

# Introducing the Framework Model for the Evaluation of Deterrent Value of States

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\*Zia Ul Haque Shamsi<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The term ‘deterrence’ is closely intertwined with the national security of sovereign states and is frequently misunderstood within strategic literature. Some argue that acquiring specific arms and equipment is essential for achieving deterrence, while others contend that security hinges on the acquisition of Deterrent Value (DV) through various means, including but not limited to arms and equipment. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of deterrence—its definitions, conceptual framework, political objectives, and its role as a military strategy—is crucial before forming a reasoned judgment about its effectiveness as a safeguard for national security. This paper aims to construct a framework model delineating a state’s deterrent capability as the paramount guarantor of its national security. Employing both inductive and deductive reasoning, this model will objectively analyze the efficacy, or lack thereof, of the tools upon which the security architecture of any state is founded. By facilitating case studies of diverse states, the framework model will aid researchers in predicting future events and extracting relevant lessons from past occurrences.

## Keywords

Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons, National Security, Economic Security, Cyber Security, Pakistan

## Introduction

The value of the social sciences lies in their subjective nature, encompassing a diverse array of meanings, contexts, assumptions, and essences within each strategic term. Notably, terms such as ‘security,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘terrorism,’ ‘extremism,’ and even ‘deterrence’ lack universally agreed-upon definitions. This article strives for a degree of clarity, particularly concerning two of these terms: *deterrence* and *security*. The objective is to explore the inseparable linkages of these concepts before drawing

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<sup>1</sup>\*Corresponding Author: Zia Ul Haque Shamsi is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan  
E-mail: [ziashamsi58@gmail.com](mailto:ziashamsi58@gmail.com)

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conclusions regarding the pivotal role of deterrent capability in ensuring the national security of any state.

Given that the national security of any sovereign state represents its most paramount and indispensable national interest, one for which states may resort to warfare against perpetrators, it becomes imperative to grasp its fundamental components. Traditionally, strong militaries were regarded as the exclusive guarantors of a state's national security. However, in the evolving paradigm, military security constitutes just one facet of the broader national security imperatives for any state.

Since the reintroduction of the term 'hybrid warfare' (Nemeth, 2002), although its conceptual roots extend back to the teachings of the ancient Chinese sage Sun Tzu around 2500 years ago (Shamshi, 2023), non-military elements of national security have gained prominence over military considerations for ensuring the security of a state. The prioritization of these elements is contingent upon each state's unique threat perception, influenced by factors such as geographical location, topography, regional security dynamics, and diplomatic relations with neighboring states. With the contemporary understanding of national security encompassing both military and non-military dimensions, it is pertinent to explore the subject further to develop a framework for the evaluation of deterrence.

### **Note on Methodology**

To maintain objectivity, deductive reasoning is utilized, while inductive reasoning is employed to develop a novel framework for calculating and assessing the deterrent value of any given state. This aspect is inspired by Sun Tzu's precept of 'Know your Enemy and Know Yourself.' Qualitative analyses are conducted to examine various methodologies for determining a state's capabilities and capacities to confront adversaries of comparable or asymmetric strength. Relevant literature on deterrence, national security, and hybrid warfare is thoroughly reviewed and analyzed to ensure the research's relevance. Works such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (1963), Clausewitz's *On War* (2007), Liddle Hart's *Indirect Strategy* (2008), Bernard Brodie's *writings on deterrence*, and Mearsheimer's contributions to realism are consulted extensively. These sources significantly contribute to the development of a novel framework model, C-7, tailored for calculating and evaluating the Deterrent Value (DV) of any state.

### **Conceptualizing National Security**

Notwithstanding the significance of conventional deterrence, several nations rely on nuclear deterrent capability as a guarantor of state security. Therefore, it is essential to first understand the concept of national security within the context of the evolving paradigm (Five Essential Elements, n.d.). This author's definition of national security is inspired by the Australian phrase *no worries*, primarily because the concept has undergone a major shift in the changed paradigm and cannot be measured on the scale of military security alone. The other major elements of national security include political security, economic security, cyber security, and, conceivably, digital security in the fast-evolving Artificial Intelligence (AI) environment.

