors, diplomats, and politicians—while they might take issue with a specific decision (“the bar’s too high” or “initial operations are too modest”)—agree in principle with the process and its objectives. It is in the best interests of all of the groups to fashion a workable coercive policy.

The second decision is made early in the implementation phase and revolves around level of initial military operations. Again, there are many possibilities, but regardless of where the coercing government decides to commence, the enemy feels some level of increased pain. The difference between that level and the high bar determines the potential additional savings realizable from coercion (shown in Figure 6C). This defines the *maximum* savings, which would only materialize with early capitulation. Note that more savings are forfeit the higher this initial level is set. This space—between the level of initial operations and the high-bar—might be labeled the “intent gap.” For coercion to work, it must be filled with a credible escalation threat (see Figure 6D). This is traditionally within the diplomat’s purview. However, modern statecraft utilizes action as well as words and takes place on television as well as in palaces and well-guarded meeting rooms.¹⁵⁸ History has proven, however, the practical difficulty of maintaining credibility as that arrow gets longer.

It is at this point where conflict can arise, because now the differing biases come into play. One can imagine two polar courses of action (COAs) for implementation. On the one hand, the coercing state could commence operations right at the level of the high bar; on the other, initial levels of force would be quite low. The first is characteristic of the warrior’s approach; in the

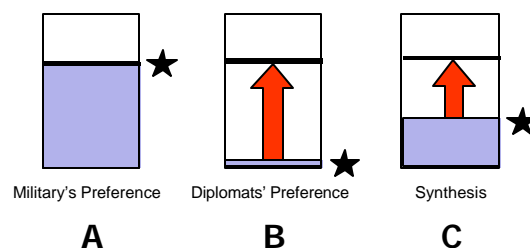


Figure 7: Implementation Options

¹⁵⁸ For a wonderful list of Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) for each arm of the DIME, see Armed Force Staff College, 6-14 to 6-16.

second, of course, one sees the roots of gradual escalation. The latter is congruent with the diplomat's preferences. These options are shown in Figures 7A and 7B, below.

Each option has its advantages and disadvantages. Option A is decisive. It provides the enemy system no time to adapt, requires no additional threat (credibility is contained in the strength of the initial action), and is the cheapest approach if the high-bar is set correctly. Of course, it forfeits all possible additional savings and it is unable to compensate for too high a high-bar setting (that is, it may inflict more damage than necessary). Most important from a practical standpoint, however, is that this COA will simply not be a realistic alternative in many cases. The second option answers all of the objections to the first but sacrifices all of its strengths. Option B is potentially the most efficient approach; it might reap the biggest gains for the least effort. It provides maximum time for a negotiated settlement to emerge, and reduces the chance of excessive force application. Unfortunately, it relinquishes all shock value, permits ample time for the enemy to adapt, and poses a very real credibility challenge. It will likely end up costing more to achieve the desired endstate. By stretching the timeline, it threatens the greatest vulnerability of U.S. policymaking: staying power. The U.S. public's willingness to employ military force for less than vital interests is subject to wide fluctuations. One might argue that Bosnia demonstrates the fallacy of that assertion, and that Kosovo shows that the difficulties inherent in this approach are surmountable. President Bush has begun reducing U.S. presence in Bosnia, however, indicating dwindling domestic support. As to Kosovo, it is indeed an ideal case study for gradualism. It shows why gradual escalation is such an appealing strategy, its inherent protraction, its greater long-term costs, and its propensity for inconclusive (or at least less than optimal) terminations. Options A and B are the thesis and antithesis of our discussion.

Like all such dialectics, this resolves in synthesis (Option C in Figure 7). This approach balances the strengths of its parents while minimizing their weaknesses. It has substantial shock value which supports high credibility. It precludes substantive enemy adaptation and mitigates risk of excessive force, while preserving most opportunities for additional savings. Option C has many apparent advantages. It shares with Option A, however, the substantial issue of political practicality. This is the limit of our reconciliation; nothing but reference to history, logic, theory,

psychology—in short, nothing but education—can breach this barrier. Gradualism is ineffective; overwhelming force is impractical. In crises where diplomatic coercion is inadequate, the sole historically effective strategy is the use of substantial force coupled with credible threat of escalation. Although more difficult to achieve consensus upon than Option B, Option C is a far more powerful long-term strategy.

Coherent policy must follow through. In the third phase of policy, decision makers should plan for “what happens next.” Military planners call this the sequel, which the Army defines as “Major operations that follow the current major operation. Plans for these are based on the possible outcomes (victory, stalemate, or defeat) associated with the current operation.”¹⁵⁹ Policy makers must make analogous plans. They should account for early capitulation, on-time success, and continued defiance at the high-bar. The first requires positioning oneself to take advantages of short-notice, fleeting opportunities for resolution. As Kissinger wrote, “the bargaining position of the victor always diminishes with time. Whatever is not exacted during the shock of defeat becomes increasingly difficult to attain later—a lesson America had to learn with respect to Iraq at the end of the 1991 Gulf War.”¹⁶⁰ Preparation maximizes bargaining power. It is equally important that policy makers be prepared for continued recalcitrance. Here, there are three options: give up (costly in prestige, but certainly not unprecedented), reduce demands, or add resources and raise the bar. All are possible; preparation makes them feasible. This third phase accounts for an implied assumption that has run throughout this discussion: that both sides “agree” on the accuracy of the high bar placement.

Limitation

The high-bar model is far from universally applicable. Its utility is restricted to situations where secondary or tertiary interests are involved and where limited objectives are sought. In such cases, the rational aspect of policy is predominates. The passionate, if not low or absent, is at least manageable. Fortuitously, it is in just such an environment that a theoretical construct has some chance of affecting outcomes.

