

The US Army and Contemporary Conventional Deterrence

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

The US Army and Contemporary Conventional Deterrence, by MAJ Thomas S. Campbell, 37 pages.

This monograph explores the US Army's role in assisting the joint force in providing conventional deterrence to support the nation's policy objectives. It explains the theoretical foundations of conventional deterrence literature, the components of deterrence, and the distinctions within conventional deterrence literature, including extended deterrence. Providing extended conventional deterrence is a challenge for the United States because of the loss of strength gradient that states the further away from a base a force moves, the weaker it becomes. This monograph examines imperial defense in the British Empire between 1899 and 1914 as a case study of how a global power attempted to apply what is today referred to as extended deterrence. Ultimately, in order to provide effective extended conventional deterrence, the US Army must find ways to minimize the effects of the loss of strength gradient.

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Acronyms

A2AD	Anti-Access/Area Denial
FM	Field Manual
LSG	Loss of Strength Gradient

Introduction

In 1992, defense analysts Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester edited a study titled *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence* for the Strategic Studies Institute. It appraised the applicability of Cold War deterrence theories for the United States in the post-Cold War world.¹ This study concluded that conventional deterrence was no longer subordinate to nuclear deterrence and that it required a new strategy along with “the prudent planning of general purpose forces that are credible and capable of underwriting this new military strategy.”² Today, the United States is emerging from major involvements in Iraq and Afghanistan to find that relative power relationships in the international system have changed. While the US was conducting counterinsurgency on a large scale in Iraq and Afghanistan, potential adversaries were developing increasingly advanced weapons systems to conduct major combat operations, many specifically designed to counter US capabilities. Since the mid-1990s, the United States Army has reduced the number of units and capabilities stationed outside the United States, leaving the majority based within the country and postured for expeditionary operations. Some regions where the United States once had more units forward stationed have become increasingly contested, such as eastern Europe, the Korean Peninsula, and the South China Sea. Many potential adversaries have also developed advanced Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2AD) capabilities, which present challenges to deploying expeditionary forces to certain regions in the event of a conflict. Overall, there are numerous challenges in the contemporary security setting that the US military is not well-structured to meet.

¹ Gary L. Guertner, “Introduction,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, eds. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 1.

² Gary L. Guertner, “Conclusions,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, eds. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 53.

One possible solution to this problem is stationing additional US Army forces in these contested areas. However, stationing and deploying additional forces in contested areas could open up opportunities for other actors to challenge the interests of the United States and its allies in other geographic regions.³ In many US Army planning exercises, large US forces defend or liberate small allied states from the forces of other regional actors. If such a large effort in terms of personnel, material, and time is required in one region, that creates vulnerabilities to US interests in other regions that may have more strategic value or have more belligerent regional actors who seek to reduce the relative power and status of the United States in their geographic region. This vulnerability potentially increases in the event of a conflict since US forces would expend personnel and material in order to terminate that conflict. Additionally, if expeditionary forces from the US are deployed to one region to prevent or terminate a conflict, it is unlikely that they would maintain the ability to shift rapidly to another region in the event of another threat to US interests. These issues present significant challenges to the US Army when considering the composition and posture of the future force. Part of the problem the United States has with conventional deterrence is that it is a global power, trying to maintain influence in all geographic regions, while the majority of potential adversaries are regional powers and therefore able to focus exclusively on a small area and specific set of problems.

This study seeks to determine whether the US Army is properly postured, structured, and enabled with contemporary capabilities to enable the nation to maintain its relative position in the international community, which contains various threats and shifting power structures, by providing credible conventional deterrence in the land domain as part of the joint force. However, it posits that the US Army is not currently postured, structured, and enabled to provide credible conventional deterrence in the land domain as part of the joint force in every region where the

³ Stacy L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783-2011* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012), 87.

relative position of the United States is challenged by the growing threat and power of regional actors.

Robert Haffa, Jr. stated that the purpose of *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence* was to offer “a guide to military strategy in the post-cold war years, but also as a guide to planning the general purpose forces and capabilities the United States and its allies will need to underwrite that theory and strategy.”⁴ Similarly, the purpose of this study is to identify the elements of conventional deterrence theory that are applicable to the US Army and provide recommendations for the structure, positioning, and capabilities it will need to provide conventional deterrence as part of the joint force.

The majority of the literature on deterrence covers deterrence theory in general and does not focus specifically on either nuclear or conventional deterrence. One of the most influential works on the subject of deterrence and conflict is economist Thomas C. Schelling’s *Arms and Influence*. In this work, Schelling explored the ability of states to physically harm other states and the bargaining power they gain from that ability, which he terms the “diplomacy of violence.” Through his examination of the diplomacy of violence, Schelling attempted to determine certain principles in how states utilize this diplomacy and bargaining power.⁵ This work is important for establishing a basis for deterrence theory. Strategic studies scholar Lawrence Freedman examined deterrence theory and provides an overview in his work *Deterrence*. In this work, Freedman developed a framework for thinking about deterrence and argued that “deterrence does not offer a self-contained strategic relationship but is part of a wider set of relationships” and that “conditional threats are a regular form of communication, but usually in concert with other forms,

⁴ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 26.

⁵ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), xiii-xiv. This work was originally published in 1966. It was republished in 2008 with a new preface and afterword, the latter was Schelling’s 2005 Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

and it is their combined impact over time that must be assessed.”⁶ Freedman’s study provides an excellent overview of deterrence theory. Another work that provided an overview of deterrence literature is *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War* by political scientist Austin Long. Long provides a history of the development of deterrence theory in the United States since the end of the Second World War and examples of its implementation. Long stated that this “book is an attempt to examine much of this [deterrence] research for lessons relevant to the current and future strategic environment.”⁷ Long’s study provides significant context for future debates on deterrence theory and policy.

Two other works examine specific aspects of deterrence theory. Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein provide an important work on deterrence theory from a psychological perspective. In their study *Psychology and Deterrence*, the authors argued that “deterrence is fundamentally a psychological theory,” and that it is “based on a series of hidden assumptions about the relationship between power and aggression, threat and response, and the ability of leaders to influence the calculations and behavior of their would-be adversaries.”⁸ This work is important to deterrence literature because it challenges any assumption that actors are rational and follow a prescribed pattern of behavior. Political scientist Paul K. Huth specifically examined extended immediate deterrence in *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War*. Huth developed and tested several hypotheses on extended deterrence through the use of data analysis and historical case studies. The author argued that “a successful policy of extended deterrence requires a fine balance between the preparations to use military force and

⁶ Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 4.

⁷ Austin Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), viii.