Firstly, the definitional conundrum warrants attention. As previously noted, there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of security or national security. Consequently, this paper undertook an examination of at least three reputable dictionaries to ascertain a linguistic definition. Accordingly, "the quality or state of being secure: such as freedom from danger (safety), freedom from fear or anxiety, freedom from the prospect of being laid off (job security)" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

“Security refers to all the measures that are taken to protect a place” (Collins Dictionary, n.d.a). Meanwhile, Cambridge defines security as the “protection of a person, building, organization, or country against threats such as crime or attacks by foreign countries” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Since all the lexicons pointed towards the safety aspects more than any other aspect, therefore, the definition(s) by different scholars for national security were considered.

According to Room (1993, p. 5), national security in terms of war, “a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war.” This definition aligns with the argument presented in this paper, emphasizing that nonmilitary aspects merit increased attention to ensure the national security of a state within the context of the evolving paradigm. Hence, each component of national security is succinctly defined to elucidate its role in ensuring security and thereby supporting the deterrent capability of the state.

### **Political Security**

Political security, an integral component of human security, holds comparable significance to economic and military security (Holmes, 2014; United Nations, 1994). Without a robust political system, no state can earn a respectable status in the comity of nations. The entire state machinery that is needed to manage the state of affairs to ensure the security of the state, as well as the well-being of the people, largely depends on *how* sound and stable the political system of the country is.

In any democratic society, elections are fundamental to democracy, embodying principles of representation and civic engagement, thus necessitating adherence to constitutional provisions for timely conduct. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure a fair and equitable environment for all political leaders and parties, thereby preventing the emergence of law-and-order issues stemming from legitimate political activities. Crucially, all state institutions must abstain from any form of political manipulation or interference in governance, as this is the exclusive responsibility of the elected government, accountable to the populace in subsequent elections.

The concept of ‘political engineering,’ defined as the deliberate structuring of political institutions to achieve specific objectives, underscores the importance of maintaining the integrity of political processes (Reilly, 2007). Recent elections in Turkey serve as a testament to the potential for democratic expression in the developing world (Clarke, 2023), highlighting the significance of political stability in safeguarding core national interests and, ultimately, the state's security.

### **Economic Security**

Another important element of national security is the economic security of any state (Neu & Wolf, 1994). No nation can peacefully coexist or advance within the international community without achieving economic independence and security. The most challenging aspect of an economic downturn is that the nation struggles to fulfill its legitimate security requirements without compromising its national development, thereby directly impacting the components of human security. The economy of a state not only influences its political standing within the international community but also enables the government to establish its spending priorities. Domestic political considerations may prompt the government to allocate greater resources toward specific areas that may not align optimally with the needs of the populace.

Moreover, the regional security environment may dictate that the government allocate a substantial amount of its earnings towards the sustenance of security infrastructures. However, any government that ignores the public sector development spending and fails to provide relief to the common citizen compromises their national security.

In the contemporary competitive global landscape, nations that depend on international donor agencies or ‘friendly’ donations for sustenance, often due to significant national debts, confront elevated risks of compromising their national security objectives. Hence, economic security emerges as a cornerstone, as no nation can legitimately assert ‘security’ if its economic underpinning is unstable. Even with formidable armed forces and secure borders, an economically dependent state may struggle to assert its sovereignty in the modern paradigm.

Such states find themselves beholden to their donors, who wield considerable influence. Donors may demand repayment of loans, seize pledged assets, seek concessions on national security matters, or even coerce the state into compliance. Additionally, the ability to maintain and enhance conventional and nuclear deterrent capabilities hinges heavily on economic viability. Nuclear capabilities are not static but demand substantial ongoing investment for improvement and innovation. Thus, economic stability is not only vital for overall security but also for the sustainability of defense capabilities.

Inspired by the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s quote for the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), “[...] A country without a strong Air Force is at the mercy of any aggressor. Pakistan must build up its air force as quickly as possible. It must be an efficient air force second to none and must take its right place with the Army and the Navy in securing Pakistan’s Defence” (Hali, 2022, Para 9).

## **Cyber Security**

Historically, rivals have made efforts to physically disrupt the communication systems of the adversary; however, in present times, cyber warfare has taken up this space. Similarly, thoughtfully devised tactics/strategies were adopted to access the information systems and create mechanisms of misinformation and disinformation within the opposing forces (Shamsi, 2022).