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 101-5-1: Operational Terms and Graphics (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 30 September 1997), 1-139.

¹⁶⁰ Kissinger, 257.

The model lacks the ability to depict elapsed time, a critical aspect of crisis and conflict. Modulating the rate of increase of pressure is a fundamental element of any strategy other than application of immediate overwhelming force (Option A). Using multiple pictures, tagging each one with a date and time, and associating each increase in the level of military operations with specific actions would suffice, although it is a brute-force, relatively inelegant method.

The model also has limited fidelity. While useful as a visualization tool, it lacks translatability to the “real world” in several domains. First, mapping all contemplated actions onto some objective “pain scale” is problematic (as McNamara found out in Vietnam). This would necessarily be a highly subjective process. Although some actions would obviously fall higher on such a scale than others, fine discrimination would eventually be required. The danger of mirror imaging—projecting our values and culture onto the enemy—lurks everywhere in this problem. There is also the issue of overlap. Seventeen actions taken at a pain level of one do not create a pain level of seventeen. Accounting for the cumulative effects on the enemy system is a daunting challenge, exacerbated by the requirement to minimize collateral damage and the capability of precision engagement.¹⁶¹ The high-bar model is extremely useful, but only in its proper context.

Amplification

Having said that, the high-bar model can help clarify two more issues. So far the discussion has been implicitly restricted to placing military actions on the pain scale, and judging the magnitude of such operations required to achieve desired objectives. Obviously, the range of options open to the coercing state is not restricted to military actions. It includes many that may precede or accompany military operations including vehement protest, recalling ambassadors, and cessation of trade (to name just a few). In other words, effective policy would seek to orchestrate all actions across the DIME to further its ends. These non-military punitive actions have been called “sticks.” Equally obviously, not all actions need be negative; there is an entire class of actions—“carrots”—whose intent is to induce or reward compliance, or overcome other

¹⁶¹ No longer, for instance, is it necessary to lay waste to an electrical power plant to stop it from producing power. Now a half dozen weapons precisely placed can have the same effect with far less damage. Even so, assessing the success or failure of such a strike is fairly simple in the case of the electrical grid. There are many other systems where such assessment is nearly impossible.

barriers to it. Both sticks and carrots can be usefully depicted. This greatly increases the high-bar's utility by making it useful as a holistic, integrative model that simultaneously depicts the effects of otherwise disconnected actions from all instruments of power.

Figure 8 shows the postulated effects of these actions. Sticks, negative actions, bolster military operations and increase their coercive value. Carrots, by rewarding compliance, can reduce the level of pain required to achieve it. Perhaps some of the enemy's requirements have been met, or his commitment reduced. These measures have the net effect of lowering high-bar.

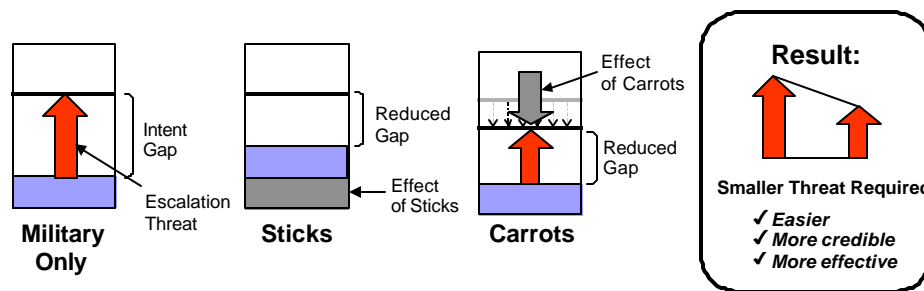


Figure 8: Sticks and Carrots

In any event, the results are identical: a reduced intent gap which requires a smaller threat to fill it. Smaller threats are easier to make (they appeal to a wider group of actors, so consensus is simpler to attain) and they are by definition more credible. As a result, they are more effective. The high-bar model can be used to help visualize the impact each anticipated action has on the objectives and suggest alternatives where an avenue is unavailable or already maximized.

CONCLUSION

The discord apparent in America's strategy in Kosovo and Vietnam stand in stark contrast to the relative harmony of Desert Storm. That is not surprising, as the former two are characterized by gradual escalation, which turns out to be a fault line between the major actors in the national security process and their beliefs. Each group's beliefs are the rational outgrowth of its perspective; nevertheless, they frequently conflict over the implementation of coercive policies. The problem is significant. All of the trends apparent in today's security environment (globalization, ambiguity, reduced time, etc.) drive toward *ad hoc* coalitions which respond to

crises that challenge, not our existence or our well-being, but our values and idealism. In such an environment, coercion plays an important role in international relations.

A framework was proposed within which the four groups interacted—the “size of their picture” (or the contexts which shape their primary concerns). This turned out to also be helpful in organizing the results and highlighted the progression of disparate views regarding gradualism. Next, the high-bar model was introduced to provide a construct within which the divergent views could be reconciled. It, too, turned out to have additional utility in visualizing all actions by each instrument of power and their gross effects on the policy’s objectives. The model has several limitations, but is quite powerful in the correct context.

The monograph has made three small contributions to the professional dialogue. The high-bar model yields both integrative and reconciliatory insights. The study itself can increase sensitivity to (and awareness of) the differing views which might arise around the interagency table when dealing with a crisis. Each of these should help participants in the national security process formulate more coherent, more effective policy in less time and with greater consensus.

	Coercion					Gradualism				
	Objective			Subjective		Objective			Subjective	
	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Effective	Low Risk	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Effective	Low Risk
Academics	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	Y	N	N	N
Warriors	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Diplomats	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	N
Politicians	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y Yes: indicates support **N** No: does not support **M** Maybe: marginal or conditional support

Example: Upper-left "Y" answers "Do Academics consider coercion feasible?"

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