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To Deter, Compel, and Reassure in International Crises: The Role of U.S. Naval Forces

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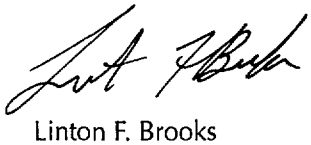

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Introduction

With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new era, many of the overarching concepts behind U.S. defense policy are open to questioning. In the Cold War, deterrence was perhaps the key concept. The thinking about deterrence—both theoretical and policy-related consideration—focused on nuclear deterrence issues. In the new era, deterrence remains a key issue but the focus turns to 'conventional' deterrence. Key associated concepts in this emerging new world order are compulsion and reassurance.

This paper provides some perspectives on the role of naval forces in deterrence, compulsion, and reassurance in the post-Cold War era. In addition to a brief overview of some of the theoretical issues surrounding deterrence, this paper focuses on some concrete examples of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps actions in response to or amidst international crises over the past 40 years. It discusses the ways these actions might have compelled an opponent to stop or reverse some action, deterred a potential adversary from taking some action, and/or reassured an ally to take some type of action. In addition to discussing naval forces, the specific case discussions outline the participation of the U.S. Army and Air Force; if they were not involved and we know the reasons they did not participate, I discuss those reasons.[1] The dis-

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1. The information on USA and USAF participation comes principally from the following three sources:

Department of the Air Force, *45 Years of Global Reach and Power: The United States Air Force and National Security: 1947-1992*, SECAF/OSX, 1992.

An Analysis of International Crises and Army Involvement (Historical Appraisal, 1945-1974), ACN 74020, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1 October 1974.

LTC Clifton Headen, Jr., and MAJ Kern C.B. Wilson, USA, *Force Employment Study (FES)*, U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency, Bethesda, MD, February 1991.

cussion focuses on situations principally involving conventional forces (i.e., it does not examine U.S.-Soviet confrontations other than the Cuban missile crisis) in the hope of providing some illumination for the new security era.

This paper can only provide examples of situations in which U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operations *might* have played a deterrence, compulsion, or reassurance role. The theoretical discussion below discusses some of the difficulties in examining these issues. Despite such theoretical problems, it seems clear that U.S. naval forces have played a role in conventional deterrence over the past decades and will, depending on national policy decision-making, continue to do so for the indefinite future.

The following are some examples (discussed further in the paper) of where naval forces have played an important role in deterrence, compulsion, and/or reassurance.

- Dominican Republic, 1961—Posturing by naval forces deterred the Trujillo family from attempting to reinstate a dictatorship. (Deterrence.)
- Burma, 1988—The movement of an amphibious ready group provided pressure on the military dictatorship to release Westerners held at the airport. (Compulsion.)
- Korean Peninsula, 1993-4—Amidst tensions over the North Korean program, U.S. naval (and other) forces are put on alert and moved into the area. (Deterrence and reassurance.)

At the same time, we must recognize that there have been situations involving naval forces where the actions failed to achieve the hoped-for deterrence, compulsion, and/or reassurance. Just as it is difficult to prove that some use of military force deterred/compelled/reassured, it is difficult to outline exactly why the desired outcome did not occur. Clearly, some events were essentially beyond the United States' capability to influence (or beyond the U.S. capability to influence at an affordable (political) cost). The premier recent example is from July/August 1990: it is difficult to imagine any action the United States could have taken that would have deterred Saddam Hussein from invading Kuwait. Other such 'failures' might include the long-

term hostage crisis in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the suppression of the Chinese democracy movement, and the holding of hostages in Lebanon through most of the 1980s.

One—essentially immeasurable—factor lies at the core of deterrence, compulsion, and reassurance: perception. Although both actual capabilities (key in the event of combat) and intent matter, deterrence is a game of perception: what an adversary believes is more important than some notion of 'objective reality.' Patriot missile batteries provide a prominent recent example of perceived versus objective capabilities. In the immediate aftermath of Desert Storm, in part due to dramatic imagery on CNN, the Patriot missile seemed to have excellent capabilities against ballistic missiles. Since then, analysis has significantly reduced our own assessment of the Patriot's capabilities but the perception of capability remains in the minds of many foreign leaders.

Thus, the issues of deterrence, compulsion, and reassurance center on perception management, and are perhaps even appropriately titled 'international mind-games.' Kenneth Booth noted that

> Naval diplomacy, like all forms of deterrence, compellence, or reassurance, is essentially a psychological phenomenon.... What matters is not so much the actual military significance of the action undertaken, but how it is construed by the target onlookers.[2]

Perception is thus key for the "target onlookers"—whether they be adversaries, allies, or neutrals. At the same time, perception is key for U.S. decision-making: what does the leadership (military and political) perceive the military capabilities of U.S. (and other) forces to be in relation to the overall issue? This perception rests, one would hope, on actual capabilities.

A current (and long-standing) circumstance can usefully illustrate these issues. In the Korean peninsula, the United States has been involved in a deterrence/reassurance situation for over 40 years. The

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2. Ken Booth, *Law, Force & Diplomacy*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1985, p. 155.

past year has seen a new round of tense relations, focusing on the North Korean nuclear weapons program. North Korea seems to have paid particular attention to just two deployments amidst the range of U.S. military preparations undertaken through this crisis period—movements of aircraft carriers (with real strike capabilities and ability to affect the air battle) and the deployment of Patriot batteries (capable of air defense against aircraft but not effective against ballistic missiles).

For analysis, deterrence presents almost insurmountable challenges as it is extremely difficult—if not impossible—to prove the effectiveness of any attempt at deterrence, compulsion, or reassurance. (See the appendix for a brief discussion of analytical issues in examining deterrence.) Since the key element is perception, one must get inside the minds of decision-makers (at the moment of decisions) to understand their perception of the situation. To prove an incident of purposeful deterrence, one must show that:

- An 'aggressor' intended to act.
- The 'deterrer' acted to forestall this.
- The 'aggressor' perceived this action and did not act due to the efforts at deterrence.