While newly developed technological tools have significantly benefited human society, they have concurrently put them at risk of being disrupted in terms of privacy, fake news, and vulnerabilities in financial transactions. One such illicit activity, often committed by criminally minded computer experts, is known as *Hactivism*. The term denotes individuals who illegally access personal data with the intent to cause psychological and financial harm. Likewise, the reports of cyber-attacks on financial institutions siphoning off huge sums have become routine. Although no large-scale cyber-attack has yet been reported in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, numerous systems related to the economy, defense, business, and decision-making processes at all levels remain vulnerable.

The employment of cyber-warfare as part of a strategy to disrupt ‘enemy’ lines of communication and cause harm to its potential capabilities has made state institutions highly vulnerable. Similarly, personal security (as an important element of human security) remains vulnerable to disruptions in communication, location tracking, and financial transactions, among other aspects. Therefore, it is necessary for related international organizations to formulate legal frameworks to safeguard individuals’

rights, ensuring that cyber warfare does not encroach upon their privacy or lead to the unlawful deprivation of their financial assets.

As indicated above, cyber-warfare, due to its immense power to disrupt communication systems, is considered a more suitable tool for offensive action against its rivals. Such an action can paralyze the related system through disruption of the defined timeframe. These systems may include highly sensitive defense establishments, including command and control systems, missile firing sites, air defense systems, and, more concerningly, the decision-making mechanism at the strategic level.

In view of the above, 'cyber war' and 'cyber conflicts' are becoming prominent forms of *hybrid threats* in the evolving paradigm. With the advent of digital technologies, the rate of cyber-attacks has increased, such that states now commonly employ cyber-attacks against their rivals (Rutherford, 2019). Furthermore, Hunter and Pernik (2015) argue that sophisticated campaigns integrating low-level conventional and special operations, offensive cyber and space actions, and psychological operations utilizing social and traditional media are employed to influence public perception and shape international opinion.

Additionally, cyberspace has emerged as a primary domain for conducting cyber warfare (Almäng, 2019). Hybrid warfare (as a tactic): Cyber-attacks have the potential to directly impact civilian populations, inducing emotional, psychological, and economic consequences. Due to the subtle nature of cyber warfare operations, both state and non-state actors keep increased flexibility in their actions compared to traditional state powers. However, cyber security, as a crucial component of national security, hinges largely on a country's capacity to invest in and adopt modern technologies, including AI and space technologies (National Cyber Security Strategy, 2013). Yet, its effectiveness is also contingent on the country's economic security, as technology-intensive elements necessitate substantial investments for development and maintenance.

### **Environmental Security**

Environmental security only gained attention in national security discussions when its impact began to affect both climate and human lives, particularly due to the excessive use of explosive materials (Barnett, 2010). The Siachen War between India and Pakistan in 1983 serves as a poignant example, causing more casualties than any other conflict between the South Asian rivals and leading to the rapid degradation of the glaciated region (Hakeem, 2022; Zain, 2006).

While international forums actively debate environmental degradation resulting from hazardous weaponry, and efforts have been made through arms control and disarmament treaties to mitigate its effects, this paper elucidates the intersection of 'environmental security' with regional 'politico-military dynamics.' Pakistan, for instance, has been embroiled in conflict since its independence in 1947, particularly over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) (Hussain, 2021). Similarly, Afghanistan has endured four decades of warfare, with significant spillover effects on Pakistan due to geographical proximity (Karim, 2017).

Therefore, this article explores environmental security through two primary dimensions: the degradation induced by hazardous war materials and the politico-military environment prevailing in conflict zones. The ongoing Siachen conflict between India and Pakistan serves as an illustrative case, showcasing environmental deterioration, particularly evident in the accelerated melting of glaciated mountains attributed to military activities (Siachen, 2023).

Similarly, the politico-military atmosphere remains volatile and unpredictable, often exacerbated by irresponsible rhetoric from leadership on both sides, driven by political expediency. India's orchestration of the Pulwama incident and subsequent Balakot attacks stand as examples to which Pakistan swiftly retaliated the following day (Yusuf, 2019; Siyech, 2019). The aerial clashes in February 2019 had the potential to escalate both horizontally and vertically, posing a significant national security threat to the region.

