

# Fighting Words: Communications and Extended Deterrence in the 21st Century

A Monograph

by

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## Abstract

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Recent policy documents and US Army doctrine have stressed the return of inter-state strategic competition. The attention on near-peer competition is a departure from the emphasis on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and stability operations that has dominated military and foreign policy circles since September 11, 2001. The renewed focus on inter-state competition is accompanied by an urgency to reassure the allies and partners of the United States of America's security guarantee in the face of aggression and intimidation by revisionist powers such as China and Russia. This monograph examines the four parts of an effective deterrent threat (it must be *capable, credible, calculated, communicated*) as outlined in Thomas Schelling's seminal Cold War work, *Arms and Influence*. These variables serve as the lens of analysis for four cases studies of extended deterrence—two that were successes, and two that were failures. This monograph establishes that the qualities of an effective extended deterrent threat hold true across time and space, and outside of the Cold War paradigm. The author concludes that while the essential variables of an effective extended deterrence threat remain unchanged, *communication* is not only the most important of the four, but also the one most influenced by new technologies and social trends. The author concludes that the United States can harness social media to better communicate extended deterrent threats to challengers, and to reassure allies and partners.

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## Introduction

Successful threats are those that do not have to be carried out

—Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*

## Background

The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) names inter-state strategic competition as the primary concern for US national security. The increased focus on competition with near-peer or revisionist powers brings to the fore a concern over interstate war that has been largely overshadowed by terrorism for the last eighteen years. Destabilizing and provocative behavior by historical competitors such as Russia, North Korea, and Iran, coupled with a rising China, demonstrates that this challenge is diffused across the globe.

An increased focus on inter-state competition leads quickly to a discussion regarding deterrence. Indeed, the goal of the unclassified summary of the NDS is to articulate the Defense Department's strategy to "compete, deter, and win" in the current global security environment. The choice of the word "deter" as opposed to "defend" in the strategy's bottom line is telling and signals a renewed emphasis on deterrence.

Both the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) stress the importance of maintaining allies and partners, and their role in extending US influence across the globe. The challenge now posed to the United States by the global security environment is how to reassure allies and practice extended deterrence while avoiding unwanted wars. History is rife with examples of great power conflicts that were in some way tied to alliances with a third party, from the Peloponnesian War to the World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Extended deterrence, then, is not a new phenomena or trend, but is instead a recurring theme in the realm of national security and international relations.

## Research Question

This study was inspired by an interest in the interplay of several contemporary issues: inter-state strategic competition, the importance and reassurance of allies, and the influence of emerging technologies on national security. The primary question that this study seeks to answer is: how should the United States better exercise extended deterrence in the 21st century? Using the deterrence theory of the Cold War as a foundation, this study will examine cases where extended deterrence failed, as well as cases where extended deterrence succeeded.

## Hypothesis

To successfully employ extended deterrence in the 21st century, the United States should embrace technological and social trends and emphasize communicating its intent in order to reassure allies and deter potential challengers.

## Purpose and Significance of Study

The NSS recognizes that “deterrence today is significantly more complex to achieve than the Cold War.”<sup>1</sup> There have been fluctuations of polarity in the international system over the past several decades, with shifts from the clear, bipolar competition of the Cold War, to a brief unipolar moment, to what can be described as either a burgeoning multipolar system or a potentially bipolar system characterized by Sino-American or Russo-American confrontations. Given the changes in polarity, coupled with the technological innovations of the information age, this paper asks how these changes have impacted deterrence—specifically, extended deterrence.

The frequency of the failure of extended deterrence in history indicates the importance of this topic. From the Greek city-states of antiquity, to the alliance-bound states of Europe during the 20th century, war between two major powers has frequently involved a third party. The failure of a sponsoring state to convince an aggressor that sponsors’ defensive plans extend to

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<sup>1</sup> Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 27.

include a threatened third party is the root of the extended deterrence challenge. The power fluctuations in the international system during the 21<sup>st</sup> century give historical precedents a contemporary urgency—while war on Russian or American soil may not be likely, war between those two powers in Estonia or Poland seems much more possible. The same sentiment extends to any of the five American treaty allies in the Pacific regarding an increasingly powerful China.

#### Why Extended Deterrence?

Extended deterrence is the core security challenge at the heart of this study, and thus needs to be clearly defined. Michael Keane defines extended deterrence as “the threat that the deterrent power of a country is extended to include its allies or its own troops stationed abroad.”<sup>2</sup> Keane notes that extended deterrence is occasionally listed as Type II deterrence, or active deterrence in some literature.<sup>3</sup>

Oftentimes, discussions of nuclear weapons and the attendant body of literature associated with their use (or non-use) overshadow the topic of extended deterrence. For many, the deterrent effect of the US ‘nuclear umbrella’ tends to subsume all other security issues, and prevents a nuanced discussion of the role of conventional forces in support of extended deterrence, and of alliance dynamics in general. Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke summarize this challenge in their seminal *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, writing,

Largely because deterrence theory at the strategic level has been so much better developed in so many respects, there has been a marked tendency for theorist to employ strategic deterrence as the paradigm case for thinking about deterrence in general. Strategic deterrence theory has been highly visible, coherent, and logically crisp. By contrast, attempts to examine the workings of deterrence at the level of limited war and below have discovered deterrence to be less sharply visible and less easy to isolate in such contexts. Accordingly, a great many discussions of such cases, or of deterrence in

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<sup>2</sup> Trump, *National Security Strategy*, 62.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

general, have approached the subject from the “purer” strategic problem and employed it as the paradigm case of deterrence.<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary doctrine, statements, and policy reflect that conventional extended deterrence is indeed a key concern deserving special study, as it exists at the nexus of two critical security issues: the US network of alliances and partners, and the capabilities and roles of the American military.

## Doctrine and Relevance

Recent statements from senior leaders indicate the criticality of alliances and partnerships in the global security arena. Speaking in October 2018, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford called the American system of alliances and global partnerships “our strategic source of strength.”<sup>5</sup> Dunford discussed America’s ability to deliver personnel and equipment virtually anywhere in the world as the country’s “competitive advantage.” Identifying America’s network of allies and partners as its strategic “center of gravity,” Dunford explained that China and Russia also recognize this strength, and seek to damage these relationships by sowing doubt regarding the United States’ commitment to its allies.<sup>6</sup>

Military force and extended deterrence are inseparable. The Army’s most recent keystone doctrine, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, published in 2017, emphasizes that the Army has a role in preventing conflict before large-scale combat operations begin. The commander of the Combined Arms Center, Lieutenant General Michael D. Lundy makes the connection between military capabilities and deterrence in *Military Review*’s “Special Edition on Large Scale Combat

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 36.

<sup>5</sup> Jim Garamore, “Dunford Shares Thoughts on Maintaining U.S. Military’s Competitive Advantage,” Department of Defense, October 28, 2018, accessed November 7, 2018 <https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1674727/dunford-shares-thoughts-on-maintaining-us-militarys-competitive-advantage/>.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Operations,” noting that the current security environment demands an Army that can continually and persistently “deter adversary aggression through strength.”<sup>7</sup> LTG Lundy identifies how military capabilities and the nation’s ability to practice extended deterrence is inextricably bound together, writing that “to assure allies, we must be able to deter. To deter, our adversaries must believe we will prevail.”<sup>8</sup> The US Army, as part of the Joint Force, plays a key role in the exercise of extended deterrence.