Almost without exception, this intent and the thinking behind decision-making remains beyond any reasonable means of examination.

Thus, rather than 'proving' successful deterrence, we can aim to provide cases with more 'compelling' evidence to support claims of successful deterrence. This paper provides a number of such cases with some discussion as to the theoretical and lessons learned implications of these cases.

This paper also focuses on just one small part of the total equation, the role of U.S. naval forces in deterring and containing crises. Almost without exception, naval forces will not act alone but will be only one part of a package that might include other military, diplomatic, economic, and political steps to signal U.S. resolve and to otherwise deter or contain a crisis. Such signaling could include comments made in private by an Ambassador, a Presidential press

conference on the crisis, a push for a UN resolution or sanctions, arms sales, or a general alert of U.S. military forces. The synergism of these different modes of expressing U.S. interests and demonstrating U.S. resolve create the basis for adversaries', allies', and neutrals' perceptions of U.S. capability and will. Deterrence efforts, therefore, will likely be most successful when each of these modes presents a similar picture of U.S. resolve. The recent effort in the Persian Gulf—Vigilant Warrior—provides a good example of coordinated military and diplomatic actions to deter a potential aggressor.

Some historical examples of naval deterrence, compellence and reassurance

Throughout its history, the United States has used its Navy and Marine Corps to compel and deter antagonists, and to reassure friends. The deployments almost 200 years ago into the Mediterranean were, for example, intended to compel North African pirate states to release American captives and to deter them from taking these actions in the future. Since the Second World War and the U.S. assumption of a leading role in the international community, such actions have occurred on a far more frequent basis. They seem to be occurring even more frequently since the Soviet Union's demise.

Concrete examples of analytical challenges

A 1970 crisis in the Middle East can provide a useful introduction to the problems of proving the role of naval forces. Current-Syrian President Hafiz Al-Assad has provided testimony to the effectiveness of U.S. naval force positioning during this crisis. Syrian forces entered Jordan on 18 September 1970, as the Jordanians sought to reassert control over Palestinian refugee camps during "Black September." In addition to an Israeli mobilization, the United States reacted strongly to the Syrian action. This reaction included a high-speed transit of the aircraft carriers *Independence* and *Saratoga* directly toward the Syrian coast.[3] Late on the 18th, the Syrian President ordered the Syrian Air Force into the air to support the troops invading Jordan; however, the aircraft never took off. Assad, then Air Force Minister, reportedly stated several weeks later that he chose to 'ignore' this order because he feared that the United States would use naval aviation to intercept Syrian aircraft if they engaged in strikes in Jordan.

We should take Assad's comments with a grain of salt. As with any after-the-fact explanation, we must question his motivations. For example, perhaps he chose not to order the aircraft into the air due

to a fear of Israeli Air Force intervention (perhaps more likely than President Nixon ordering USN aircraft to fly over Israel for combat air patrol flights over Jordan). In the context of Syrian politics and in view of the fact that Assad took power in a coup several months following this incident, blaming failure on a fear of U.S. activity could seem a much more palatable excuse to Assad than blaming inaction on a fear of Israeli action. The Jordanians believed that two factors influenced Assad's actions: the Israeli Air Force and his intention to seize power.

The 1971 Indo-Pakistani War provides another example of the difficulty of proving cause and effect. During the Indo-Pakistani War (December 1971) U.S. Navy forces reportedly played an important role in influencing events on the ground. According to the Indian journalist Pran Chopra, Indira Gandhi intended to continue the war after the defeat of Pakistani forces in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) with a campaign against West Pakistan to guarantee Indian domination over Pakistan.[4] The *Enterprise* carrier battle group (CVBG) moved into the Indian Ocean on 14 December 1971, 11 days after the war

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3. In addition to the U.S. Navy activity, in a well-publicized 19 September action, the NCA ordered two U.S. Army divisions on alert for movement to the Middle East. USAF movements included 24 F-4 Phantom IIs and a TAC C-130 squadron deployed to Incirlik, Turkey. Sixth Fleet forces reacted to events inside Jordan several other times during 1970. For several examples, see entries 121 and 122 in CNA Research Memorandum 90-246, *The Use of Naval Forces in the Post-War Era,* by Adam B. Siegel, February 1991 (hereafter CRM 90-246). In general, this memorandum relies on the research work documented in CRM 90-246 and work conducted to update this research memorandum.

4. Pran Chopra, *India's Second Liberation,* Cambridge, MA, 1974. Chopra based his conclusions on leaked documents and interviews with much of the Indian leadership. See discussions by James M. McConnell and Anne Kelly Calhoun, "The December 1971 Indo-Pakistani crisis," in *Soviet Naval Diplomacy,* edited by Bradford Dismukes and James McConnell, New York, 1979, pp. 178-192 and David K. Hall, "The Laotian War of 1962 and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971," in *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument,* edited by Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution, 1978, pp. 175-217.

had begun. In the open press, the U.S. government pointed to a need to evacuate Americans in East Pakistan as the mission for the force—but the Royal Air Force had evacuated most foreigners on 12 December and only 47 Americans remained (voluntarily) in Dacca. The United States hoped to influence India to forestall an expansion of the war to the west and to limit the extent of Pakistan's defeat. The presence of U.S. naval forces south of the Indian sub-continent, along with growing diplomatic isolation, thus evidently helped to sway Indian decision-makers away from the preferred option of continuing the war with an offensive in the West.[5] Analysis of this situation highlights the way that diplomatic activity interacts with military deployments in a crisis situation. James McConnell and Anne Kelly Calhoun concluded that *Enterprise*'s deployment strengthened U.S. diplomatic efforts to isolate India in the international community.[6]

These two cases seem to demonstrate the decisive influence that naval forces can have in deterring or containing crises. As the discussion highlights, however, even these cases are not *proven*. In both cases, alternative explanations exist. Even such relatively 'clear cut' cases remain limited in number. Direct discussions about the influence of U.S. military forces on the actions (or inaction) of other nations remain sparse, at best. Even where direct evidence exists (such as with Assad's comments), we must still wonder at the true meaning of that evidence. Thus, the discussions below remain sketchy and suggestive, rather than definitive, on the role of U.S. naval forces in containing, deterring, or reassuring during international crises.