⁸ Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), viii.

demonstrations of resolve and the provocation of the potential attacker.”⁹ Huth concluded that “the adoption by the defender of both a firm-but-flexible position in negotiations and a policy of tit for tat in military escalation contributed substantially to the success of deterrence.”¹⁰ Overall, these works are important because they closely examine specific aspects of deterrence theory.

While most of the current literature covers deterrence theory in general, two important works cover conventional deterrence specifically, *Conventional Deterrence* by John J. Mearsheimer and *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence* by Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester, mentioned previously. Most of this literature focuses on Europe, specifically western Europe during the Cold War. However, there is some examination of deterrence in the Middle East, specifically case studies that examine conventional deterrence between Israel and Egypt prior to the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Mearsheimer examined conventional deterrence and studied the previously mentioned cases along with others in his study. Mearsheimer argued that “deterrence is a direct function of specific military strategies” and “that strategy depends, in part, on an assessment of both the balance of forces and the type of weapons available to each side.”¹¹ The author focused on armored warfare and identified three basic approaches conventional forces utilize: attrition, blitzkrieg, and limited aims.¹² Mearsheimer went on to state that “in the final analysis the degree of risk that an attacker is willing to assume is determined by political considerations, the possibility of conventional deterrence is ultimately a function of the relationship between military calculations and the political considerations that drive a nation to consider war.”¹³ The author concluded that

⁹ Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 200.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹¹ John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 28.

¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 66.

“deterrence is likely to hold when a potential attacker is faced with the prospect of employing an attrition strategy, largely because of the associated exorbitant costs and because of the difficulty of accurately predicting ultimate success in a protracted war.”¹⁴ Mearsheimer pointed out that “the possibility of becoming engaged in a long, costly war, even if success could be guaranteed, is a powerful deterrent to military action.”¹⁵ These studies are important in applying deterrence theory to conventional forces and strategies.

This study follows a similar structure to that of *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, which studied the foundations of deterrence theory, examined some historical cases, and offered recommendations on the future of conventional deterrence. The first section of this study examines deterrence theory. The second section explores how the British Empire used deterrence to ensure their security and further their foreign policy aims following the South African War (1899-1902) until the beginning of the First World War in 1914.¹⁶ The third section examines the current position of the United States in the international community and applies conventional deterrence theory to current US challenges by examining conventional deterrence in US Army doctrine. The final section concludes the study and provide recommendations for how the US Army can provide credible conventional deterrence in the land domain as part of the joint force. This study specifically examines the US Army’s role in contributing to conventional deterrence as part of the joint force in key theaters in the contemporary security environment. Additionally, while most theorists agree that military force is just one part of the overall deterrence equation, this study focuses exclusively on conventional deterrence. Finally, while this study does not examine maritime power specifically, it is important to understand that naval power and secure sea lines of communication are important to transporting and maintaining units away from the continental United States.

¹⁴ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 207.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The British would have used the term ‘imperial defense’ rather than extended deterrence.

Theoretical Foundations of Conventional Deterrence

Deterrence is an important part of US national strategy and must remain so in the future. The Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy states that the US must deter aggression in several key areas across the globe, thereby identifying deterrence as an important concept for the US Army to understand.¹⁷ In a discussion on the foundation of deterrence theory, economist Thomas C. Schelling stated that “violence is most purposive and most successful when it is threatened and not used.”¹⁸ One of the reasons it is better to threaten than to use violence is that war requires the expenditure of military force; it will be “consumed in use.”¹⁹ In an age when military equipment and professional forces are increasingly expensive, it is important from a resource standpoint to use force only when necessary. Additionally, defense analyst Robert Haffa, Jr. stated that “the primary function of military force should be to prevent its reciprocal use by one’s opponents.”²⁰ Therefore, for the US to try and maintain its current position in the international community, it must maintain the ability to deter potential adversaries.

Specifically, conventional forces and capabilities have been important for deterrence, especially since the end of the Cold War. Thomas C. Schelling stated that “With nuclear weapons available, the restraint of violence cannot await the outcome of a contest of military strength; restraint, to occur at all, must occur during war itself.”²¹ This assertion, along with the current state of the international system, signals that even given the existence of nuclear weapons,

¹⁷ US Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 6.

¹⁸ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 10.

¹⁹ Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 196.

²⁰ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 7.

²¹ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 20.

conventional forces will be vital for fighting and winning wars in the foreseeable future because restraint is needed when dealing with nuclear weapons and their destructive potential. While the nuclear deterrent remains important and necessary, conventional forces will be essential for deterring regional adversaries around the globe.

In order to determine whether or not the US Army is currently postured, structured, and enabled to provide conventional deterrence as part of the joint force, it is important to establish the theoretical foundations of conventional deterrence. Schelling stated that the word “deter” essentially means “to turn aside or discourage by fear” or “to prevent from action by fear of consequences.”²² In discussing the definition of deterrence, political scientist John J. Mearsheimer stated that “deterrence broadly defined is ultimately a function of the relationship between the perceived political benefits resulting from military action and a number of nonmilitary as well as military costs and risks.”²³ International relations scholar Robert Jervis described deterrence as what happens when “states try to persuade others that starting a war is foolish.”²⁴ Lawrence Freedman stated that deterrence is a form of coercive diplomacy, which “involves the purposive use of overt threats of force to influence another’s strategic choices.”²⁵ Several scholars at the RAND Corporation have described the purpose of deterrence as “the generation of fear.”²⁶ In essence, deterrence is about affecting the potential adversary’s risk, or cost and benefit calculations. However, political leaders and decision-makers make the calculations differently based on their psychology. In addressing the psychological aspects of deterrence, Huth and Russett stated that “motivation, commitment, and resolve are in some part a

²² Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 71.

²³ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 14.

²⁴ Jervis, Lebow, and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*, 2.

²⁵ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 26.

²⁶ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 7.

matter of the ‘psychology’ of the decision-maker.”²⁷ Jervis stated that “the effects of threats often differ from those posited by deterrence theory and expected by statesmen because people process information and reach decisions in different ways.”²⁸ While different decision-makers react to fear, process signals, and make calculations in different ways, they still make calculations based on perceived cost, benefit, and risk. Conventional deterrence might affect those calculations utilizing non-nuclear capabilities or, as Mearsheimer stated, “a function of the capability of denying an aggressor his battlefield objectives with conventional forces” and that it is linked to battlefield outcomes.²⁹ This study utilizes the definition of conventional deterrence put forward by Robert P. Haffa, Jr. He stated that conventional deterrence is a “policy that seeks to persuade an adversary, through the threat of military retaliation, that the costs of using military force to resolve political conflict will outweigh the benefit.”³⁰ Since conventional deterrence involves the adversary’s cost/benefit calculations, both the potential attacker and defender’s viewpoints must be considered. Mearsheimer stated that “conventional deterrence is a function of the capabilities of both sides. The attacker primarily wants to know, not whether there will be a response, but rather how effective it is likely to be.”³¹ Jervis stated that “deterrence requires both understanding the other side’s view of the state and predicting its view of the state’s policy.”³² Therefore, military capabilities and the perceptions of threats on both sides are important to deterrence calculations.