### **Military Security**

Traditionally, states concentrated their resources on building a strong standing military force to defend territorial integrity and sovereignty (Idachaba, 2019). Based on the perceived threat and geographical considerations, the security infrastructure was developed, giving priority to the army, navy, or air force. However, with the advent of nuclear technology, the relatively more developed states immediately grabbed the opportunity to monopolize nuclear technology. These states formed an exclusive group of nations that could afford the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons (US, USSR, UK, France, and China)<sup>2</sup>. The rest of the world was forced to get deterred by these P5 countries for the decades to come. Hence, the states, confident of their military security due to an expanded security infrastructure, suddenly felt insecure and started to look for other options.

Regardless of the strength of a state's security apparatus, both developed and developing nations remain vulnerable to external interventions by more powerful states. This underscores the importance of recognizing and prioritizing various elements of national security, as briefly outlined above. The Afghan War serves as a poignant example, where the (former) Soviet Union, despite its extensive security infrastructure and an arsenal of traditional and advanced weaponry, lost its political identity without a single shot being fired on its own soil.

Similarly, Ukraine, despite its size and military capabilities, is rapidly losing ground and territorial integrity, largely due to a lack of readiness in other elements of national security, such as diplomacy, economy, cyber warfare, and support from allies, to confront a global power. Similarly, Iraq, once a regional powerhouse with a formidable military infrastructure and nuclear ambitions, faltered against an international coalition formed to liberate Kuwait following its invasion in 1990 under the leadership of its now-deceased President Saddam Hussein.

On the other hand, Qatar, a small peninsular state in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, survived an extremely precarious security situation when, on 5 June 2017, several brotherly neighboring countries imposed a blockade (land, air, sea). It was none other than the non-military effort that saved Qatar from a Kuwait-like situation.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in the contemporary technology-driven environment, where social media has elevated public opinion to a critical and influential force, military security alone is insufficient to ensure the national security of any state.

The aforementioned elements of national security are essential for fortifying a state's capacity to ensure its security both internally and externally. In the current

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<sup>2</sup> The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was an Agreement signed in 1968 by several of the major nuclear and non-nuclear powers that pledged their cooperation in stemming the spread of nuclear technology.

<sup>3</sup> Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

paradigm, no single element can suffice as a *guarantor* of peace, stability, and security, as national security is now more closely aligned with human security than ever before.

### **Conceptualizing Deterrence**

To understand the term ‘deterrence, at least three sources were consulted for their definitional explanations. With regards, the term was conceived as “the act of making someone decide not to do something, [...] the act of preventing a particular act or behavior from happening” (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d.).

According to Merriam-Webster, deterrence is defined as “the maintenance of military power to discourage attack—nuclear deterrence” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b). Likewise, it is described as “the prevention of something, especially war or crime, by having something such as weapons or punishment to use as a threat” (Collins Dictionary, n.d.b).

Interestingly, each of these definitions associates deterrence primarily with the evolution of nuclear weapons, implying that deterrence (as a concept) or strategy did not exist in the conventional era. However, this paper argues that deterrence is one of the oldest strategies for ensuring personal or collective security and advancing one’s interests and influence. It has been selectively effective over time. The primary objective of a deterrence regime is to dissuade adversaries from planning and executing acts of violence or war by instilling fear of the consequences they cannot afford.

Therefore, the concept of deterrence must be understood in its entirety—meaning, concept, policy, and strategy—before it is considered a primary tool for the security of a state. In modern times, the concept and definitions draw reference to the birth of nuclear weapons in 1945. Brodie and Dunn (1946), the strategists of nuclear deterrence theory, were of the view that “[...] if aggressor feared retaliation in kind, he would not attack.” Explaining further, “[...] thus far, the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them” (Brodie & Dunn, 1946, p. 74). There is little doubt that this traditional meaning and concept of deterrence worked well between the Cold War adversaries because they understood its consequences and perhaps learned some lessons after the Cuban Missile Crisis (CMC) of 1962.<sup>4</sup> However, in the changed paradigm, deterrence cannot be accomplished by military means only, and to achieve a credible deterrence, a combination of hard and soft power is essentially required to ensure national security.