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5. See Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, pp. 206, 212-213.

6. The key was that while the international community had much sympathy for India's actions in East Pakistan (liberating an 'oppressed' region), no such sympathy existed for Indian aggression in the West. (See McConnell and Calhoun, pp. 189-192.) Unlike McConnell and Calhoun, Hall concluded that the Indian government never seriously considered the U.S. action as aimed against possible Indian action in the West and viewed it only in light of actions in East Pakistan. (See Hall, pages 192-4.) Hall emphasized the role of diplomatic action in isolating the Indians and Soviets (p. 196), whereas McConnell and Calhoun comment on the importance of the Navy forces in creating the climate for that isolation (pp. 189-192.)

Case discussions

The discussions below do not focus on the numerous exercises and traditional deployments that serve to reassure allies, but will instead highlight the role of U.S. naval forces in selected international incidents and crises.

Taiwan Straits, 1950s

Through the 1950s, the United States conducted interpositioning operations between Taiwan and mainland China.[7] Naval forces provided the principal element of these operations. In the summer of 1954, tensions increased over the Tachen islands in the Formosa Strait. The Chinese military sought (and received) permission to conduct an operation against the island in the early fall. When Mao learned that the United States was placing great emphasis on the area, including military activity,

> he ordered that the campaign start only when there were no U.S. ships and aircraft present. In this instance U.S. military deterrence was successful; its naval presence raised the strong possibility of direct American involvement and made the Communists pause. The attack was delayed for several months. But U.S. deterrent efforts were not consistent.[8]

In an aspect analogous to the famous Acheson exclusion of Korea from the U.S. security arc, the Mutual Defense Treaty (publicly released later in 1954) explicitly covered only Taiwan and the Pesacadores, not the other offshore islands. Mao drew the conclusion that the United States would not interfere in an operation against the Tachens—directly opposite the perception that Eisenhower and Dulles wished to create.

This case illustrates the vital importance of perception management in compulsion, deterrence, and reassurance situations. Clearly, the

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7. See entries 23, 27, 34, 45, 53, and 57 in RM 90-246 for example.

8. Gordon H. Chang and He Di, "The Absence of War in the U.S.—China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-55: Contingency, Luck, or Deterrence?" *American Historical Review*, December 1993, pp. 1512-3.

United States' adversary (Mao) perceived the United States to have the capability to interfere, but political actions called into question the will. Thus, Mao's perception of the question allowed him to give the go-ahead for Chinese military action.

Dominican Republic, 1961

In November 1961, two brothers of the slain Dominican dictator Trujillo returned to Santa Domingo and seemingly threatened to reestablish the family dictatorship. Secretary of State Dean Rusk warned that the United States would not "remain idle" if they attempted this. As part of the pressure, a large U.S. Navy and Marine Corps force (including an aircraft carrier, six surface combatants, and the Caribbean Amphibious Ready Group) moved toward the area. Operational activity included "Seagull," a demonstration in front of Cuidad Trujillo including amphibious feints and A4D's directly toward the beach just outside the three-mile limit.[9] The day after Seagull, factions in the Dominican Republic agreed on a power-sharing arrangement that forestalled a renewal of the Trujillo dictatorship. U.S. actions, both political and military, created the perception of capability and will to interfere if the dictatorship reemerged.

Cuban Missile Crisis, October–November 1962

The Cuban Missile Crisis is perhaps the most extensively documented international crisis during the Cold War. Clearly the United States failed to deter (via military or other means) the action leading to the crisis: the Soviet deployment of Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) in Cuba. The crisis itself was a (successful) U.S. attempt to coerce the Soviets into removing these weapons from Cuba. All elements of the U.S. military participated in this crisis response. Over 2,500 USAF aircraft and many U.S. Army divisions were alerted or moved during the crisis. U.S. Navy forces, by their preponderance over Soviet capabilities in the waters around Cuba, played an important role during the crisis. Since the Soviets (and/or Cuba) had no realistic capacity to challenge the quarantine operation, the Soviet leadership had a choice between participating in a global military

9. "Seagull" did not involve USA or USAF units.

confrontation (in which U.S. naval forces would form a part) and conceding to U.S. demands. During the missile crisis, U.S. Navy capabilities (in comparison with adversary capabilities) limited the adversary's options within the confrontation. The primary player in this crisis, however, was not traditional military capabilities but the specter of a massive thermonuclear war that neither superpower wanted.

Uganda, February 1977

The NCA ordered the *Enterprise* CVBG to move to a position off the coast of Kenya after President Idi Amin placed severe travel restrictions on Americans in Uganda. The all-nuclear CVBG moved across the Indian Ocean in a highly publicized high-speed transit.[10] Although some might question the ability of naval forces to affect the situation far inland (such as in a land-locked country like Uganda), Idi Amin specifically complained about the U.S. Navy ship movements and became far more congenial to the U.S. position as the aircraft carrier crossed the Indian Ocean. Amin released the 'hostage' Americans just before the nuclear-powered task force arrived at its scheduled holding point off the Kenyan coast.