## Definition of Terms

### Deterrence

For this study, a clear understanding of the term deterrence is paramount. For its simplicity, this study uses the parsimonious definition offered by Michael Keane in his *Dictionary of Modern Strategy and Tactics*: “the prevention or inhibition of action brought about by fear of the consequences.”<sup>9</sup> Keane’s expanded definition directly addresses several of the criteria used to evaluate cases studies in this study, writing that deterrence is a “state of mind brought about by the *credible* threat of unacceptable counteraction. It assumes and requires *rational* decision makers.”<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that Thomas Schelling, who is referenced at length in this study, held a similar definition for deterrence, which he accepted as to “prevent or discourage from acting by means of fear, doubt and the like,” as well as “to turn aside or discourage through fear, hence, to prevent from action by fear of consequences.”<sup>11</sup> Deterrence has a negative aim, it demands that a targeted actor refrains from acting.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Michael D. Lundy, “Meeting the Challenge of Large-Scale Combat Operations Today and Tomorrow,” *Military Review* 98, no. 5 (September-October 2018): 112.

<sup>8</sup> Lundy, “Meeting the Challenge,” 113.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Keane, *Dictionary of Modern Strategy and Tactics* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 62-63. Emphasis added by author to highlight two of the evaluation criteria.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New York: Yale University Press, 1966), x.

<sup>12</sup> Keane, *Dictionary of Strategy and Tactics*, 43.

## The Challenge of Extended Deterrence

Deterrent threats regarding a state's self-defense are inherently credible—an adversary can assume that an attack on one's homeland will not go unchallenged. Exercising extended deterrence and deterring an attack on a state's allies, however, is significantly more challenging. This study acknowledges that it is difficult to gauge when deterrence works for the simple reason that an event that does not occur is not measurable (thus, a causal relationship cannot be established). As Lawrence Freedman writes of deterrence during the Cold War, “deterrence succeeded if nothing happened, which led to a problem when working out cause and effect.”<sup>13</sup>

### Scope and Organization of the Study

This study is focused exclusively on extended, or Type II, deterrence and not on traditional (Type I) deterrence between two states. The rationale for this delimitation is that a focus on extended deterrence ties directly to how the United States can, and should (or should not) reassure allies and partners. Extended deterrence takes into account both reassuring the ally of the defender, as well as communicating this extension of protection to any potential aggressors. A focus on extended deterrence is generally associated more with conventional as opposed to nuclear deterrence, as the use of nuclear weapons is most closely associated with self-defense and Type I deterrence.

This study is organized into four sections. Section I, the theory portion of the paper, establishes the theoretical context. This section addresses the existing body of knowledge and the generally accepted theories in the field of deterrence, focusing primarily on Thomas Schelling and deterrence as it was perceived during the Cold War. This section lays the theoretical foundation for the next section, which focuses on historical examples of both successful and

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<sup>13</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 159.

failed attempts at extended deterrence. As a result, the theories and themes in Section I serve as a lens to examine the case studies in the subsequent sections.

Section II is comprised of four case studies, in order to ground the study historically. Each case is analyzed to discern whether or not classic deterrence theory played a role in the failure or success of extended deterrence. Section III is an examination of how emerging technologies and trends in the 21st century have already begun to shape events and change state behavior. Section IV is the conclusion, which synthesizes the first three sections and ties together the theory, history and emerging trends as means to discuss application.

## Methodology

This study uses structure-focused comparison as the method to compare case studies, looking for similar evidence in each case. Using four cases helps to guard against the instance of an exception, or anomaly, in the research. The cases used reflect a wide range of political and geographic circumstances. World War I reflects a historical instance of multipolarity in the international system as a way to further distance deterrence theory from the bipolar, Cold War paradigm. The Falklands War is as an example of extended deterrence in modernity, and is a scenario that stretches the operational reach of the defender. The First Taiwan Strait Crisis is an example set in Asia, and the Venezuela Crisis is a non-European focused Western Hemisphere example. These four cases represent different locales, polarities, and are split between the pre-nuclear and post-nuclear eras. Collectively, the case studies focus on historical examples of when extended deterrence worked, and examples of when it did not.

## Criteria

Classic deterrence theory assumes that for a deterrent threat to work, it must be *credible*, and *communicated* by a state that is seen as *capable*, and *calculating (rational)*. This study seeks to apply these four tenets to the geographically and temporally disparate case studies. By looking at the *credibility* of the security guarantee extended by the sponsoring state, as well as whether

that sponsor was seen as *capable* of carrying out the promised protection, whether or not it was clearly *communicated*, and whether or not that sponsoring state was seen as making a *calculated* decision to extend security, these criteria can be applied to the unique situations examined in each case study.

## Section I: Deterrence Theory

Due to the intense competition between the United States and the Soviet Union during the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, deterrence has come to be closely associated with Cold War phrases, concepts, and strategies such as massive retaliation and containment. These terms have nuclear connotations, and they evoke images of mushroom clouds and nuclear war for both the layperson and many policymakers. Deterrence theory, however, is by no means a special property of the Cold War, however. The foundational theory and characteristics of deterrence that underpinned the tension and ideological competition of the later half of the 20th century are relevant beyond the bipolar, Cold War paradigm.

Deterrence theory, as espoused by some of the most prominent strategists and academics of the Cold War, must be outlined before a worthwhile evaluation of case studies can take place. The bulk of the theory dedicated to deterrence was written between 1949 and 1989, with some related works coming shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. The United States only enjoyed a nuclear monopoly for four years, but the ideological struggle that followed spawned what has been “described as a ‘golden age’ of strategic studies.”<sup>14</sup> Several theorists stand out as particularly important in the field, such as Bernard Brodie and Herman Kahn, but the theorist whose ideas have proven to be the most enduring is Thomas Schelling.<sup>15</sup>

### Schelling

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<sup>14</sup> Freedman, *Strategy*, 157.

<sup>15</sup> Not to detract from the contributions of Brodie and Kahn, but their works are almost exclusively focused on nuclear weapons and Type I deterrence. Their arguments lose some utility when applied to conventional and extended deterrence.

Thomas Schelling is the theorist associated with deterrence whose impact was the most widely felt across academia and politics, and whose work still resonates with current policymakers. While Schelling was trained as an economist and worked on implementing the Marshall Plan in Europe, (an endeavor that sparked an interest in negotiations and bargaining), his work is best known as part of the foundation for deterrence related theory.<sup>16</sup> Schelling would later work at RAND in the late 1950s and become involved in game theory and strategy. His unconventional background, as opposed to the traditional military or policy experiences of a strategist, informed his views on the behavior of both states and policymakers, as well as the use of force. It is Schelling's 1966 *Arms and Influence* that had the largest impact on deterrence, and still holds sway over much of the field.

Military force and its ability to hurt others is at the core of coercion as Thomas Schelling described it. While Schelling writes that the ability to hurt an opponent was a key attribute of military force, its true worth was not in doing so, but in ascertaining what opponents would do to avoid it. To use the power to hurt would be a "gross failure of strategy," but if the enemy believes that violence can be "anticipated and avoided by accommodation," then that violence (and the associated deterrent threat) has coercive value.<sup>17</sup> While *Arms and Influence* was published at the height of nuclear tensions in 1966, the hurt that Schelling describes did not have to be nuclear according to scholar Lawrence Freedman. The framework that Schelling outlines for coercion (with deterrence being the defensive form, and compellence describing its offensive embodiment), is about "influencing through threats rather than controlling the opponent's behavior."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Freedman, *Strategy*, 162.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 163.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.

Regarding deterrent threats, the spirit of deterrence in *Arms and Influence* can be summarized by the “four C’s”: that a deterrent threat must be *capable, credible, communicated* and *calculated*. Schelling summarized these in his chapter aptly entitled “The Art of Commitment.” Schelling acknowledges that while no one doubts the availability of American military forces to defend the homeland, he had “heard Frenchmen doubt whether American troops can be counted on to defend France.”<sup>19</sup> This uncertainty is the heart of the problem for extended deterrence. In abiding by the “four C’s,” a state is more likely to be successful in extending security over a partner or ally.