²⁷ Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, “What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980,” *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 502.

²⁸ Jervis, Lebow, and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*, 2.

²⁹ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 15.

³⁰ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 7.

³¹ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 19.

³² Jervis, Lebow, and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*, 30.

Components of Deterrence

Along with defining conventional deterrence, Robert P. Haffa, Jr. identified three components of deterrence which can be applied to both nuclear and conventional deterrence. The first component is capability. Haffa defined capability as “the acquisition and deployment of military forces able to carry out plausible military threats to retaliate.”³³ The second component is credibility, which is defined as “the declared intent and believable resolve to protect a given interest.”³⁴ This description, however, only examines one side of credibility in deterrence. Credibility is also an important part of reassurance, which means that “the threatened harm will not be implemented if deterrence holds.”³⁵ Thomas Schelling stated that “the threatened penalty and the proffered avoidance or reward need to be credible.”³⁶ If reassurance is not credible, it can lead to a security dilemma where the states involved fear the defection by another state.³⁷ According to Long, “credibility is the linchpin of deterrence.”³⁸ Long also stated that “reputation was posited very early as a source of credibility,” and goes on to point out that “reputation must be managed with one’s allies as well as one’s adversaries. The politics of alliance were as important to deterrence as any other element.”³⁹ The last component is communication, which is “relaying to the potential aggressor, in an unmistakable manner, the capability and will to carry out the deterrent threat.”⁴⁰ Other authors also point out the importance of capability and

³³ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 8.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 10.

³⁶ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 75.

³⁷ Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978): 167.

³⁸ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 10-11.

³⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁰ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L.

credibility in deterrence. RAND Corporation analyst Austin Long stated that “Like all forms of coercion and threat, it (deterrence) requires two elements: the credible capability to harm and the credible intent to carry out this harm.”⁴¹ However, communication is often ignored as a component of deterrence. Communication is essential in deterrence because the defender must communicate its capability and credibility to potential adversaries. Since deterrence involves affecting the cost/benefit calculation of potential adversaries, the defender must take steps to ensure its capability and credibility are understood by those potential adversaries. Therefore, the defender must make communication a component of deterrence. Overall, these three components are important in analyzing any strategy that relies primarily on deterrence.

While deterrent signals are normally formulated at higher levels of government as part of national policy, these three components are also important at lower levels as well. The operational artist, defined as “the person tasked with both the authority and responsibility to decide and order the ways in which the means will be employed within the defined policy aim,”⁴² may not be able to affect strategic communications about the credibility of certain threats, but must be aware of these three components to ensure actions at the tactical or operational level do not erode the nation’s credibility or communication regarding certain signals. The operational artist must ensure military forces have the capability to carry out the threat and must communicate the threat appropriately as part of national policy. This is essential to reinforce the credibility of the threat.

Distinctions in Deterrence Literature

Deterrence theory is a broad topic so there are several distinctions within the literature. First, the defender can threaten to impose costs on the attacker either through punishment or

Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 8.

⁴¹ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 8.

⁴² G. Stephen Lauer, “The Tao of Doctrine: Contesting an Art of Operations,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 82, (3rd Quarter 2016): 122.

denial. According to Mearsheimer, deterrence through punishment involves “threatening to destroy large portions of an opponent’s civilian population and industry.”⁴³ On the other hand, deterrence through denial “requires convincing an opponent that he will not attain his goals on the battlefield.”⁴⁴ RAND Corporation analyst Austin Long explored the logic of deterrence through denial: “what enemy would start a war if it knew for certain that the war would not achieve its aims?”⁴⁵ This echoes Clausewitz’s statement that “No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.”⁴⁶ Security analyst Michael S. Gerson stated that “There is an important difference between the threat to merely deny a rapid victory and the threat to completely defeat the opponent.”⁴⁷ While this is important to note, this distinction will be subsumed into deterrence by denial because less conventional force is necessary to deny and a state must have forces in place to deny before it allocates additional forces to be able to defeat an opponent. In the past, deterrence through punishment has been associated with nuclear weapons and deterrence through denial associated with conventional weapons and military forces.⁴⁸ However, some analysts believe that advances in weapons systems allow conventional forces to punish a potential adversary, likely through the use of precision weapons to target military and political leadership.⁴⁹ Therefore, this study considers both deterrence through punishment and denial.

⁴³ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁵ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 10.

⁴⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Peter Paret and Michael Howard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 579.

⁴⁷ Michael S. Gerson, “Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age,” *Parameters* 39, no. 3 (Autumn 2009): 40.

⁴⁸ Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 15.

⁴⁹ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 19; Gerson, “Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age,” 37.

Another important distinction found in deterrence scholarship is one between general and immediate deterrence. Lawrence Freedman defines immediate deterrence as “a relationship between opposing states where at least one side is seriously considering an attack while the other is mounting the threat of retaliation in order to prevent it.”⁵⁰ He goes on to clarify that “Deterrence at a time of crisis, a severe emergency when time is short and passions are high, involves immediate deterrence.”⁵¹ On the other hand, general deterrence is not tied to a specific crisis. These two concepts are not mutually exclusive. A state can practice general deterrence in several regions while practicing immediate deterrence in one region in order to address a specific threat or crisis. These concepts are important when examining where a force is postured or based and how expeditionary it is.

There is also an important distinction between central and extended deterrence. Central deterrence focuses exclusively on a state’s sovereign territory or national homeland while extended deterrence is the extension of a state’s deterrent capability to its allies.⁵² This distinction is important because, according to Lawrence Freedman, “central deterrence was assumed to enjoy a higher credibility than extended deterrence.”⁵³ Similarly, Thomas C. Schelling stated that “the difference between the national homeland and everything ‘abroad’ is the difference between threats that are inherently credible, even if unspoken, and the threats that have to be made credible.”⁵⁴ Analyst Austin Long stated that “geography makes the use of force easier, so a nearby threat is more credible than a distant one.”⁵⁵ However, credibility is not the only issue when it comes to extended deterrence. Political scientist Paul K. Huth, in a work focused

⁵⁰ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 40.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁴ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 36.