Iran-Iraq War, September 1980–September 1988

Throughout the Iran-Iraq War, U.S. military forces remained forward deployed in the Persian Gulf.[11] These deployments varied in scope, depending on U.S. perceptions of threat and signal-sending needs. The presence of U.S. naval forces, especially during the Earnest Will escort operations of 1987-88, played an important role in preventing the spread of the war into other states of the region.[12] The Earnest Will operations contained the 'tanker war,' which Iran escalated in 1986-87, and eventually demonstrated to Iran (especially after the *Vincennes* incident) that it had essentially no international support in its confrontation with Iraq.

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10. No USA or USAF forces were involved in the effort to influence Idi Amin's decision-making.

11. For brief discussions of some U.S. naval operations, see entries 154, 170, 175, 182, 185, and 191 in CRM 90-246.

Libya, August 1981 on

For many cases of the use of military force we can derive at best an inconclusive evaluation as to effectiveness and results. Since 1981, U.S. military (principally naval) forces have had a number of incidents involving Libya and have maintained a near-constant low-level commitment to activities (if only intelligence gathering) directed against Muammar Qaddafi's Libya.[13] Although much of this activity has focused on freedom-of-navigation issues related to Qaddafi's claims to Libyan sovereignty over the Gulf of Sidra, Libyan support of terrorist activity and of aggression in other countries sparked some U.S. military action. The most prominent of these came in April 1986 when U.S. Navy and Air Force aircraft struck targets in Libya following a terrorist attack in Germany attributable to Libya. Many would argue that this strike and the other U.S. military activity led Qaddafi to curtail greatly his destabilizing activities in neighboring nations and his support to terrorism. On the other hand, some might point to Libyan involvement in such terrorist acts as the Lockerbie bombing and the destruction of a French airliner flying from Chad as showing that Qaddafi remains undeterred by the U.S. (and French, in Chad) military activity. This situation provides a good example of the problems of this type of analysis. We cannot know what Qaddafi's policies would have been in the absence of U.S. military activity aimed at deterring his support for Arab (and other) terrorist organizations.

Evacuating the PLO from Lebanon, August-September 1982

U.S. and world attention returned to Lebanon with the June 1982 Israeli invasion. In August, an internationally brokered agreement brought Marines into Beirut to help escort the evacuation of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) forces from Beirut. The presence

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12. USAF reconnaissance (including AWACS), refueling, and airlift aircraft supported the Earnest Will operations. Basing restrictions prevented the use of USAF fighters and bombers in support of Earnest Will. U.S. Army special forces, including helicopter detachments operating off U.S. Navy ships, participated in the operation.

13. For some incidents involving U.S. Navy units, see entries 159, 160, 165, 167, 187, and 189 in CRM 90-246.

of U.S. (and other nations') naval forces helped, at that time, to limit the conflict in Beirut by removing an Israeli imperative to attack in the city of Beirut itself.[14]

Peacekeeping in Lebanon, August 1982–February 1984

Two weeks after departing Beirut following the PLO's departure, U.S. Marines returned to Beirut as part of the Multi-National Force (MNF) after Phalangist Christians massacred Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. Over the next year and a half, U.S. forces remained in Beirut and U.S. Navy ships remained offshore amidst a gradually escalating situation.[15] Like the deployments during the Iran Hostage Crisis, one has little choice but to judge these deployments as failures in terms of deterring and/or limiting the war among militias in Lebanon. Across the board, the United States failed to achieve its (poorly defined) policy objectives in Lebanon.

Central America, 1980s

Through the 1980s, U.S. military forces of various types deployed to Central America as part of a U.S. effort to limit the spread of communism by the Sandinistas from Nicaragua. Especially important was the establishment of a U.S. base at Palmerola, Honduras, and the rotation of U.S. units through that base and elsewhere in the region. Although the Central American operations principally involved the Army, U.S. naval forces participated in the full spectrum of activities, including surveillance patrols between Honduras and Nicaragua, and periods of deployments intended to deter Nicaraguan military action against Honduras or in Honduras against Contra guerrilla bases.[16] In this case we run into the problem of intentions: did the Sandinistas intend to invade Honduras and, if so, would it have happened in the absence of U.S. military deployments and threatened actions?

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14. USAF airlift and intelligence aircraft supported the evacuation effort.

15. During the USMC presence ashore, USAF airlift and intelligence aircraft supported the operation and USA artillery spotters supported efforts to identify hostile artillery batteries.

16. See, for examples of U.S. Navy activity, cases 166 and 174 in CRM 90-246.

Burma unrest, September 1988

During unrest in Burma, the Burmese military dictators restricted foreigners' ability to leave the country. Several nations attempted to get permission to send charter flights to evacuate those wishing to leave, but the Burmese repeatedly refused such requests. As tension mounted, the NCA ordered the movement of Amphibious Ready Group ALPHA to stand off Burma and to prepare for the conduct of a noncombatant evacuation operation of U.S. citizens and other foreigners (as determined by the U.S. ambassador). The ARG's orders called for it to remain outside the sight of land. Despite the 'semi-surreptitious' nature of the movement, the Burmese knew about the deployment.[17] U.S. Embassy officials believed that the Burmese became much more cooperative when they learned of the amphibious deployment. The Burmese then allowed the endangered U.S. and other foreign citizens to leave Burma by commercial air.

Korean Peninsula: Olympics (1988) and Nuclear Weapons (1994)

In addition to U.S. involvement with NATO and the defense of Western Europe, the United States has committed significant resources to the defense of South Korea since North Korean forces first attacked it on 25 June 1950. In addition to forward deployed standing forces from all four services, various crises along the DMZ have caused crisis deployments.[18] In addition, deployments have occurred to reassure South Korea of continued American commitment. This includes annual exercises (such as Team Spirit, involving forces from all four U.S. services) and deployments for significant events. Deployments have also occurred to deter potential North Korean aggression. For example, during the Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, the United States put forces in South Korea on alert and deployed additional forces to deter a feared disruption of the Olympics by North Korea. At one point, two CVBGs (*Nimitz* and *Midway*) were operating

17. In part because the U.S. Navy attache based in Bangkok, Thailand, traveled to Burma and informed the Burmese of the naval movement. Although alerted, no USAF or USA units deployed for this crisis.