#### Calculated (rational)

For deterrence, a calculated threat implies that the state making the threat is viewed as rational. A rational state makes calculated decisions and threats; they are able to understand “what an adversary treasures” and what scares him, and is able to communicate this understanding to an opponent.<sup>20</sup> A calculated threat implies that the actor in question has considered the stakes, and understands that war can be a contest of “endurance, nerve, obstinacy, and pain.”<sup>21</sup> This is a brutal bargaining process in which the state is willing to risk at least some level of suffering to achieve a policy of defend an ally.<sup>22</sup>

#### Capable

For a deterrent threat to work, the state issuing the threat must have the capabilities to execute the violence that they threaten to do. This is perhaps the simplest tenet of deterrence. If, for example, State A threatens to bomb, invade, or exert force in some other way against State B if State B invades State C, State A must possess the aircraft and munitions with which to make

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<sup>19</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 35.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.

good on this threat. As Schelling writes, “arms and military organizations can hardly be considered the exclusively determining factors in international conflicts, but...the weaponry does affect the outlook for war or peace.”<sup>23</sup> Schelling explains that weaponry has a meaning beyond just technology, including factors such as organizations, plans, geography and even doctrines and theories of warfare.<sup>24</sup> In this way, Schelling refers to the “character, not its simple quantity” of factors when considering a state’s capabilities.<sup>25</sup> Even if a potential attacker acknowledges the relative military capabilities of the defender, other variables such as distance can detract from the value of extended deterrence if the attacker questions the ability of the defender to position its capabilities or forces quickly enough to prevent the achievement of at least short-term goals.<sup>26</sup>

#### Credible

Schelling described examples of deterrence on behalf of an ally or partner as hard to make because they “are not so inherently credible that they can be taken for granted.”<sup>27</sup> Threats to the homeland can be seen as inherently credible, whereas the threats that buttress extended deterrence need to be “made” credible.<sup>28</sup> The forward positioning of troops in an allied state, such as US forces in South Korea, is one way of demonstrating a credible commitment to an ally—the risk implies an investment. For Schelling, a deterrent threat is only credible if it is accompanied by a corresponding assurance that if the potential aggressor does not act, it will not be harmed. Since these assurances tend to be implicit to a deterrent threat, Westerners often forget that both

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 234-235.

<sup>24</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 234.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 235

<sup>26</sup> Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 4.

<sup>27</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 36.

sides of the threat, “the threatened penalty and the proffered avoidance or reward, need to be credible.”<sup>29</sup> Unconditional threats, then, detract from the issuers’ credibility.

Communicated

Communicating deterrent threats could be the hardest part of extended deterrence. While the United States can announce that it will intervene on an ally’s behalf, just saying so “does not make it true,” and perhaps more importantly, “does not always make it believed.”<sup>30</sup> To convince both allies and enemies that it would fight abroad, the United States must project its intentions.<sup>31</sup> It is critical to communicate both what the United States wants, and what it does not want. Schelling maintains that the deterring state too often focuses on what it will do to punish transgressions, and does not pay enough mind to communicating what behavior will satisfy the deterring actor. Specifically, there is “too little emphasis to communicating *what* behavior will satisfy us.”<sup>32</sup> Surveying extended deterrence and all its attendant challenges, Schelling writes, “the hardest part is communicating our own intentions.”<sup>33</sup>

## Section II: Case Studies

The cases used in this study include two examples of successful extended deterrence— The Venezuela Crisis of 1902-1903 and the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1954, and two examples of extended deterrence failure—the Falkland Islands War, and World War I (focused specifically on the failure of the United Kingdom to deter an attack on Belgium by Germany). The equal number of extended deterrence successes and failures represent an effort to discern continuities or discontinuities between cases of success or failure. In each case, the criteria of the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 75

<sup>30</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 75.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 75

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 35.

study is applied to the historical events so as to focus on the question of whether or not extended deterrence was exercised in a way that was seen as credible, calculated, capable, and most importantly, was it communicated?

## The Venezuela Crisis of 1902-1903

The Venezuela Crisis of 1902-3 is a little known diplomatic confrontation that brought the United States and Imperial Germany to the brink of war. Unappreciated for its significance as an example of successful extended deterrence, the crisis is overshadowed by later events such as the Russo-Japanese War and the series of crises that preceded the outbreak of the First World War. This case study is an important example of how even deliberate attempts to communicate extended deterrence can result in near-disaster despite what the issuer sees as clearly communicated threats and reassurances.

### Strategic Context

The confrontation between the United States and Germany originated with the failing Venezuelan economy at the dawn of the 20th century. After a series of leaders accepted loans from European powers on terms advantageous to the lenders, the corrupt and weak central Venezuelan government found itself deeply in debt.<sup>34</sup> After several years of missed interest payments, Germany, Britain, and Italy sought economic compensation. Venezuelan leader Cipriano Castro, a “caricature of the stereotypical Latin American dictator,” directed the European demands to Venezuelan courts, which, staffed by Castro supporters, did not disappoint their leader and rendered judgments favorable to Venezuela. Additionally, Venezuelan naval forces seized foreign ships and cargoes, and Castro tacitly approved looting foreign-owned homes in his territory.<sup>35</sup> The aggressive Venezuelan strongman believed that the United States and the Monroe Doctrine protected his indebtedness and behavior from European reprisal.

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<sup>34</sup> Henry J. Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt's Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 28.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

Set forth in 1823 by President James Monroe, the Monroe Doctrine and its' prohibition on colonization or European interference in the Western Hemisphere was, as Graham Allison writes, originally more “aspirational rather than operational.”<sup>36</sup> The United States lacked the military means to enforce the proclamation for much of the 19th century, and European powers pushed the United States to the limits of its credibility by probing around the edges of both the Monroe Doctrine and Latin America. The British took the Falklands in 1833, and maintained a presence in Nicaragua, while the Germans exercised gunboat diplomacy to settle disputes in Haiti.<sup>37</sup> European nations were thus accustomed to a relatively passive United States, and on the issue of Venezuela, Secretary of State John Hay made it clear to Britain and the continental powers that the Monroe Doctrine was not intended to protect a “wrongdoing state from justice.”<sup>38</sup> Once Theodore Roosevelt unexpectedly became President following William McKinley's 1901 assassination, the Monroe Doctrine found in the new President a new champion—one who would implement the doctrine regardless of the character or economic irresponsibility of any Latin American protégés.<sup>39</sup>

The critical variable in the extended deterrence success of the 1902-3 Venezuela Crisis was President Theodore Roosevelt's communication of the security guarantee for Venezuela that he considered inviolable. While Venezuela was not a treaty ally, and the European lenders were justifiably angered by its failure to repay its debts, Roosevelt would not tolerate European adventurism in the Western Hemisphere and felt compelled to intervene. The new President was particularly concerned with the potential for a German-controlled port near the site of the “future

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<sup>36</sup> Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), 97.

<sup>37</sup> Allison, *Destined for War*, 97.