⁵⁵ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 11.

exclusively on extended deterrence, stated that “A potential attacker, however, may find it difficult to estimate what military capabilities of a defender can be extended to the defense of an ally located hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away.”⁵⁶ In discussing the calculations of a potential adversary, Huth wrote that:

In situations where the ally is located at some distance from the defender a potential attacker may also question whether the defender can actually deploy adequate military forces in a timely fashion. Thus, even if the potential military strength of the defender is acknowledged, an attacker may still reason that the power of the defender cannot be translated into effective strength quickly enough to prevent the attacker from attaining its immediate goals through the use of military force.⁵⁷

Since securing allies in regions throughout the world is a national security objective, the US must engage in extended deterrence and provide both a credible and capable deterrent. For the US Army to contribute to conventional deterrence as part of the joint force, it must have a competent expeditionary capability. Additionally, potential adversaries must recognize this expeditionary capability.

There are several issues that make extended deterrence complicated. Long stated that “Ultimately, making extended deterrence fully credible may simply be impossible.” He continued, with respect to the Cold War and its aftermath, “extended deterrence appears to have succeeded in keeping the peace for decades, weathering crises and shifts in the balance of power.”⁵⁸ Huth and fellow political scientist Bruce Russett stated that extended deterrence is “a more precarious and demanding task than that of deterring a frontal attack on oneself.”⁵⁹ Diplomatic ties are also important to extended deterrence. In their analysis of extended deterrence in the first eight decades of the twentieth century, Huth and Russett concluded that “successful deterrence is very much more than just a matter of having a favorable military balance, and very

⁵⁶ Huth, *Extended Deterrence*, 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁸ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 15.

⁵⁹ Huth and Russett, “What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980,” 496.

much a matter of the nature and the extent of ties between the defender state and the state it wishes to protect.”⁶⁰ Distance is another important factor when considering extended deterrence. Economist Kenneth E. Boulding noted the importance of distance in international conflict in his work *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* where he identified the law of diminishing strength, also referred to as the Loss of Strength Gradient (LSG), which can be summed up in the phrase “the further, the weaker.”⁶¹ He states that “the further from home any nation has to operate, the longer will be its lines of communication, and the less strength it can put in the field.”⁶² The law of diminishing strength affects the capability of a military force, which subsequently affects the credibility of a state’s deterrent threats. This is another reason why extended deterrence is a challenge in international relations.

One important question respective conventional deterrence is exploring how a state can maintain that perception of power without fighting a war. Similarly, how can a defending state affect a potential aggressor state’s cost-benefit calculation without having fought a recent war? According to Haffa, it is unlikely that conventional deterrence will always succeed. Instead, he stated that “it will be necessary to use the force in order for it to deter.” He goes on to assert that conventional deterrence will “inevitably break down on occasion, but such occasions provide the opportunity to demonstrate the price of failure, and rejuvenate the credibility of conventional deterrence, thereby contributing to a new period of stability.”⁶³ These two statements are applicable in the current international security environment and will be in the future. While it is important to have up-to-date military capabilities in order to prosecute a conflict successfully, a

⁶⁰ Huth and Russett, “What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980,” 497.

⁶¹ Kenneth E. Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (New York, NY: Harper and Sons, 1962), 231.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 231.

⁶³ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 26.

states must also prove their commitment, which may come in the form of fighting a war. Political scientists Alexander George and Richard Smoke stated that “the requirements for implementing deterrence are much less a matter of acquiring, proving possession of, or using raw military capabilities than a matter of demonstrating concern, motivation, and commitment.”⁶⁴ Similarly, Robert Jervis pointed out that deterrence is never final and that “the challenger need not accept a temporarily adverse military balance as final.”⁶⁵ Jervis noted that defenders can be surprised by an attacker’s actions since those actions “gain surprise because they are implausible; they are implausible because there are good reasons for not carrying them out.”⁶⁶ Therefore the US Army, while thinking and planning for conventional deterrence, must maintain its ability to achieve military victory. It is likely that despite the best efforts of military planners and diplomats, deterrence will break down. In that case, the US Army and its allies would have to achieve military victory in order to re-establish credible deterrence in the future.

While the development of deterrence theory as we know it today began in earnest during the Cold War, states have been using conventional deterrence for much of history since it is a form of coercive diplomacy. However, it depends on how a potential adversary perceives threats and how a defender communicates them because, as Schelling states, “the object of a threat is to give someone a choice.”⁶⁷ Ultimately, deterrence is a form of coercion focused on convincing a potential adversary to adhere to the status quo. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain used military force to try and maintain the status quo in the international system.

⁶⁴ Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 52.

⁶⁵ Jervis, Lebow, and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*, 20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁷ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 74.

Imperial Defense in the British Empire 1899-1914

Contemporary researchers, searching for examples of conventional deterrence, have projected the concept into earlier eras, though the theory we now use was not then current. This monograph follows this literature, making use of the projection of the concept of deterrence into earlier historical eras before this contemporary concept was in use. Austin Long asserted that deterrence is not a new concept and examples of conventional deterrence can be found in history as far back as the Peloponnesian Wars.⁶⁸ One example of deterrence in history that could be relevant to the United States today is how the British Empire utilized the concept of deterrence following the South African War and leading up to the First World War. In the South African War (also referred to as the Anglo-Boer War or 2nd Boer War), it took the world's most powerful empire three years to finally subdue two small states of farmers and miners in the southern tip of Africa. Even though the British were ultimately successful in prosecuting the war against the Boers, historian Piers Brendon stated that "the South African conflict was the greatest catastrophe to overtake the Empire since the loss of the American colonies."⁶⁹ Once Britain emerged from the South African War and some of the other smaller imperial conflicts during that time, they faced increasing pressure from other great powers, notably France, Germany, Russia, and even the United States. The British experience bears some resemblance to that of the United States following Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. Those operations saw the United States, the world's only superpower, struggle to subdue insurgencies in small states which were generally poorly developed.⁷⁰ Additionally, as the United States moves on from those conflicts, it is faced with challenges from competing states, such as

⁶⁸ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 5.

⁶⁹ Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire: 1781-1997* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 219-220.

⁷⁰ Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, 1. This analogue between the British Empire following the South African War and the United States after Operation Iraqi Freedom is similar to the analogue made by Edward Luttwak between the Roman Empire and the United States after the Vietnam War.

China and Russia. This section begins with an overview of the South African War and British foreign policy from that conflict until the beginning of the First World War in 1914. Deterrence following the South African War is evaluated in terms of the components of deterrence: capability, credibility, and communication, followed by a section conclusion.

Overview

Most observers expected the conflict between the British Empire and the Boer states in Southern Africa should have been decided quickly in favor of the British, if one was to only count numbers of soldiers and armaments available to each side globally at the beginning of the conflict. Historian Paul Knaplund compared the war between the Boers and the British Empire to the Biblical struggle between David and Goliath.⁷¹ However, this war was costly for the British in terms of manpower, material, and treasure. Historian Lawrence James stated that “Britain’s largest imperial war had cost 200 million pounds and had witnessed the mobilization of 295,000 soldiers, which was evidence of the lengths the government was prepared to go to uphold paramourcy in South Africa.”⁷² The financial cost of the war turned out to be over twenty-two times the original estimate.⁷³ The financial costs and blow to Britain’s international prestige from the South African War forced Britain to rethink its approach to imperial defense and the long-established policy of splendid isolation.