18. See, for example of naval force deployments, cases 140, 152, 153, 169, and 171 in CRM 90-246.

in the Sea of Japan to provide an augmented U.S. Navy presence during the Olympics. But, although the North Koreans issued some propaganda rhetoric denouncing the Olympics, we cannot know whether the U.S. military deployments, the extensive South Korean security measures, and/or various diplomatic demarches actually deterred the North Koreans. (Again, because the intent of the 'aggressor' (North Korean) being deterred was not, is not, and cannot be known with any degree of assurance.)

More recently, during the continuing tension over the North Korean nuclear program, several U.S. Navy ships (minesweepers) have deployed to Korean waters and an aircraft carrier has remained on higher alert to help deter potential North Korean attacks. Out of the movements of forces from all the services over the past year, two seem to have received particular attention in North Korean propaganda efforts: the deployment of Patriot batteries and the intermittent presence of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers. Again, North Korean intent remains beyond knowing, thus it is impossible to determine whether these actions have deterred North Korean aggression over the past year or have actually affected the diplomatic process leading to an agreement limiting North Korea's nuclear program.

Hostages in Lebanon, August 1989

Following the Israeli capture of Sheik Obeid, Iranian-supported Hezbollah terrorists claimed that they had executed Lt.Col. William R. Higgins, USMC.[19] In response, President Bush ordered highly publicized movements of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps forces toward Lebanon and Iran. The *America* CVBG steamed from Singapore to the Arabian Sea; the *Coral Sea* CVBG left a port call in Alexandria, Egypt, ahead of schedule and took position off Lebanon in the eastern Mediterranean; and BB-61 *Iowa* broke off a port call in Marseilles, France, to steam east toward Lebanon. The cruiser *Belknap*, with the Sixth Fleet commander aboard, headed to the waters off Lebanon, canceling its participation in a port call in the Soviet Union.[20] Later that month, the crisis escalated as the terrorists threatened to kill

19. As is well known, the terrorists had almost certainly killed Col. Higgins well before the Israel raid to capture Obeid.

additional hostages if the Israelis did not meet a deadline for Obeid's release. U.S. forces moved toward Lebanon in response and press reports spoke of preparations for air strikes and other retaliatory measures. The visibility of heightened U.S. preparations for retaliation evidently influenced the terrorists' decision not to execute hostages despite the Israeli refusal to release Obeid in response to terrorist demands.

Iraqi pressure on Kuwait, July 1990

In response to mounting Iraqi pressure against Kuwait, the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered an exercise by Middle East Force (MEF) ships. The exercise was a combined exercise with the United Arab Emirates, and involved five MEF ships and three USAF aircraft (two tankers and one cargo plane).[21] The forces remained in theater on higher alert during the period prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In this case, if the NCA intended to deter Iraqi action against Kuwait, there was a clear failure of deterrence. We also cannot know Saddam Hussein's reading of the U.S. actions and what steps might have been necessary to deter Saddam Hussein in late July 1990.

This circumstance highlights the importance of credible deterrence and of combining all aspects of a national-political-economic strategy together to create such credibility. Although the United States may have sent a rather hesitant signal of deterrence through the small-scale Persian Gulf exercise, the political leadership (through the State Department and publicly) created the impression of U.S. non-involvement in the issue. Although entirely speculative, one can postulate easily a more credible attempt at deterring the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. For a more credible effort to deter Saddam Hussein, the rapid deployment of aircraft carriers, amphibious forces, and other power projection forces would have reinforced strong political statements warning of the consequences of an invasion. Even with a more assertive military and political posture, it is unclear whether the

20. USAF airlift and intelligence aircraft supported this effort.

21. Other USA and USAF forces could not deploy to theater due to host nation restrictions on the presence and activities of U.S. forces.

United States had the ability to take actions in late July 1990 that would have deterred Hussein from ordering an invasion of Kuwait. To start with, Kuwait (and other Arab countries) would not support any major actions. More importantly for the discussion at hand, it seems that Saddam Hussein doubted both the U.S. capability to effectively counter an Iraqi invasion and the willingness of the United States to risk American lives in 'far away' Kuwait. Since Hussein misperceived both capability and willingness, even more aggressive military and political posturing might have failed to deter him.[22]

We cannot know whether a determined effort to deter Saddam Hussein might have succeeded. All that we know is that, at most, a rather half-hearted attempt at deterrence using military forces occurred and that the U.S. government's political signals via other channels did not reinforce the military action. The record indicates that this failed to influence Hussein to moderate his actions.

Operation Desert Shield, August 1990-January 1991

Thus, despite the combined U.S.-U.A.E. exercise, Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. U.S. Navy forces, including two aircraft carriers (*Independence* and *Eisenhower*), provided the first U.S. forces in theater, and other naval forces were among the earliest U.S. reinforcements in the region. One of the stated reasons the United States (and other nations) deployed military forces to Saudi Arabia was to deter an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia. Again, we encounter the problem of intent. Did Saddam Hussein intend to invade Saudi Arabia or not? Good reasons exist to think not: the Iraqi military had made no logistical preparations to continue beyond Kuwait, and Saddam Hus-

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22. See Paul K. Davis and John Arquilla, *Deterring or Coercing Opponents in Crisis: Lessons from the War with Saddam Hussein,* RAND Report R-4111-JS, 1991, for one analysis indicating the difficulty of deterring Saddam Hussein.