<sup>38</sup> Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 30.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

Isthmian Canal” that he was working hard to make a reality.<sup>40</sup> Germany and Great Britain took steps to decisively intervene in Venezuela late in 1902, instituting what they called a “peaceful blockade” on the 7th of December, and seizing Venezuelan naval ships two days later.<sup>41</sup>

### Speak Clearly and Carry a Big Stick

President Roosevelt used both formal and informal channels to communicate his determination to uphold the Monroe Doctrine during the zenith of the US-European crisis. His first act was an unusual one, appointing the US Navy’s only four-star Admiral as the commander of the Atlantic Fleet for its’ 1902-1903 winter exercise. The US Navy’s highest-ranking officer rarely went to sea, but Roosevelt wanted to send a message by appointing Admiral George Dewey—the ‘Hero of Manila Bay,’ as the combined fleet’s commander. By posting Dewey to the Atlantic Fleet, Roosevelt hoped to “arrest the attention of...the Kaiser.”<sup>42</sup>

The President exercised informal channels in attempts to communicate his deterrent threat while maintaining discretion. President Roosevelt wrote to friend and British parliamentarian Arthur Lee that Admiral Dewey was training the fleet for war, knowing that the well-connected Lee would socialize this comment in the capitals of Europe.<sup>43</sup> Roosevelt used what Henry J. Hendrix calls the “intimacy of personal diplomacy” as another means of indirect communication, inviting friend and German diplomat Baron Speck von Sternburg to a private White House dinner, along with Admiral Dewey on November 24, 1902. Indirect methods having failed, Roosevelt saw Dewey and the fleet set sail just over a week later at the Washington Navy Yard.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 40. The Germans, “in their excitement,” sunk one of the captured ships and damaged another.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 35-36.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 38-39.

President Roosevelt communicated directly and succinctly with the German Ambassador, Theodor von Holleben, throughout the crisis. On December 8, 1902, the President issued a stern ultimatum for the ambassador to relay to the Kaiser: Germany must accept international arbitration in ten days, or be prepared to go to war with the United States.<sup>45</sup> On December 14, 1902, when Roosevelt saw von Holleben again, he inquired as to what the Kaiser's response to his ultimatum was. To Roosevelt's dismay, the Ambassador confessed that he, not thinking that the ultimatum was a serious threat, had not transmitted it to Berlin! A flustered Roosevelt then told Ambassador von Holleben that rather than wait for the remaining three days of the ultimatum, he would authorize Admiral Dewey to steam towards Venezuela in forty-eight hours.<sup>46</sup> The American Ambassador to Britain, Henry White, presented a message on the 17th from President Roosevelt to the British Balfour government, advising them to convince their German co-belligerents to accept arbitration.<sup>47</sup> Later on the 17th, after an exchange of telegrams with Berlin, von Holleben reported that Germany would accept the American proposal, and requested that Roosevelt serve as the arbitrator.<sup>48</sup>

### Roosevelt and Coercive Diplomacy

Roosevelt succeeded where many have failed, by communicating his intent to defend a third party to a skeptical foreign leader. Earlier in 1902 and prior to the crisis, Kaiser Wilhelm dismissed Ambassador von Holleben's warnings that Roosevelt would respond strongly to any perceived planning or action towards a permanent German base in the region, telling him "We will do whatever is necessary...even if it displeases the Yankees."<sup>49</sup> How did Roosevelt convince

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<sup>45</sup> Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 41.

<sup>46</sup> Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 44.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

the Kaiser to back down from the brink of war when the emperor held such a contemptuous view from the outset of the crisis? Roosevelt was unflinching in his attempts to communicate his intentions to the Kaiser, and used multiple means to convey the outcomes if Germany did not acquiesce with his demands. As the ascendant power in the Western Hemisphere, the United States acted with the *calculated* efforts of a regional hegemon. For the first time, the Monroe Doctrine was *credible*, thanks to the modernized and growing US Navy. The capabilities of the US Navy underwrote the claims of the Monroe Doctrine, and gave the decades-old pronouncement teeth. Most importantly, however, was that Roosevelt used discretion in his messaging. He *communicated* through both formal and informal channels what the Germans and their European consortium must do to avoid war, and what the United States *would do* if the challengers did not abide by his demands.<sup>50</sup>

### Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-1955

The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1954-1955, also called the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, serves as an example of successful extended deterrence. The United States served as the security sponsor of Chiang Kai-shek-led Taiwan, while Mao's Communist China was the initiator of hostilities. Given the lack of access to the official records of the Chinese government, it is difficult to infer the opportunities and threats as perceived by Mao and his advisors.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, it is difficult to infer the precise military objective of the communist Chinese government in Peking (modern-day Beijing), but it is likely that Mao's goal was to wrest the islands of Quemoy and Matsu from Nationalist control, given that their locations make them the most important islands in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 52. Roosevelt's discretion was avoiding a public confrontation that would have forced the Kaiser's hand. A diplomatic clash between the two personalities could have forced the Kaiser to act, and favor war over losing face domestically.

<sup>51</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 277.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 266.

## Strategic Context

After the Second World War, President Harry S. Truman maintained a policy of non-intervention in the Chinese civil war. The communists drove nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and his followers from Mainland China to the island of Taiwan in 1949. Truman accepted the fall of Taiwan as an inevitability, and was determined not to become embroiled in an east Asian civil war. He was forced to act however, with the outbreak of the Korean War during the summer of 1950. Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait at the same time that he authorized the use of force to assist the Syngman Rhee's government on the nearby Korean peninsula.<sup>53</sup>

Once the Chinese communist intervention in Korea became public knowledge, the United States moved to strengthen ties with the Nationalists in Taiwan. In February 1951, the United States and Taiwan agreed to a bilateral Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement, which pledged conditional US military assistance to Taiwan. Truman endeavored to communicate that American support to the nationalists was for "internal security," and "legitimate self-defense," thus discouraging the more bellicose intentions of Chiang Kai-shek and some US policymakers who favored a cross-strait invasion of mainland China.<sup>54</sup> Truman's initial order sending the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to guard against a communist invasion of Taiwan excluded the approximately thirty small island groupings near the Chinese mainland in the Taiwan Strait, collectively referred to as the offshore islands.<sup>55</sup>

Of the offshore islands, the Quemoy islands are the most strategically important. Comprising approximately sixty square miles, they are only two miles from the mainland and they block the Chinese port of Amoy. Further north are the nineteen Matsu islands, which only cover twelve

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<sup>53</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 268.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 268-269.

square miles, and are located ten miles from the Chinese coast city of Foochow. Due to their proximity to the mainland, the Quemoy and Matsu islands were a challenge for the Nationalists to defend, as they were vulnerable to communist artillery-fire and were at the furthest extent of Nationalist reach.<sup>56</sup> These small islands were, as Henry Kissinger writes, Taiwan's "first line of defense," or, Taiwan's "forward operating base for an eventual reconquest of the mainland," depending on the belligerent's point of view.<sup>57</sup>

#### Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1955

By 1954, John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State for then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower, was pursuing a series of alliances in the Asia-Pacific, having witnessed the fall of the French in Indochina. After the United States signed a mutual defense treaty with South Korea, Chiang Kai-shek sought a similar commitment to replace what he saw as a less-stable, unilateral assertion of support from the previous administration. Dulles was happy to support the initiative, as it would help to form a ring of alliances around China. Peking reached the same conclusion, and the revitalized US-Nationalist discussion served as the proximate cause for the bombardment unleashed by communist coastal batteries on Quemoy Island on September 3, 1954.<sup>58</sup> Chiang Kai-shek argued to have the offshore islands included in the new defense agreement, but by the time the treaty was concluded in December 1954, it applied to only the island of Taiwan itself, and the Pescadores.<sup>59</sup>

The key deterrence variable during the 1954-1955 crisis was communication. The decision to not include the offshore islands in the 1954 defense commitment between the United States and Taiwan reflected the division between US policymakers and military leaders over how

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<sup>56</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 269.

<sup>57</sup> Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), 152.