During and following the South African War, the Britain faced a number of challenges in ensuring the security of the home islands and the Empire.⁷⁴ The main geopolitical problem the British faced following the South African War was maintaining its position relative to the other

⁷¹ Paul Knaplund, *The British Empire: 1815-1939* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), 448.

⁷² Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 268.

⁷³ Marc M. Yakutiel, “Treasury Control and the South African War, 1899-1905” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1989), 266.

⁷⁴ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), 251.

established and emerging great powers, and it had to do so on a global scale. Historian Paul Kennedy stated that “British statesmen had to engage in a diplomatic and strategical juggling act that was literally worldwide in its dimensions.”⁷⁵ In this security environment, the Royal Navy’s task was to prevent an enemy battle fleet from breaking out of the English Channel or North Sea and attacking British shipping, which would inhibit Britain’s ability to intervene on the European continent.⁷⁶ The British Admiralty’s primary concern was defense of its home waters. Additionally, in accordance with its two-power standard, where the Royal Navy had to be larger than the next two maritime powers, the Admiralty estimated in 1900 that it would have to match the fleets of France and Germany.⁷⁷ The Royal Navy had to keep the sea lines of communication open to supply the home islands and in order for the British Army to conduct land operations on the continent to prevent the conquest of Europe by another great power and maintain the balance of power on the continent. Darwin stated that “In a period of relative economic decline, the strain of upholding a worldwide pre-eminence and safeguarding the regional security of the British Isles had become too great. Over-extension abroad and under-performance at home forces strategic change.”⁷⁸ Both the Royal Navy and the British Army “could not be strong everywhere.” In terms of the army, Kennedy stated that “it was a juggling act carried out in military terms, by the transfer of battalions from Aldershot to Cairo, or from India to Hong Kong, to meet the latest emergencies – and yet all this had to be done by a small-scale volunteer force that had been completely eclipsed by mass armies on the Prussian model.”⁷⁹ This strategic change included

⁷⁵ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 227.

⁷⁶ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), 329-330.

⁷⁷ Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914*, 251. It should be noted that the British decided to exclude the United States from this calculation.

⁷⁸ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System 1830-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 262.

⁷⁹ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 227-228.

equipping and structuring the army to fight other European powers as opposed to occupying and defending colonial possessions across the empire. After the Boer War, there was discussion within the British Army that it should focus on the maintenance of the continental balance of power.⁸⁰ Historian Keith Neilson stated that “no other European power had an empire that posed such serious defense issues as did the British Empire. For most of the nineteenth century, and, arguably, even until 1914, the defense of India was the major issue for those who dealt with British defense policy.”⁸¹ Neilson goes on to point out that “as the South African conflict and the quarrels in 1898 with France at Fashoda and with Russia over China made evident, imperial involvements could both create opposition from the Great Powers and paralyze British foreign policy in Europe.”⁸² Overall, Britain had to utilize extended deterrence not to protect allies, but to protect its imperial possessions.

Capability

The South African War affected the capability of British forces, especially their ability to react to other contingencies around the empire. Historian John Darwin wrote that “With their army and reserves tied down in South Africa, and a long oceanic supply line to guard, (British) ministers could only hope that no emergency arose in the defense of India or of British interests in the ethnic cauldron of the Near East.”⁸³ He wrote that “a long war in South Africa was a strategic luxury that London could ill afford.”⁸⁴ Further, “During the war, the concentration of so much military manpower in South Africa made the defense of India (the first object of imperial grand strategy) look increasingly precarious.”⁸⁵ The South African War also called into question

⁸⁰ Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914*, 253.

⁸¹ Keith Neilson, “Great Britain,” in *War Planning, 1914*, ed. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 176.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 247.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

the fighting ability of the British Army. Darwin stated that “The defeats of ‘Black Week’ in December 1899 shattered any remaining complacency about the likely performance of the Army in a war against a first-class opponent.”⁸⁶ The British Army was initially not capable of defeating the Boer forces, and the other powers at the time took notice.

Following the South African War, the British Army attempted to contribute to imperial defense in the land domain by increasing its overall numbers and providing more forces to India to support what Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief in India, “declared essential to repel an invasion brought closer by Russia’s new strategic railways in Central Asia.”⁸⁷ However, they were unable to increase the strength of the army to levels requested by Kitchener. There were some proposals to begin peacetime conscription, but those did not succeed due to domestic political reasons. Darwin stated that those proposals were a fantasy and that “no British government would then have dared impose it in peacetime.”⁸⁸ Similarly, Neilson asserts that “without conscription, such numbers as Kitchener argued were necessary could not be raised, and conscription was an unacceptable political option.”⁸⁹ This was an issue because the British Army faced several threats at once. Historian Aaron L. Friedberg stated that “Instead of one critical frontier and one enemy (like France) or even two of each (like Germany), England and its imperial possessions presented many, widely separated points of possible ground attack.”⁹⁰ Due to the nature of these challenges and the lack of overland lines of communication, the British Army relied on the Royal Navy to transport it to trouble spots and maintain its supply. However, Britain could not move men and equipment immediately to trouble spots, so planners had to

⁸⁶ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 258. “Black Week” was a series of British defeats at the hands of the Boer forces during December 1899 when British forces attempted to relieve several sieges.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁸⁸ Darwin, *Unfinished Empire*, 329.

⁸⁹ Keith Neilson, “Great Britain,” in *War Planning, 1914*, ed. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 179.

⁹⁰ Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 273.

station adequate troops at each imperial outpost to hold out until reinforcements arrived, but had to ensure that too many troops were not fixed and unavailable for operations in other parts of the empire.⁹¹ While this was a challenge for the army, naval power and transport played an important role in the army's ability to respond to crises and supply forces away from home bases. The British were able to reduce the effects of the loss of strength gradient (LSG) with the Royal Navy and its worldwide bases. During and in the aftermath of the South African War, the Royal Navy had to contend with challenges to its naval supremacy from France, Russia, and Germany in different areas of the globe.⁹²

In the aftermath of the South African War, the British Army, in addition to its commitment defending the empire, also had to prepare for a conflict against other great powers on the European continent. Darwin stated that "Britain's army, like her navy, now seemed to be focused not on the defense of a far-flung empire, but on deterring a German bid for primacy in Europe."⁹³ He pointed out that "the Army had been remodeled for convenient deployment on the European mainland, almost unthinkable before 1900."⁹⁴ Similarly, Neilson stated that "the defense of India was not the only issues for the British Army. From the turn of the century, it also had an increasing interest in a continental commitment."⁹⁵ Historian Tim Travers discussed this transition. He stated that "the [British] army in the period 1900-1914 was going through a particularly anxious transitional phase. It was developing from a small volunteer force, geared to the defense of empire and the waging of small colonial wars toward a much larger- scale force (later conscripted), capable of waging continental war, competent in staff work and the handling

⁹¹ Friedberg, *The Weary Titan*, 274.