    An analysis of the Iraqi released transcript of the July 1990 meeting between U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie and Hussein provides insight on what Saddam Hussein wanted to the world to believe (if nothing else). In this transcript, Hussein implies that he doubted both U.S. capability and U.S. will to act against Iraq in support of Kuwait.

sein's rhetoric focused on Kuwait. If intent existed, then it seems likely that U.S. military forces, including the Navy, played a critical role in deterring this invasion. In addition, the early presence of credible U.S. military power, as represented in the two aircraft carrier battle groups, might have played a role in King Fahd's acceptance of U.S. forces into Saudi Arabia. The presence of credible U.S. power projection forces signaled that the United States would not leave Saudi Arabia vulnerable while preparing deployments from the continental United States and thus reassured King Fahd so that he asked for U.S. military deployments.

Navy forces (both U.S. and allied) played the principal role in enforcing the UN economic sanctions against Iraq. The aggressive patrolling and boardings of suspect vessels deterred efforts to break the sanctions. No major seaborne violations of the sanctions occurred after the imposition of the Navy patrols.

Operation Provide Comfort, March 1991 on

Following the conclusion of Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein turned his remaining military forces against internal enemies, including Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq. In April 1991, the world community decided to intervene to protect the Kurds inside northern Iraq so as to end the flow of refugees into Turkey and Iran, amongst other goals. Although the USA and USAF provided the lion's share of the U.S. participation, U.S. Navy forces were involved. Navy efforts included deploying Marines from amphibious ships, a Seabee unit involved in engineering efforts ashore, and, on occasion, sending an aircraft carrier (both the *Forrestal* and *Theodore Roosevelt* CVBGs were involved in 1991) to provide air cover and to deter Iraqi intervention with the international relief effort. The interposition of forces and provision of relief supplies allowed the Kurds to return home by the summer of 1991. This case helps to illuminate the blurring between compulsion and deterrence. Originally, foreign military intervention compelled Saddam Hussein to remove his troops from Kurdish regions in northern Iraq. Since then, the threat of international military action has deterred Iraq from reintroducing ground forces in the area or from attempting to attack the Kurds from the air.

Enforcement of sanctions and other operations: Iraq, March 1991 and on

As noted above, the end of Desert Storm did not mean an end of the need for the application of military force against Iraq. For example, multi-national naval forces have maintained interdiction operations against merchant shipping to enforce UN sanctions against Iraq. The U.S. and its allies have also deployed military force on a number of occasions to coerce (compulsion) Saddam Hussein into observance of the conditions of the cease-fire accords following the Gulf War. On many occasions, Iraq has come into compliance following such demonstrative deployments (such as in July 1992, with the movement of two aircraft carriers toward Iraq when Iraq would not let UN inspectors examine nuclear sites); however, failures to comply have escalated to armed retaliation (such as the air and Tomahawk strikes in January 1993).

Interestingly, the situation with the no-fly zones deteriorated toward the end of December 1992. Although perhaps coincidental, this occurred after the aircraft carrier and amphibious ready group had left the Persian Gulf for Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope and the U.S. Army's Patriots had redeployed out of Kuwait. Did the absence of these 'deterring' forces lead Iraq to the calculation that it should test the allied resolve to enforce the no-fly zone? We can't know, but the record seems suggestive.

Although deployments of naval and other military forces have not 'bent' Saddam Hussein to full observance of international norms of conduct, clearly the presence of foreign military forces and the displayed willingness of the United States to respond quickly with force has proved the most potent means of insuring Iraqi compliance with international agreements (compulsion) and the promise of U.S. support to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait has deterred Hussein from attempting another invasion (assuming that Iraq has the capability and Saddam Hussein has the intention or desire to do so).

The October 1994 crisis, when two Iraqi divisions moved toward Iraq, saw a combination of political, diplomatic, and military tools to deter an Iraqi assault into Kuwait. Elements from all four services were

ordered to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf in well-publicized movements under the code-name Vigilant Warrior. The United States also sought allied support and deployments, and UN actions against Iraq were initiated. Saddam Hussein withdrew the threatening divisions. Again, we cannot know whether the U.S. actions deterred Hussein since we do not know whether the Iraqis intended or even contemplated invading Kuwait.

Enforcement of sanctions and other involvement, 2: Serbia, July 1992 and on

In June 1992, the NCA ordered U.S. forces toward Yugoslavia in support of UN relief efforts. U.S. military efforts since then have included USAF relief flights into the Sarajevo airport and airdrops into Eastern Bosnia, establishment of an Army hospital[23] in Croatia, U.S. Navy involvement in NATO patrols monitoring UN sanctions against Serbia, Navy and Marine Corps support of relief flight operations, monitoring (and now enforcement) of a no-fly zone over Bosnia, and involvement in a variety of actual strikes against targets in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Little suggests that these operations successfully supported the objective of limiting Serbian aggression and ending the fighting in the FRY (though, as of yet, the conflict has not spread into Kosova or Macedonia).

On the other hand, the threatened (and actual) use of U.S. military force to intervene in the conflict seems to have had greater effect at times. During the first month of the Clinton administration, fighting abated to a relatively low level as, evidently, Serbs feared U.S. military intervention based on candidate Clinton's rhetoric on the conflict. This caution dissipated as President Clinton did not act as strongly as his campaigning might have indicated.[24] Similarly, the Bosnian Serbs finally signed the Vance-Owen peace plan on 2 May 1993 after public reports stated that President Clinton had decided he would use force

23. On occasion, U.S. Navy personnel have manned this hospital unit which is a rotated responsibility between the Army and Navy.

24. Former Secretary of State George Schultz made this argument on an appearance on *Nightline*, 26 April 1993.

in Bosnia if the conflict did not end. The fact that the peace agreement fell through and strikes did not occur may have undercut the power of threats to influence events on the ground. In the almost twoy years since then, cycles of threatened and actual use of force (such as to create the safe haven zone around Sarajevo) have taken place. These actions have, at best, placed limits on the conflict within the former Yugoslavia.