<sup>58</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 271.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 271-272.

rigidly the policy of containment should be interpreted. Strict interpreters were committed to preventing the loss of *any* territory to communist forces, a frame of mind that informed the advice given by visiting diplomats to Chiang Kai-shek to strengthen his forces on the offshore islands in mid-1953.<sup>60</sup>

While the acceptable level of violence on the offshore islands was left vague, Eisenhower was firm in his commitment to Taiwan itself. When asked during an August 17, 1954, press conference what would happen if the communists attacked Taiwan in force, he responded, "...any invasion of Taiwan would have to run over the Seventh Fleet."<sup>61</sup> This threat, clearly communicated to communist China, was made credible by the presence of the Seventh Fleet in the region. The US Navy was clearly capable of defending against any maritime invasion originating from the Chinese mainland.

While the American commitment to Taiwan and the Pescadores was clearly communicated, made credible by the proximity of a capable force, and stated with credibility by a defender (the United States) that had intervened in South Korea only several years before, the matter of the offshore islands was still unsolved. There were reports of a buildup of communist forces, and on August 26, a force of forty raiders struck Quemoy, killing ten nationalists.<sup>62</sup> Once the United States focused on Quemoy following the initial communist artillery bombardment, Mao shifted focus 200 miles to the north, bombing the Tachen Islands on 1 November, and overwhelmed the 1,000-strong Nationalist garrison on Ichiang with a force of 4,000 communist troops. Eisenhower downplayed the importance of the Tachens to the overall defense of Taiwan, but simultaneously told his advisors "the time had come to draw the line."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 270.

<sup>61</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 280.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 285.

The increasing size of communist excursions onto the offshore islands prompted a change in the messaging emanating from the Eisenhower White House. Dulles and Eisenhower engineered a new approach that focused on the stated intent of the communists, with Dulles asserting that the US should assist in the evacuation of the less important Tachens, but declare that the United States would assist in “holding Quemoy and possibly the Matsus, *as long as the Chinese Communists profess their intention to attack Taiwan.*”<sup>64</sup> By making the American defensive commitment to the small island groups near the mainland contingent on an attack, or the preparations of an attack on Taiwan, the Eisenhower administration bought time during an increasingly tense situation. The Formosa Resolution, passed in the US Senate in January 1955, codified these thoughts by tying actions in the offshore islands to the potential for an actual invasion of Taiwan, rather than just Chinese provocations.<sup>65</sup>

While Eisenhower and Dulles both believed that “ambiguity in declaratory policy was not in accord with the dictate of sound deterrence strategy,” critics, and the Nationalists, nevertheless found the Formosa Resolution too vague.<sup>66</sup> Viewing the situation through the doctrine that Thomas Schelling would later espouse, however, Eisenhower was issuing an effective deterrent threat by limiting his own freedom of action and removing the option of withholding force in the case of an invasion of Quemoy that was a preliminary to an invasion of Taiwan.<sup>67</sup> The situation at Quemoy in 1955, after the Formosa Resolution, became Schelling’s “threat that leaves something to chance.”<sup>68</sup> By leaving himself no choice but to act in the potential invasion scenario, and communicating that to Mao, Eisenhower slowed the pace of the crisis. The crisis reached its

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<sup>64</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 286.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>66</sup> George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, 287.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 121 n.

denouement in the spring of 1955, when Dulles publically stated that any communist offensives would be met with tactical nuclear weapons, a view that was at least implicitly approved of by Eisenhower, who remarked that he saw no reason that the United States could not use tactical weapons “just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”<sup>69</sup>

Extended deterrence succeeded during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis due to the quality of the US security guarantee. The capabilities of the US military were clear given the presence of the Seventh Fleet and other US military forces in the Pacific. The credibility of Eisenhower’s statements was not called into question given the uneasy cease-fire that had only recently been established on the Korean peninsula—the Americans would clearly fight on the Asian periphery in defense of an ally. Given the Cold War paradigm and the supremacy of the domino theory, the willingness to defend a Nationalist Taiwan from a Communist China was a calculated measure by the United States. Most importantly, Eisenhower communicated what Mao *should not do* (profess the intention to attack Taiwan via the offshore islands) coupled with an acceptance of tactical nuclear weapons. Eisenhower and his staff communicated how to avoid war, decreasing the risk of escalation or miscalculation.

## The Falkland Islands, 1982

In the spring of 1982, the long simmering dispute over the rights to the Falklands Islands (also referred to as the Malvinas) boiled over into a war between Argentina and the United Kingdom. Despite the fact that the Falklands are not a third-party, wholly separate from either the United Kingdom or Argentina, it is a distinct enough territory for this conflict to be considered a failure of extended deterrence, as opposed to traditional deterrence. While the Falklands are an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, they are an internally self-governing entity with a

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<sup>69</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 156.

constitution and a democratically elected Legislative Assembly.<sup>70</sup> The failure of the United Kingdom to prevent the 1982 invasion of the islands by Argentinean forces is an appropriate case study given its uniqueness—it is distinctive not just for its remote location, but for its occurrence so late in the 20th century.

### Strategic Context

The Falkland Islands are located in the South Atlantic, approximately 400 miles off the coast of Argentina and nearly 8,000 miles from the United Kingdom.<sup>71</sup> An archipelago, the Falklands consists of two main islands (East and West Falklands) and 778 smaller islands, which give it a total land area approximately the size of Connecticut.<sup>72</sup> Once Argentina won independence from Spain in 1820, it inherited the Spanish dispute with the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands. The diplomatic quarrel over the islands ebbed and flowed for over a century, and the issue gained traction following the global focus on decolonization after the Second World War. Negotiations dragged on from 1966 to 1979, when a potential “lease back” solution was proposed. The proposal called for the recognition of Argentinian sovereignty over the islands, coupled with a long period of continued—but gradually decreasing, English administration.<sup>73</sup>

The lease back proposal of 1979 was rejected in the English House of Commons in late 1980. After a long period of negotiations, the Falklands question appeared to be an impasse.<sup>74</sup> Diplomatic talks over the future of the archipelago were hosted by the United States in New York City after the failure of the lease back proposal, but by 1982 the Argentine dissatisfaction with

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<sup>70</sup> Falkland Island Government, *Falkland Islands: Facts and Fictions: 50 Years of Argentine Falsehoods at the United Nations*, accessed February 24, 2019, <https://www.falklands.gov.fk/assets/Falklands-Facts-and-Fictions-ENGLISH-.pdf>, 13.

<sup>71</sup> Duncan Anderson, *The Falklands War 1982* (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2002), 14.

<sup>72</sup> “Our Home,” The Falkland Islands, accessed February 24, 2019, <https://www.falklands.gov.fk/our-home/>.

<sup>73</sup> Anderson, *The Falklands War*, 11-12.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

diplomatic measures peaked. Argentina disavowed the negotiations on March 3, 1982, and Argentinian marines landed in the Falklands on April 2, 1982. This tense month-long period is the focal point for the study of extended deterrence failure that precipitated the Falkland Islands War.<sup>75</sup>

#### Extended Deterrence of the Falklands Islands, 1982: Analysis

The diplomatic crisis during the spring of 1982, and the resultant war between the United Kingdom and Argentina was the end product of a failed policy of extended deterrence on the part of the United Kingdom. The failure of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government to prevent the conflict can be tied to the failure to meet thoughts behind the classic tenets of deterrence theory. Thatcher's deterrent threats lacked credibility, were poorly communicated, and appeared unenforceable due to a weak military posture.