⁹² Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 259.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Keith Neilson, "Great Britain," in *War Planning, 1914*, ed. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 180.

of modern weapons.”⁹⁶ The various challenges that Britain faced during and after the South African War led the British Army to try and develop the capability to support operations in continental Europe and in defense of India and its other colonies.

Credibility

Credibility was an important factor the British government considered when making decisions about the South African War and strategy in its aftermath. The British saw success against the Boers in South Africa as critical to maintaining the credibility of their power and future threats. James states that “In a sense, Britain had been defending the imperial status quo, which from 1895 onwards appeared imperiled by the Transvaal’s bid for independence and German meddling.” James goes on to point out that “to have ignored both would have been to admit weakness, which would have been unthinkable at a time when Britain was under pressure from France, Germany, and Russia, who were challenging her position elsewhere in Africa and in the Far East. The [South-African] war was, in international terms, a demonstration of Britain’s imperial will and determination to retain global power, whatever the cost.”⁹⁷ The British demonstrated their credibility in defending their imperial possessions by successfully concluding the South African War.

Communication

Britain also had to effectively communicate its capability and credibility to other states and potential challengers. The South African War provided an opportunity for Britain to communicate its capability and credibility. However, Britain was not involved in any major wars between the South African War and the First World War. Therefore, communication had to take place through diplomacy and military demonstrations. From the perspective of diplomacy prior to

⁹⁶ Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, The Western Front & The Emergence of Modern War 1900-1918* (South Yorkshire, England: Pen and Sword Books, 2009), 4.

⁹⁷ James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, 268.

the First World War, political scientist Sean M. Lynn-Jones argued that “British leaders did not want to appear to provoke Germany and thus failed to take early steps to deter German moves that led to war.”⁹⁸ As it relates to credibility and communication, Lynn-Jones stated that British actions “fostered false German hopes that Britain would remain neutral in a continental war, thereby encouraging Germany to adopt policies fraught with the risk of such a conflict.”⁹⁹ From the military perspective, communication during this period was a challenge. Britain kept its intention to support France in case it was attacked by Germany secret, including its plans to send 160,000 soldiers to the Franco-Belgian frontier. This could have been communicated to Germany as a deterrent threat, but the British government wanted to keep its public unaware of any potential commitments on the continent.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, Britain was losing its relative preeminence in terms of industrial and commercial power in the world. Kennedy states that “nothing frightened the thinking British imperialist more than this relative economic decline, simply because of its impact upon British power.”¹⁰¹ This was important because British imperial strength rested on its economic power.¹⁰² Economic and military capability are important in terms of communication because other states can observe a state’s industrial and commercial power and determine its relative position and led to challenges by less mature powers.¹⁰³ Communication is how one state informs potential challengers of its capability and commitment. Britain faced challenges in communication after the South African War since there were no opportunities to demonstrate its capability and credibility in a conflict or exercise, while it kept its intention to send an expeditionary force to support France in case of a German attack secret.

⁹⁸ Sean M. Lynn-Jones, “Détente and Deterrence: Anglo-German Relations, 1911-1914,” *International Security* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 124.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, 339.

¹⁰¹ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 228.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 231-232.

Imperial defense played a major role in British decision-making during the South African War and in its aftermath, especially in terms of the capability of its armed forces. The conduct of the war, especially Black Week, called into question the capability of the British Army, which it had to regain in the years following in order to deter threats to India and deter other great powers from attempting to conquer Europe. The British government determined it was important to successfully conclude the South African War to demonstrate its credibility to the other powers, especially in light of imperial conflicts in other parts of Africa and the world. Finally, communication of its capability and credibility were lacking, especially towards Germany prior to the First World War. However, Britain did have some advantages when it came to imperial defense during this time period. Kennedy stated that “the vast increases in the Royal Navy, equal in power to the next two largest fleets” and that their “unparalleled network of naval bases and cable stations around the globe” were both indicators of British strength. Since there are certain similarities between the international position of Britain after the South African War and the United States after its involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important to understand how the British used imperial defense to ensure the safety and security of its empire.

Applying Deterrence Theory to Current US Challenges

The US Army faces a number of challenges in the contemporary security environment which will make it hard to deter potential adversaries. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, David Ochmanek, a senior researcher for the RAND Corporation, described many of these challenges. He stated that “the security environment in which US forces are operating and for which they must prepare is, in important ways, more complex and more demanding than the familiar post-Cold War world in which most of us have formed our expectations about what constitutes an appropriate level of investment in military power.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ David Ochmanek, “Recommendations for a Future National Defense Strategy,” *Testimony before the US Senate Armed Services Committee* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017). 4.

Similarly, the *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy* states that “We are facing increased global disorder, characterized by decline in the long-standing rules-based international order – creating a security environment more complex and volatile than any we have experienced in recent memory.”¹⁰⁵ In his testimony, Ochmanek described four geographic areas where the US faces its biggest challenges. These include eastern Europe, with Russia as the primary threat; the South China Sea, with China and its rapidly modernizing armed forces as the primary threat; the Korean Peninsula, with North Korea as the primary threat; and finally, the Middle East, with Iran, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Al Qaeda as the threats.¹⁰⁶ Many of the actors in these key theaters made significant upgrades to their conventional capabilities since 2001. This is important because during the same time frame, the US Army was focused primarily on fighting counterinsurgency warfare as opposed to large-scale, interstate warfare. As a result, the capability gap between the US Army and its opponents in large-scale combined arms maneuver warfare has steadily shrunk. Ochmanek goes on to point out that “as these threats have emerged and US forces have been engaged in unremitting combat for sixteen years (in counterinsurgency), the nation has not committed the resources called for to build and sustain the capabilities that the forces need if they are to succeed in this more demanding environment.”¹⁰⁷ This requirement for a shift in focus is echoed in the *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy*. It stated that “Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.”¹⁰⁸ Additionally, questionable results in Iraq and Afghanistan have called US capability and credibility into question. According to Lawrence Freedman, the US invasion of Iraq in 2003

¹⁰⁵ US Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Ochmanek, “Recommendations for a Future National Defense Strategy,” 4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ US Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 1.

and the war that followed “raised questions about American power.”¹⁰⁹ In terms of credibility, Gerson pointed out that “many potential adversaries believe that the United States will use conventional firepower, especially because America has conventional superiority and a demonstrated potential to use it.”¹¹⁰ Gerson published this statement in 2009 and it remains valid in terms of the use of conventional weapons, particularly long-range precision-guided munitions, to punish adversaries. However, since this article was published, the US’s conventional superiority is less absolute. Despite this, the US Army still faces a number of modernization and warfighting challenges and as a result, the US Army faces capability and credibility challenges in terms of conventional deterrence. This is an issue for US policy since the army is a key element in terms of conventional deterrence.