This case helps to illustrate how military (including naval) forces do not operate in a vacuum in deterrence and compulsion. In this case, the threatened military force may have provided the required leverage to end the conflict through a diplomatic solution which then fell through as the adversary perceived a weakening of U.S. (and allied) willingness to use force to decisively influence events on the ground.

Reassuring Friends and Allies

Military forces can play many roles besides deterring or containing crises. They also "rekindle old friendships, develop new ones, and shape a better environment."[25] For example, the deployment of U.S. military forces (including naval forces) to Europe clearly aided in the peaceful development of Western Europe after the Second World War and probably contributed to the so-far generally peaceful (Yugoslavia aside) transition from communism to democracy in Eastern Europe. Similarly, the 40-year presence of U.S. troops in South Korea has likely deterred another war on the Korean peninsula. These forces, with the other forces in the Western Pacific, have probably contributed to the general prosperity in the region by reassuring allies and neutrals that U.S. presence would deter aggression. Such reassurance likely led, therefore, to a general dampening of any arms races that might have occurred otherwise.

Below are a few relevant cases.

25. In the words of Vice-Admiral W. Leighton Smith, March 1993.

Thailand, late 1970s and on

In the late 1970s, as Vietnamese forces infiltrated and then invaded Kampuchea (Cambodia), the United States strengthened and increased its exercise program with Thailand. These exercises, most notably the 'Cobra Gold' series of naval exercises, sought to signal continued U.S. involvement in the region and to reassure Thailand of U.S. support in the event of Vietnamese escalation of the conflict into Thailand. Such exercises remain an important element of Thai-U.S. relations.

Saudi Arabia, March 1979

In March 1979, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered the *Constellation* CVBG from the South China Sea to the Gulf of Aden, AWACS to Riyadh, and (unarmed) F-15s to Saudi Arabia for an exercise. These deployments had two main objectives: to monitor the fighting between North and South Yemen and to reassure the Saudis that the United States intended to remain in the region despite the fall of the Shah and would act to deter the Communists in South Yemen. A carrier remained in the area for the next three months. Such rapid deployments to the region likely aided U.S. efforts to gain base access upon the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait a decade later.

Morocco, January 1981

During the Cold War, U.S. military forces often responded to some form of Soviet military activity. At times, the U.S. government specifically intended that the U.S. military action would serve to reassure U.S. allies in the face of a potential Soviet threat. For example, in early 1981 the Secretary of State requested a U.S. Navy port visit in Agadir, Morocco, following the movement of three Soviet Navy ships to the region. CG-20 *Turner* conducted a well-publicized visit to Agadir in late January.

Conclusion

This paper only scratches the surface of the U.S. Navy's role in deterrence, compulsion, and reassurance. A number of limitations and key problems restricted the scope of the work:

- This effort relied on previous CNA work and does not represent new research on crisis situations. In particular, information on U.S. Army and Air Force operations is incidental to work on U.S. Navy and Marine Corps actions rather than due to specific research conducted to support this effort.
- The cases discussed above are merely illustrative rather than exhaustive.
- Most important, this area is a very difficult one for research and analysis. In essence, the problem of 'the fallacy of proving the negative' means that work in this field will always remain subjective in conclusions.

Readers are thus warned that they should not discount how the subjective and difficult nature of the subject matter limits the broader applicability of the work documented in this memorandum.

After such cautionary notes, however, we return to the issue of whether analytical devices exist that can reliably determine cause and effect in deterrence, compulsion, and reassurance situations. That neither political science nor operations research presents a reliable path toward proving something does not deny the reality or importance of an issue. Readers should not take anything in this paper as arguing that naval forces do not or cannot play a role in deterring and containing crises simply because the analytical devices at hand cannot supply us with an irreproachable proof of this role. In fact, those issues that do not lend themselves to a quantitative or rote solution may be the most important.

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Appendix: Deterrence theory

Without a doubt, attempting to prove the effectiveness of any attempt at compulsion, deterrence, or reassurance presents a researcher with a serious challenge. How does one "prove" that actions that did not happen might have happened or that something that did happen would have happened differently? Many political theorists have grappled with this issue, especially since the inauguration of nuclear deterrence almost 50 years ago.[1] To this date, despite all this effort, no one has developed a theoretical foundation adequate for an 'objective' analysis of deterrence, compulsion, and reassurance situations in the search for cause-and-effect relationships. [2]

In other words, researchers confront a fundamental problem when examining deterrence theory and contemplating using it as an analytical device.[3] On the one hand, policy-makers perceive deterrence situations (nuclear or otherwise) in the real world and they make policy

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1. This points to one of the problems in attempting to use deterrence theory as an analytical device. Much of the theory was conceived in terms of nuclear deterrence and thus might have limited applicability, at best, to non-nuclear scenarios.

2. For a review of recent literature in the context of convention deterrence, see Charles T. Allen, "Extended Conventional Deterrence: In from the Cold and Out of the Nuclear Fire?," *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 1994, pp. 203-233. For a recent review by two of the leading academic theorists, see two papers by Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein: *When Does Deterrence Succeed and How Do We Know?* Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security Occasional Paper 8, February 1990; and, "Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable," *World Politics*, vol. 42, no. 3, April 1990, pp. 336-369. This memorandum does not intend (nor pretend) to provide a comprehensive review of deterrence theory and literature. For further discussion, consult the footnotes in Allen, Lebow and Stein. Other authors to consult include Robert Jervis (*Perception and Misperception* and *The Logic of Images*) and Patrick Morgan (*Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis*).

decisions on the basis of what they believe will deter (or compel) an adversary. On the other hand, it is difficult to formulate a deterrence theory that can stand up to intense scrutiny and can be used as the basis for an analytical effort. In essence, there is a great difficulty in 'proving' that an action of one party actually influenced—whether modifying (i.e. compulsion) or forestalling (i.e. deterrence)—the actions of another party.