The actions of the English government worked at cross-purposes with the intention of deterring Argentine aggression aimed at the Falklands. English domestic political and budgetary concerns combined in a way that undermined the implicit defensive umbrella that stretched from England to the South Atlantic. The Ministry of Defence announced its intent to scrap two light carriers, the *Hermes* and the *Invincible*, along with nearly one-third of the Royal Navy's surface fleet.<sup>76</sup> The Ministry of Defence's decision to withdraw the *Endurance*, an Antarctic Protection Vessel, sent a message that bordered on indifference to South Atlantic affairs to the ruling *junta* in Argentina. The presence of the *Endurance* was associated with England's determination to exercise influence in the region, and was seen by the Argentines as a "visible symbol of Britain's determination to retain its interests in the South Atlantic."<sup>77</sup> The combination of these decisions

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<sup>75</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, "Miscalculation in the South Atlantic: The Origins of the Falklands War" In *Psychology and Deterrence*, eds. Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 90.

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *The Falklands War*, 12.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

served to convince the *junta* in Argentina that Britain was not only abandoning its interests in the region, but would soon lack the capacity to defend the Falklands even if the policy was reversed.<sup>78</sup>

The distance between the disputed islands and the United Kingdom combined with the near-absence of British military forces in the area combined to undercut the credibility of Britain's defensive commitment to the Falklands. Budgetary concerns precluded the possibility of a "tripwire" force large enough to convey seriousness.<sup>79</sup> Richard Ned Lebow writes that a "visible and intimidating display of force" would have been the only naval action with any hope of deterring the invasion.<sup>80</sup> A show of force of that nature would have both communicated the intent of the United Kingdom, and demonstrated the physical *capability* to fulfill its defensive promise to the islands. Importantly, a large show of force would have a second effect beyond demonstrating capabilities—it would have given the Argentine junta, whose domestic position was already tenuous, a legitimate excuse with which to demur on the decision to use force and not lose face.<sup>81</sup>

A British emphasis on avoiding "miscalculated escalation" contributed directly to the failure of extended deterrence in the Falklands.<sup>82</sup> London failed to issue clear deterrent threats with the appropriate tone, with no "strongly worded warnings, even private ones" coming from the Thatcher government until March 31st.<sup>83</sup> Rather than communicate to the Argentine *junta* that the United Kingdom would honor its defensive commitment to the Falklands, the adopted policy

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<sup>78</sup> Anderson, *The Falklands War*, 12-13.

<sup>79</sup> Lebow, "The Origins of the Falklands War," 101.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>83</sup> Lebow, "The Origins of the Falklands War," 110.

instead revolved around avoidance—avoiding any public display or commitment of British resolve, in order to avoid offending the *machismo* of the *junta* and thus force the regime into action as a way to preserve legitimacy.<sup>84</sup>

Comments by the Labour party's former Foreign Secretary David Owen reveal the depth of the misunderstanding of communicating deterrent capabilities. After the invasion, Owen suggested that the United Kingdom should have deployed hunter-killer submarines, without any publicity.<sup>85</sup> While submarine movements are shrouded in secrecy as a matter of operational security, it is a mistake to associate their classified movement as having any deterrent value. While an adversary may understand the general deterrent effect of another state possessing submarines, *an action must be known to an adversary for it to have any deterrent value.*<sup>86</sup> This manner of thinking indicates the confusion in the British government over what was and was not being effectively communicated to the Argentine *junta*.

In retrospect and with regards to the classic tenets of deterrence, it is clear why the United Kingdom failed to exercise extended deterrence over its territory in the Falklands. Deterrent threats were weakly communicated due to an overcautious approach that was focused on avoiding escalation. This lack of communication was coupled with decisions that undermined their military capabilities in the South Atlantic, and thus detracted from their overall credibility. The lack of military capability in the disputed area meant that when the crisis peaked, it was “too late to deter with anything but words.”<sup>87</sup> These elements all combined and, as Lebow writes, England's “...passivity contributed to a deterrence failure since it appears to have been interpreted by Argentina as a lack of resolve.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>85</sup> Lebow, “The Origins of the Falklands War,” 109.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 122.

## The United Kingdom and Belgium, 1914

The United Kingdom's failure to deter the German violation of Belgian sovereignty in 1914 is an extended deterrence failure of the first order. This paper does not claim that Britain's deterrence failure was the proximate cause of the First World War, but it *was* a contributing factor to the ultimate scale of the global conflagration. Given that the causes of the First World War comprise a wide body of work, the focus on this case study is purposefully scoped down to July 1914 and the first fateful days of August in 1914, and focuses on the dialogue between the United Kingdom and Germany.

### Strategic Context

The United Kingdom long had a vested interest in the neutrality of Belgium due to the latter's terrain and proximity to the British Isles. Across the channel from England, Belgium's coast was "England's frontier" to military planners and ministers alike.<sup>89</sup> The British saw this open, easily traversed territory as a potential starting point for a future invasion of their island home, and sought to deny the Belgian coast to future aggressors. In a masterstroke of diplomacy, the British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston secured an international treaty that guaranteed Belgian independence and its status as a "perpetually neutral state."<sup>90</sup> The 1839 Treaty of London wrote into creation an independent Belgium, whose neutrality eased some English anxieties by removing the temptation of the flat plains of Flanders from the continental powers. Signed by England, France, Russia, Austria and Prussia, the perpetual neutrality of Belgium guaranteed by the treaty would be flagrantly violated by Germany in 1914, leading to the British declaration of war and entry into World War I.

### The Iron Dice Roll

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<sup>89</sup> Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Random House, 1962), 21.

<sup>90</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 22.

Why the British security guarantee to Belgium failed, and why Germany was not deterred from using Belgium as an invasion route can be boiled down parsimoniously to one common phrase: military necessity. To German military planners, military objectives outweighed any potential threat posed by Britain. They came to see the route across the flat plains of Flanders as an absolute necessity on the road to Paris given the physical space, railroads, and roads needed to move the massive armies that were characteristic of European states of 1914.<sup>91</sup> Count Alfred Von Schlieffen, German Chief of the General Staff from 1891 to 1906, oversaw the planning effort that encouraged the violation of Belgian soil, and produced the invasion plan that ultimately bore his name.<sup>92</sup> Believing that “Belgian neutrality must be broken by one side or the other,” Schlieffen would not allow the detail of Belgian neutrality to stand in the way of his country entering the war in the most favorable position.<sup>93</sup>

Schlieffen’s plan to move troops across the Belgian border in order to rapidly attack France was first formulated in 1899. Initially calling for only a small violation of Belgian territory, the Schlieffen Plan went through several iterations, and by 1905 the plan called for a “huge enveloping sweep” from Liege to Brussels.<sup>94</sup> The German General Staff came to see the movement into Belgium as critical to the overall success of a campaign against France before turning east to focus on Russia. Schlieffen had, as Barbara Tuchman writes in *The Guns of August*, pinned Germany’s fate to the strategy of decisive battle, and “decisive battle dictated envelopment, and envelopment dictated the use of Belgian territory.”<sup>95</sup> While his successor, Helmuth Von Moltke the Younger, did alter Schlieffen’s plan by moving forces from the German

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<sup>91</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 24.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid 21.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>95</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 26-27.

right wing to the left wing, and insisting that the neutrality of The Netherlands be preserved, he agreed with the basic premise of Schlieffen's planning, that "in order to be on the offensive against France it will be necessary to violate Belgian neutrality."<sup>96</sup>

### Miscommunication and Military Necessity

Given Schlieffen's insistence on violating Belgian sovereignty throughout his iterative planning process, and Moltke's acceptance (with some changes) of the basic tenets of his predecessor's campaign plan, it may be difficult to accept that Britain could have successfully exercised extended deterrence over Belgium in 1914. To understand how this eventuality could have been reached, it is best to consider Eliot Cohen and John Gooch's explanation of the fallacy of homogeneity. This logical fallacy is the "habit of speaking of a large organization as a unitary whole rather than a collection of sub organizations with definable subcultures, routines, and modes of operation."<sup>97</sup> Taking Cohen and Gooch's definition into account, we see the need to rephrase the question from "could Germany have been deterred?" to "*how* could Germany have been deterred?" or perhaps even "who in Germany was the target of deterrence?" This reframing demonstrates that the question regarding extended deterrence should not necessarily consider each potential aggressor as a unitary one, but rather that in each case, the *audience* to whom the deterrent threat is addressed, matters.