### **Inseparable Linkage between Deterrence and Security**

The above discussion on the definitional explanations of security and deterrence leads to the conclusion that there is an inseparable linkage between security and deterrence. Because non-military aspects are the overriding factor in the national security of any state under the changed paradigm, and military security is just one element of deterrent capability that a state must acquire. In either case, deterrent capability acquired to ensure one’s own security against a relatively bigger and stronger state or expand influence onto relatively smaller and weaker states will significantly play a role in the process. Therefore, it is incumbent upon academics, researchers of international affairs, and strategic studies to logically, rationally, and dispassionately evaluate the state’s

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<sup>4</sup> Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 is considered the most dangerous situation where the Cold War rivals, the US and USSR, came close to nuclear war over the employment of Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) by the Soviets in Cuba.

deterrent capability to predict a future event and perhaps help the decision-makers in strategic decision-making.

### **Evaluating the Deterrent Value of a State: Framework Model C-7**

To logically evaluate the deterrent value of a state as a guarantor of security, it is necessary to evaluate it on certain universal criteria. Since the deterrence theory gained prominence in the post-nuclearized era, it would be prudent to evaluate the state's capabilities on its status: Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) and Non-Nuclear Weapon State (NNWS).

For this purpose, this paper has developed a 'Framework Model C-7' to evaluate the deterrent value of any state (NWS and NNWS) against any other NWS and NNWS. The C-7 Model represents the *Capability, Credibility, Capacity, Communicability, Command, Control, and Conduct*, with a strong political will of the evaluated state. The C-7 Model is expected to help the researchers evaluate the deterrent value of NWS against NWS, NWS against NNWS, and NNWS against NNWS (conventional domain).

States pursue nuclear capabilities for a myriad of reasons, as noted by Cruz (2020). Nonetheless, two primary rationales stand out: firstly, to bolster the security apparatus of the state, and secondly, to augment influence by attaining an elevated status within the international community of nations. Therefore, it is evident that the deterrent capability of an NWS will be largely different than that of an NNWS. Also, it would differ against an NWS, and an NNWS, as well. However, to maintain objectivity, a common framework is being developed for ease of understanding and logical conclusions.

### **Capability of States**

Generally, the capability is reflective of the state's abilities and the intent of the leadership and does not necessarily reflect military capability alone but also includes its non-military attributes. These may include the will-to-do, diplomacy, economy, and support of the people to the state institutions. Moreover, capability must be evaluated in both domains: *Offensive* (i.e., active) and *Defensive* (i.e., passive).

*Offensive* capabilities may include Launch Platforms (Airborne, Land-based, Sea-based), Missiles (Ground-based, Air-Launched, Sea Launched Ballistic Missiles-SLBMs), Bombs (GPS-guided stand-off, IR-guided, Over the target), Airborne Jammers, and Ground-based jammers, etc. Whereas the *Defensive* capabilities may include Ballistic Missile Defence Systems (BMDs), silos, camouflage and concealment, dispersal, depth, etc.

The relative size of the nuclear arsenals will add to the deterrent capability significantly because the greater numbers of nuclear weapons will certainly make it more difficult for any adversary to destroy the deployed nuclear weapons in a single and surprise attack. Whereas the debate may continue on the efficacy of numbers in the calculation of deterrent value, the numbers do become a factor while planning an operation for and against the NWS.

### **Credibility of States**

Subsequently, an imperative consideration pertains to the credibility of a state in executing its intended operations. The importance of credibility in each domain, leadership (i.e., practicality), and equipment (i.e., technical) cannot be overemphasized. The deterrent value of the state cannot be effective if the opponent doubts the credibility of the rival, either in its leadership's determination or the technical efficiency of the



acquired capability. This is one reason why statements and body language are so keenly monitored by opponents during peacetime. Any miscalculations in this regard often lead to violence and undesirable situations.

Several pertinent instances underscore this point, such as the US cautionary message to the Taliban government subsequent to the tragic events of 9/11, urging them to surrender Osama Bin Laden under threat of repercussions (“US Warned Taliban after 9/11 Attacks,” 2011). Similarly, in a more contemporary context, (former) Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan issued warnings to India in the aftermath of the Pulwama incident, advising against any adventurism (“Pakistan Warns India against Attacking,” 2019). However, in each of the above-mentioned situations, Saddam, Mullah Omer, and Modi doubted the credibility of the subject warnings and hence faced undesirable consequences. Conversely, the subdued reaction of the United States to warnings issued by Iraq’s President Saddam Hussein weeks prior to the invasion of Kuwait bolstered the resolve of the Iraqi leader, ultimately leading to the execution of his intended invasion (Hoagland, 2024).