Deterrence in US Army Doctrine

The US Army provides important capabilities to the joint force to enable conventional deterrence throughout the world and attempt to meet the challenges previously described. According to Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, the US Army applies land power “as part of unified action to defeat the enemy on land and establish conditions that achieve the joint force commander’s endstate.”¹¹¹ In short, it provides forces and capabilities to enable the joint force to fight and win in the land domain. Additionally, the US Army supports “the joint force in four strategic roles: shape operational environments, prevent conflict, conduct large-scale ground combat, and consolidate gains.”¹¹² Through enabling the joint force to fight and win in the land domain, US Army forces play a key role in conventional deterrence. US Army Field Manual (FM) 3-0 provides the key doctrine on the US Army’s contribution to deterrence. It states that

¹⁰⁹ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 2.

¹¹⁰ Gerson, “Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age,” 35.

¹¹¹ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 3-1.

¹¹² US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-14.

“Army operations to prevent (conflict) correspond to the deter phase in a joint operation,”¹¹³ and devotes a chapter to discuss operations to prevent. It states that the purpose of these operations is to “deter adversary actions contrary to US interests,” and requires the “deployment or repositioning of credible forces in a theater to demonstrate the willingness to fight if deterrence fails.”¹¹⁴ It stated that “achieving successful deterrence involves convincing adversaries that the deployed force is able to conduct decisive action.”¹¹⁵ This corresponds with the credibility and communication of the deterrent threat. The potential adversary must know that the conventional force it faces has the ability to inflict damage. FM 3-0 also states that “the ability of an Army force to prevent (conflict) stems from an adversary’s realization that further escalation would result in military defeat.”¹¹⁶ While most of the US Army doctrine is in line with the literature on deterrence theory, this statement is not. According to the definition of conventional deterrence used in this study, land forces play a role in affecting the potential adversary’s cost/benefit analysis, not convincing them that they will be defeated. In essence, conventional deterrence is effective if the potential adversary calculates that even if they are successful in a conflict, the cost will outweigh the benefit.¹¹⁷ Overall, US Army doctrine provides the framework for it to contribute to conventional deterrence as part of the joint force.

Applying Deterrence Theory

The framework for conventional deterrence that US Army doctrine gives applies to theory in terms of general extended conventional deterrence. As part of deterrence strategy, the US Army can contribute to all three components of deterrence; capability, credibility, and

¹¹³ US Army, FM 3-0 (2017), 1-15.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 4-1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Robert P. Haffa Jr., “The Future of Conventional Deterrence: Strategies and Force to Underwrite a New World Order,” in *Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence*, ed. Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa, Jr., and George Quester (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 7.

communication. However, it can primarily affect capability, which in turn can contribute to credibility. In terms of communication, its primary role is to reinforce signals and messages issued by national leaders while ensuring its subordinate commands do not inadvertently contradict those messages. Lawrence Freedman highlighted the importance of capability for conventional deterrence when he stated that “conventional deterrence requires a demonstration of capability, while nuclear deterrence is more a matter of will.”¹¹⁸ Overall, capability is of primary importance when analyzing the US Army’s role in conventional deterrence.

The conventional deterrence framework provided by US Army doctrine applies primarily to deterrence through denial rather than deterrence through punishment. Conventional deterrence through punishment is possible due to advances in precision guided munitions.¹¹⁹ While the US Army does have the capability to provide long range attacks with precision guided munitions, primarily through long-range rocket artillery and aviation systems, conventional deterrence through punishment is primarily in the realm of the US Air Force and/or the US Navy due to their ability to deliver conventional precision guided munitions over long ranges. Therefore, the US Army contributes to conventional deterrence through denial. The framework provided by doctrine is also concerned primarily with general conventional deterrence. Due to the global nature of the US’s national security goals and strategy, the US Army will have to maintain a posture where it can help provide general deterrence in several regions against multiple potential adversaries, while also maintaining the capability to provide immediate deterrence in the event of a crisis. However, until a specific threat arises, the focus will be on providing general deterrence in several key theaters. US Army doctrine provides a framework for general deterrence followed by immediate deterrence once specific threats are made.

¹¹⁸ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 39.

¹¹⁹ Gerson, “Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age,” 37.

US Army doctrine regarding deterrence does not explicitly mention extended deterrence, but it plays a significant role in the logic behind it. While the Summary of the 2018 *National Defense Strategy* acknowledges that the “homeland is no longer a sanctuary,” it identified threats to the homeland in terms of asymmetric threats such as terrorism and cyber-attacks.¹²⁰ These are important threats, but generally outside of the US Army’s ability to deter with conventional forces. Instead, the US Army, along with the joint force, is focused on the re-emergence of long-term strategic competition throughout the globe.¹²¹ Therefore, the US Army is and will be engaged primarily in extended deterrence and will provide reassurance to allied states in key theaters. One goal of extended deterrence for the United States will be to deter regional powers from attacking allies. Long states that “coercive diplomacy of regional powers, including deterrence, is potentially more complex than that of peer competitors.”¹²² One reason is that the regional power is located close to allied states. Geography and distance make it difficult for the major power to move forces to allied states in order to deter regional powers. This is a function of the loss of strength gradient as described by economist Kenneth Boulding.

Understanding the loss of strength gradient is an essential piece of ensuring the US Army can assist the joint force in providing extended conventional deterrence. Boulding stated that “the forces that determine the actual LSG of a nation, i.e., the degree to which its military and political power diminishes as we move a unit distance away from its home base, are complex in the extreme and depend on a host of geographical, psychological, and organizational factors.”¹²³ One way to reduce the effects of the LSG gradient on a military force is to lower the costs of transportation for that force. Boulding stated that “the LSG is a cost of transport of strength,

¹²⁰ US Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²² Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 72.