This is the critical problem in deterrence analysis: the difficulty, if not impossibility, of getting inside the minds of decision-makers and gaining their perception of the situation. Talking only of deterrence, in reviewing a situation where deterrence was claimed to have operated, we have a series of potentially unanswerable questions:

- Did the 'aggressor/adversary' intend to attack?
- Did the 'deterrer' perceive this threat?
- Did the deterrer take action against the threatened attack, and did the 'aggressor' perceive this as a deterrence action?
- If the attack (or other deterred action) did not occur, was this due to the deterrence action?

This inability to link a deterrence threat with a deterred action is a fundamental problem for analytical efforts. Thus, the fact that we can perceive one side's intent to deter does not mean that deterrence actually occurred. One standard work on deterrence theory presented three basic requirements for deterrence:

- Formulation of intent
- Acquisition of capabilities
- Communication of intent.[4]

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3. Deterrence (acting to forestall some action) and compulsion (acting to try to force an action) are, theoretically at least, often just two sides of the same coin. Although the discussion mainly uses the word 'deterrence,' essentially identical problems exist in examining compulsion.

4. Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1974.

Or more simply, deterrence requires capability and communication of an intent to use that capability.

The following is a simple formula for expressing deterrence:

$$D = p(C*W).$$

Or that the power of deterrence (D) equals the other party's perception (p) of the deterrer's capability (C) and will (W). Although useful for understanding the components of deterrents, perception and will do not lend themselves to quantification meaningful enough to allow some form of calculation.

The fact that the above criteria might actually get fulfilled in a specific situation does not, however, prove that deterrence exists or existed since the intent of the other ('deterred') party still remains to be examined. Additionally, we would also need to know whether:

- The 'aggressor' was aware of the 'deterrer's' actions to deter; and, even if perceived,
- These actions had any influence on the 'aggressor's' decision-making.

And, almost without exception, this intent and thinking behind decision-making lies beyond any reasonable means of examination.

The area of proving deterrence situations remains, it seems, a highly subjective one. All we can hope for are situations with greater degrees of agreement with more 'compelling' evidence in support of actual deterrence. With the general limitations of this field of study in mind, this quick-look memorandum remains highly subjective. ALthough a longer and more detailed research effort might simply lead to more exhaustive documentation, it might radically recast the discussions of individual cases. Readers of this document should remain aware of the subjective and tentative nature of the discussion. Other researchers (or this researcher with more time available for research) might derive radically different conclusions from the same set of cases.

Realizing that the results would remain subjective, a potential approach would involve building up numerous examples of U.S.

goals during specific crises against the presence or absence of specific forces. If adversaries never (or rarely) acted in the presence or threat of a specific element of U.S. power and acted in the absence of that element, that would indicate that this tool of power had value in deterrence, compellence, and reassurance situations. For example, we could examine the presence of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers against the actions of Saddam Hussein since 1990. A quick examination of the record provides some indications that the presence or absence of aircraft carriers may have been considered by Saddam Hussein in his decisions as to when and how to act. Table 1 provides a cursory version of this examination .

Table 1.Saddam Hussein's actions in the absence of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers

Time period	Activities of USN CVs	Iraqi actions
Late July, early August 1990	In the Mediterranean on normal operations and on exercises in Indian Ocean. Not moved to respond to threatened Iraqi actions.	Iraqi forces build up in southern Iraq in late July, move into Kuwait on 2 August 1990.
December 1992	CV moved to off Somalia in support of Operation Restore Hope.	Iraq escalates pressures against UN inspectors and begin violations of no-fly zone in Southern Iraq. Anti-aircraft weaponry move into Southern Iraq.
Early October 1994	CV on normal operations. No presence in Arabian Gulf.	Iraqi divisions move toward Kuwait.

A more detailed examination, however, might provide evidence of other factors or variables that better explain Iraqi action or inaction. Therefore, any analysis would have to take a detailed look at all the components of U.S. power (military, economic, and diplomatic) and how they were applied in the specific situation. Such detailed (and extensive) research lies outside the charter for this report.

Related CNA studies

The following are a number of related Center for Naval Analyses studies that might also be of interest:

Information Memorandum 334, *A Chronology of USMC Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations*, by Adam B. Siegel, September 1994

Information Memorandum 229, *Answering the 9-1-1 Call: U.S. Military and Naval Crisis Response Activity, 1977-1991*, by Thomas P.M. Barnett and Lt.Cdr. Linda D. Lancaster, USN, Revised August 1992

Information Memorandum 132, *A Sampling of U.S. Naval Humanitarian Operations*, by Adam B. Siegel, November 1990

Research Memorandum 94-42, *JTF Operations Since 1983*, by George Stewart, Scott M. Fabbri, and Adam B. Siegel, July 1994

Research Memorandum 93-240, *The Contexts of Military Interventions*, by Daniel Y. Chiu, Anne M. Dixon, and Henry H. Gaffney, December 1993

Research Memorandum 93-192, *National Security Strategy and Forward Presence: Implications for Acquisition and Use of Forces*, by Bradford Dismukes, March 1994

Research Memorandum 93-40, *Blue Hulls: Multinational Naval Cooperation and the United Nations*, by Jeffrey I. Sands, July 1993

Research Memorandum 90-246, *The Use of Naval Forces in the Post-War Era: U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps Crisis Response Activity, 1946-1990*, by Adam B. Siegel, February 1991

Occasional Paper 116, *Who Will Do What With What: Defining U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Roles, Functions, and Missions*, by Adam B. Siegel, May 1993

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