Based on the scale, detail, and acceptance of the Schlieffen Plan, the German General Staff would not have been deterred from violating Belgium in 1914 regardless of any statement or show of force by the United Kingdom. The German leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II, however, could have possibly been deterred if efforts at extended deterrence were made more clear by the United

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<sup>96</sup> Annika Mombauer, "German War Plans" In *War Planning 1914*, ed. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 59. Moltke saw the Netherlands as a "windpipe" for Germany, and preferred that it stay neutral, whereas Schlieffen had planned for its violation just as he had for Belgium and Luxembourg.

<sup>97</sup> Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortune: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 37.

Kingdom, before the July crisis reached its peak. The United Kingdom did not have an appreciation for the disconnect between the German Army and its purported civilian leadership, and their resultant strategic dysfunction. A better understanding of the organizational structure of the German High Command and its relationship to civilian authorities, as well as an appreciation of its unique challenges—the “organizational dimension of strategy,” may have aided in understanding the overall situation for British policymakers.<sup>98</sup>

Moltke and his staff saw breaking Belgian neutrality as an operational and strategic imperative as a result of their organizational culture, preference for offensive operations, and Germany’s geographic dilemma in the case of a two-front war. Kaiser Wilhelm’s behavior during the summer of 1914 indicates that he would have refrained from violating Belgian territory, thus keeping England out of the war and trading the potential for a speedy victory over France for the certainty of a one-front war with Russia. The exchange of telegrams between Berlin and London on August 1, 1914 is evidence of this potential conflict avoidance.

As a result of miscommunication between the German ambassador to England, Prince Lichnowsky, and Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, the Kaiser was under the impression that if the Germans did not attack France and did not violate Belgian territory, England would stay neutral in the event of a Russo-German War. While this was not exactly the message that Grey had meant to convey, the Kaiser believed that the telegram from London was the key to a one-front war after all. Upon conferring with Moltke, however, the Kaiser was informed by his top military commander that there was no way to change the military plans already in motion.<sup>99</sup> The Kaiser seems to be a victim of circumstance in this context, bound to a

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<sup>98</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortune*, 231.

<sup>99</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 91-93.

military planning process that gave him only one option, and a plan that according to Moltke once it was settled, “cannot be altered.”<sup>100</sup>

Moltke and the German General Staff foresaw with clarity that the British would support the Belgians in the event of German aggression. A year before the war, Moltke wrote that if Germany violated Belgian territory, the English “will and *must* join our enemies.”<sup>101</sup> Assuming that any British force on the continent would be caught up and ensnared in the German envelopment, Moltke simultaneously acknowledged and downplayed Britain’s likely involvement, telling his naval counterpart “the more British the better” would potentially be on the battlefield.<sup>102</sup> The Kaiser on the other hand, would bemoan his fate later in the war saying “if only someone had told me beforehand that Britain would take up arms against us!”<sup>103</sup> Given his excitement at the 1 August telegram, coupled with his later regret, an attempt at extended deterrence that focused on the Kaiser—separating him from his myopic military planners, would have had a higher likelihood of success rather than succumbing the fallacy of homogeneity and treating the German leadership as a unitary organization.

Kaiser Wilhelm could have potentially been deterred from attacking France through Belgium if British policymakers specifically focused their attempt at extended deterrence on the German leader. The British could have strengthened their efforts by directly addressing the criteria that was in doubt. The Germans knew that the small British Expeditionary Force (BEF), even if it could reach the continent in time, was not large enough to defeat the German Army—to argue this point would be futile, and sounds more like a subjective defense of the prowess of British arms rather than a calculated assessment. Rather, to assuage the doubts of British

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<sup>100</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 94.

<sup>101</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 144.

<sup>102</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 143.

<sup>103</sup> Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 143.

*capability and credibility*, the deterrent threat should have focused on how the BEF would spoil the German strategy. The Kaiser may not believe that the introduction of the BEF would lead to an outright defeat of his armies, but he could easily accept that the BEF could slow down or halt the German offensive in the West, desynchronizing his plan. Emphasizing this point, the denial of the rapid victory in the West that was meant to enable the overall German strategy, would have resonated with the Kaiser, who clearly favored a one-front war with Russia in 1914. While this effort may not have avoided war in general—indeed, it may have encouraged a German-Russian War in 1914, it would have prevented the death and destruction on the Western Front and allowed for the preservation of Belgian sovereignty.

## Section III: Emerging Trends

### Social Media and Deterrence

Could new, disruptive technology such as social media have an effect on how deterrence is perceived of and applied in the 21st century? Several events since 2014 demonstrate that technological changes are indeed driving decisions regarding the use of force, whether to fight or take flight, and how foreign actors can gather the intelligence that can shape deterrent threats and diplomatic overtures. Analyzed in turn, the advance of the Islamic State (ISIS) on Mosul in 2014, and the Israeli Operation Pillar of Defense, show how social media has arrived as a weapon of war and tool of deterrence.

#### The Islamic State

The use of social media by the Islamic State (ISIS) during their 2014 invasion of northern Iraq demonstrates that it is not a question of *if* or *when* social media will impact coercion—it already has. Rather than mask their movement or intent with traditional military deception operations, ISIS crowed about its progress, and boasted about its objectives on social media. The Twitter hashtag “#AllEyesOnISIS” became the top-trending hashtag on the Arabic variant of the social media platform Twitter, and the technologically savvy extremists reached millions of

followers.<sup>104</sup> As ISIS drove deeper into Iraq, its social media campaign had the effect of what authors P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking call an “invisible artillery bombardment.”<sup>105</sup>

The most compelling lesson regarding the Islamic State’s social media use during its foray into Iraq is not the reach they achieved, or the hubris of their narrative, but the physical effects they achieved due in large part to activity in the cyber domain. The Islamic State’s entry into Mosul is instructive—thousands of Iraqi soldiers and most of the Mosul city police fled before the invaders even reached the city. With the Islamic State’s advance playing out on the smart phones and computers of Iraqi government forces, the city was essentially lost before the fighting even began. Only 1,500 ISIS fighters had deterred the bulk of a 10,000-strong Mosul garrison from fighting, and only a handful of soldiers and police remained to oppose them.<sup>106</sup>

#### Operation Pillar of Defense

Israel’s 2012 Operation Pillar of Defense was an eight-day operation that targeted Hamas operatives and facilities, primarily in Gaza City.<sup>107</sup> The operation was relatively one-sided, with only two Israeli Defense Force (IDF) personnel killed, compared to approximately 100 Hamas militants—but that is not the most notable element of the campaign. The use of social media by both belligerents, and the apparent connection to public opinion and the pace of operations, was the most groundbreaking part of Operation Pillar of Defense. The IDF communicated to the Israeli people, Hamas, and the greater international community using Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr blogs, and Pinterest. It was not until several years after the campaign that a professor at American

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<sup>104</sup> P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *Likewar: The Weaponization of Social Media* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), 4-5. The term ‘followers’ is used here to describe those people with access and interest to the ISIS twitter feed; since anyone can follow people or organizations on Twitter, followers can range from supporters to adversaries.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>106</sup> Singer and Brooking, *Likewar* 6.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 194.