¹²³ Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, 245.

whatever strength is.”¹²⁴ He goes on to point out that “General improvement in means of transport are nearly always reflected in a decline in the LSG, simply because the transport of violence always involves the transport of men and things.”¹²⁵ In addition to reducing transportation costs, Boulding addresses basing as another means of reducing LSG. In effect, bases form “secondary centers of home strength.”¹²⁶ Bases not only have a positive effect on the forces of the defender, but also have a negative effect on the forces of a potential attacker. Boulding stated that “a base may also have the effect of lowering the strength line of the opponent” because “the base requires effort to circumvent, and this reduces B’s [that attacker’s] strength at all points beyond it.”¹²⁷ Therefore, basing has ramifications for extended deterrence because a base located in an allied country would not only reduce the effect of the LSG of the US, but increase the effect of the LSG of a potential adversary.

Since extended general deterrence through denial plays a significant role in the US Army’s contribution to conventional deterrence as part of the joint force, it follows that the US Army’s ability to provide conventional deterrence in the contemporary security environment is a function of its ability to overcome the LSG. This leads to the question of how does the US Army ensure they have the capability to rapidly deploy forces to extend deterrence to allies around the globe and that that capability is recognized by potential adversaries? The US Army can ensure it has the capability to rapidly deploy forces through transportation infrastructure, transportation resources, and basing. It can ensure that capability is recognized by potential adversaries by publicly exercising that capability, which will assist with credibility and communication. According to FM 3-0, “Expeditionary Army forces reduce the risk of aggression by maintaining

¹²⁴ Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, 231.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 263.

the ability to deploy rapidly and arrive ready to conduct operations.”¹²⁸ One example of demonstrating to an adversary the capability to rapidly deploy forces to a potential combat zone are the Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercises. Long stated that:

In the case of NATO conventional forces, for example, it appeared that, across models, rapid mobility contributed greatly to deterrence. By making a rapid fait accompli, such as the seizure of a small German salient, seem unlikely if not impossible, even the most risk-acceptant Soviet model could be deterred without undue provocation. This analysis highlighted several force-structure considerations for deterrence. At the operational level, it showed the role of units, such as the corps-level armored cavalry regiments, and the importance of new systems, such as PGM-armed attack helicopters, for deterrence. At the strategic level, it pointed to the importance of the Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercise, both as a deterrent signal and as a means of ensuring warfighting readiness.¹²⁹

In addition to utilizing exercises such as REFORGER, the US Army could also increase permanent basing in potential conflict zones. Ochmanek stated that US forces are “poorly postured to meet key challenges in Europe and East Asia.”¹³⁰ Regardless of the method used, overcoming the LSG is essential for the US Army to provide extended conventional deterrence in the contemporary security environment.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Providing effective extended deterrence is complicated for several reasons. This includes maintaining diplomatic ties with allied states and accounting for the distances involved in deploying coercive force to assist those allied states. The US Army needs to ensure it has the transportation infrastructure and resources to rapidly move forces and then exercise that capability in order to demonstrate it to potential adversaries. The US Army must have the capability to overcome the LSG quickly in order to assist the joint force in providing effective conventional deterrence in the contemporary and future security environments. Having this capability will assist in providing credibility to the deterrent signals of the United States

¹²⁸ US Army, FM 3-0 (2017), 4-1.

¹²⁹ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 57.

¹³⁰ Ochmanek, “Recommendations for a Future National Defense Strategy,” 4.

government. Since overcoming the LSG is primarily a matter of reducing transportation costs and basing, it is essential that the US Army ensures it has the appropriate infrastructure and shipping available to rapidly move units from bases in the continental United States to key theaters and potential areas of conflict throughout the globe. Since basing can assist in lessening the effects of the LSG, the US Army should station additional forces and supplies in friendly states in key theaters. While the political will may not be in place to station additional Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) permanently overseas, the army should take steps to station enablers in overseas bases including fire support, logistics, and aviation capabilities. These capabilities will provide reassurance to allies, contribute to the combat power of allied militaries, and assist in receiving and supporting forces deployed from the continental United States.

The ability to move forces quickly to key theaters is important so the joint force can present a potential opponent with the prospect of being defeated in battle or fighting a long, costly war. However, fighting a long, costly war may not be palatable to US political leaders, which is why it is important for the US Army to have the capability to help provide extended deterrence. Capability and credibility are important factors in extended deterrence, and overcoming the LSG is important for both. The US Army must have the capability to rapidly move forces from the continental US or from forward bases into potential conflict zones in order to deter potential adversaries. This capability contributes to the overall credibility of deterrent threats and signals sent by the US government.

There are several ways to reduce the effects of the LSG and demonstrate the capability and credibility of US Army forces. One recommendation that Ochmanek makes in his testimony that is important in this study is that the US needs to increase its force posture in key theaters. He stated that:

Since Operation Desert Storm, US forces have become accustomed to relying heavily on an expeditionary approach to power projection, in which the vast bulk of US combat power employed in a conflict is deployed forward following warning or the actual initiation of hostilities. This approach is less appropriate for theaters in which US and allied forces face threats from highly capable adversaries, especially in NATO member

countries in Europe, where heavy ground forces will play important roles in an effective defense. Strengthening posture also means investing in base infrastructure that is more resilient in the face of large-scale attacks by accurate ballistic and cruise missiles.¹³¹

While there is a need for strengthened force posture in key theaters, this does not diminish the importance of expeditionary forces for US Army conventional deterrence. They are important to reinforce forces already in theater and also react to unforeseen challenges in other theaters. It is also important to practice the rapid deployment of expeditionary forces to key theaters. This not only decreases friction, but also demonstrates capability to potential adversaries. Long recommended that the US conduct exercises similar to REFORGER, but on a smaller scale that could help the joint force respond to crises smoothly.¹³² With regard to strengthening force posture in key theaters, Ochmanek recommended “station[ing] more US heavy armored forces and artillery along NATO’s northeast flank. Increase forward-based stocks of preferred munitions in both the U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. European Command areas of responsibility.”¹³³ In a discussion on conventional deterrence in Europe against Russia, Long states that “The U.S. role in European deterrence against Russia will be in the area of intelligence and surveillance along with rapid reinforcement through naval and sea assets.” Long goes on to point out the importance of a corps-level headquarters in Europe to provide and coordinate assets.¹³⁴ In addition to intelligence and surveillance assets, the US should also have long range artillery assets in Europe to provide support for NATO allies. If the US Army insists on keeping the majority of its forces based in the continental United States in an expeditionary capacity, it must ensure it has the logistics and transportation capability to move those forces from their bases to air and sea points of departure. In addition, the US Air Force and US Navy would have to acquire and maintain additional mobility assets. Finally, the US Army must position logistic and transportation

¹³¹ Ochmanek, “Recommendations for a Future National Defense Strategy,” 5.

¹³² Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 66.

¹³³ Ochmanek, “Recommendations for a Future National Defense Strategy,” 8.

¹³⁴ Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War*, 66.

capabilities forward to ensure the rapid movement of forces into a potential theater to ensure or assist in conventional deterrent signals.

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