University would connect the data points and discover the influence of social media on real-world Israeli decisions.<sup>108</sup>

Studying hundreds of thousands of tweets dating from Operation Pillar of Defense, Thomas Zeitzoff discovered that activity in the cyber domain had physical effects in the land domain. When there was a trend towards online sympathy for Hamas, Israel slowed the pace of their air strikes by more than half, and increased their own online propaganda efforts. When the tweets were plotted on a timeline, it was almost possible to predict what would happen next in the physical world. Clearly, IDF commanders and planners were monitoring social media with the same scrutiny of their own radio networks and battlefield tracking systems.<sup>109</sup> As explained by a senior IDF information officer, this operation highlights that in addition to the physical and the cyber fight, there was another fight in the “world of social networks,” a fight which, amazingly, crossed domains and metered the Israeli approach in Gaza in 2012.<sup>110</sup>

#### Social Media and Deterrence: Cross-Domain Impacts

From Iraq to Gaza, social media is having effects across domains, influencing how militaries perceive threats and how states interact with non-state actors. Social media has contributed to deterring an Iraqi garrison from fighting against an enemy less than half its own size, and convinced Israel to moderate a successful counterterror campaign. Analyzing these events through a theoretical lens, students of deterrence and international relations can see why these coercive measures were effective.

Non-state actors can both deter and be deterred. While non-state actors, particularly terrorist groups, may appear irrational or “fanatical” if they participate in suicide operations, their

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 194-196.

<sup>109</sup> Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 196.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 194.

zeal does not make them immune to deterrence.<sup>111</sup> Non-state actors can be considered rational actors in the context of having political goals, and it is their political goals that can be a focus of deterrence. The logic behind Robert Pape’s *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*—that strategies focused on denial as opposed to punishment are more efficient—applies to non-state actors as well as states. For Pape, “denial” prevents a challenger from possessing the military capacity to achieve its ends, such as having the ability to control contested territory, or launch an invasion of a neighbor.<sup>112</sup> With this argument, non-state actors could be deterred if they are denied the means they require to achieve their political aims.

While these examples involve non-state actors interacting with state actors, their lessons are still relevant for the purpose of this study. The right message, clearly communicated through social media can have real world, physical effects, regardless of the credibility of the claim or the capabilities of the originator. For example, had the nearly 10,000 strong garrison of Mosul stood fast in the face of the approaching 1,500-man ISIS attack, the fall of Mosul may not have been a forgone conclusion.

The events that make up the opening salvos of what P.J. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking call the “Likewar” are at the intersection of emerging technologies and classic deterrence theories. While there are differences between how states may behave when faced with a state as opposed to a non-state actor, many of the lessons are the same, and are applicable to the practice of extended deterrence. The question of whether deterrence can be ‘cross-domain’ has been answered in the streets of Mosul and Gaza.

## Section IV: Conclusion

### Communication as the Key Variable

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<sup>111</sup> Robert F. Trager and Dessislava P. Zagorcheva, “Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done,” *International Security* 30, no. 3, (Winter 2005-2006), 88.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 7.

Famed political scientist Joseph Nye writes that “extended deterrence depends upon a combination of military capability and credibility.”<sup>113</sup> While capability and credibility are critical elements of an extended deterrent threat, history demonstrates that *communication* is the key variable. The capability of a sponsor’s military, and the credibility of a security guarantee—which could be credible for reasons of mutual interests, of a common enemy, a shared history or any other number of reasons—mean nothing if extended deterrence is not communicated. Extended deterrence successes and failures from around the globe and over the course of several decades reveal the criticality of communicating a deterrent threat. Not only is communications the essential variable of the “four C’s” of deterrence, but with the diffusion of information technology and social media, states can communicate extended deterrence like never before.

#### Cultural Filters and Frictions

Cultural filters can add friction when communicating a deterrent threat.<sup>114</sup> Cultural differences can be barriers that “are apt to distort what is heard,” and a distorted message can lead to the failure of extended deterrence even when the defender believes his message is clear.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, a lack of understanding can spawn an unclear threat when the issuing power does not fully grasp the cultural nuances of a challenger, or the challenger’s domestic politics. For example, the Thatcher government went to great pains to remain vague in its messaging and not offend the perceived *machismo* of the Argentinian junta during the Falklands Crisis without considering that a strongly worded narrative coupled with a show of force had the potential to serve as an off-ramp for hostilities if the *junta* was seen as standing tall in the face of overwhelming British power.

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<sup>113</sup> Joseph Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 46.

<sup>114</sup> Antulio J. Echevarria, *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 56.

<sup>115</sup> Nye, *The Future of Power*, 103.

Social media and the Internet allow for unseen levels of mitigation regarding cultural frictions. Not only is access to cultural information diffused at unprecedented levels and cultural awareness stressed like never before, but new technologies now allow for near-instantaneous feedback. If a strategic message is not received with its intended effect, a government can analyze what is trending on Twitter and adjust almost instantaneously. Global audiences do not need to be polled to determine how a proposed treaty is received, social media will provide unsolicited feedback that can be categorized and analyzed within hours. While policy should not be driven by social media metadata, and collection efforts could be targeted with false accounts, the larger trends can still be analyzed for feedback and inform both analysts and policymakers.

### Audiences

With the rise of information technology, deterrence, like diplomacy has become “less private and policy oriented and more public and performative.”<sup>116</sup> While the role of diplomats has not lessened, global affairs do not hinge on communiqués between cabals, or unsent telegrams between ambassadors and kings. Social media allows for the direct interaction of peoples who are “ostensibly at war.” Not only is this an unusual development for the combatants and non-combatants regarding the conduct of war, but it also means that there is a potential shift in shaping activities before a conflict. Direct access to the population of an aggressor opens the door to influence operations in a way that was unimaginable to propagandists of the past. As Joseph Nye writes, “...diplomacy aimed at public opinion can become as important to outcomes as the traditional classified diplomatic communications between leaders. Information creates power, and today a much larger part of the world’s population has access to that power.”<sup>117</sup>

The internet and social media allow states to address what Nye calls the weak point of reaching audiences with a mass media approach: influencing how a message is perceived in

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<sup>116</sup> Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 15.

<sup>117</sup> Nye, *The Future of Power*, 103.

different cultural settings. He writes that “the sender knows what she says, but not always what the target(s) hears.” The endless number of forums and digital gathering places now give governments the opportunity to “correct daily misrepresentations of their policies” as well as convey longer-term themes and messages. The global reach of information technologies allows for access to a wide-variety of audiences and helps generate global awareness of US goals, intentions and agendas.<sup>118</sup>

Extended deterrence is about more than just threatening a potential aggressor. It, as with Type I deterrence, must convince the challenger that the “alternatives to aggression” are more appealing than war.<sup>119</sup> This way of thinking necessitates more nuance than simply issuing threats; it requires the shaping of perceptions.<sup>120</sup> Information technologies, and social media in particular, allow for the direct shaping, influencing and manipulation of perceptions in a way that was not available to earlier generations. They are not just better ways to issue deterrent threats, but are better ways to shape perceptions. Extended deterrent threats can be adjusted to address specific audiences such as minority populations within a state, rival political factions, and psychological profiles of specific leaders. It would be folly to underestimate the importance of developments in technology and social trends in how extended deterrent threats can be communicated to potential aggressors, and how security guarantees can be communicated to allies and partners.

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<sup>118</sup> Nye, *The Future of Power*, 107.

<sup>119</sup> Michael J. Mazarr, *Understanding Deterrence*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), accessed April 10, 2019, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE295.html>, 2.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

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