### **Capacity of States**

The capacity of a state to absorb, execute, or respond to a challenge is another important element of the C-7 Model, or in simple terms, the war *stamina* of the state. Capacity includes a host of factors and each one critical in its domain and may become an overriding factor when the time to decide comes. Conceivably, the most important could be the organizational capacity to either *act* or *react* in a certain security situation. The assessment of a state’s deterrent efficacy may encompass several facets, including the resilience of its military capacity, technological assistance before, during, and after projected operations, the economic strength enabling resistance or execution of such operations, and conceivably, the state’s political and intellectual acumen to confront international pressure if adverse circumstances arise, as well as its ability to garner diplomatic backing when deemed necessary.

### **Interstate Communicability: A Multidimensional Analysis**

Another important factor that may determine the strengths or the weaknesses in the deterrent value of any state is its communication of the intent or the strategic communication by its leadership. The opponents would keenly look at the posturing of the state, which may be done through statements by the responsible officials or the actions of the state. The statement has to be clear, concise, and specific. This may make the intent clear or keep it ambiguous, would largely depend on the policy of the state and the strategy of the services. The deterrent value of any state is seriously affected if the deterring state is unable to impress upon the state to be deterred state. If the adversary doubts the intent of the opponent, this is one area that may create confusion and lead to an irreversible situation. Therefore, it is necessary that the politico-military leadership of the state, initiator, or recipient must desist from issuing irresponsible statements to domestic audiences on security issues.

### **Command Structure of the States**

This paper has adopted a nuanced approach, delineating the conventional association between command and control. It argues that these two elements possess different connotations and merit separate evaluations. Command specifically pertains to military command, intelligence, and communication networks and their resilience against physical and technical intrusions.

As discussed earlier, cyber warfare poses a significant threat in this regard, making the security of military command structures paramount, particularly against technologically advanced adversaries. Moreover, the paper posits the significance of robustness and technological sophistication within military command structures. Whether domestically developed or adapted from external models, ensuring their security and technological integrity is paramount for safeguarding against potential threats.

### **Control Structure of the States**

The control aspect primarily concerns the organizational oversight of sensitive technology and systems. Whether these systems fall under political or military jurisdiction, each possesses distinct implications stemming from its operational methodologies. A critical consideration pertains to the authorization of the use or non-use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in response to existential threats to the state. Furthermore, the effectiveness and efficiency of these systems necessitate evaluation within a historical context, encompassing their development, testing, and deployment phases. For instance, the North Korean nuclear program exemplifies heightened opacity due to the pervasive control exerted by its dictatorial regime (Kitano, 2016). Consequently, uncertainties persist regarding the future of security in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly concerning South China (Guan, 2000) and the complex dynamics surrounding the Taiwan Strait issue (Mc Devitt, 2004; Qimao, 1996).

### **Conduct of the States**

Under the umbrella of ‘Conduct of the States,’ an evaluation is conducted on both internal and external behavior during crises. This assessment encompasses various factors such as the state’s historical background, value system, socio-cultural composition, ethnic and demographic makeup, domestic political framework, and type of governance. Opposing entities scrutinize the state’s governance structure, defense expenditures, citizen welfare, education system, research and development capabilities, and the state’s level of economic self-sufficiency.

Additionally, the state’s behavior in international forums and its political alignment with global and regional powers are crucial determinants of its conduct, both domestically and internationally. Of particular significance is the state’s adherence to international obligations, as it reflects its future trajectory. Notably, North Korea serves as a prime example of poor conduct among nuclear-armed states, displaying defiance towards international obligations, particularly in the contested Korean Peninsula region (Howell, 2023).

### **Methodological Framework: Guidelines for Academic Inquiry**

The C-7 Model can be deployed for either NWS or NNWS. Also, this may work in situations where the researchers are war-gaming between NWS versus NWS, NWS versus NNWS, and NNWS versus NNWS. The sole purpose should be to carry out a dispassionate analysis to determine the future outcome of an impending conflict. However, once the deterrent value of a state is determined, its findings must be placed before the decision-making body of the country with emphasis on the following factors:

#### ***Doability***

Based on the evaluations of the deterrent value, the leadership may opt to pursue either an offensive or counteroffensive strategy, assessed through the lens of feasibility or

*doability*. While this may entail revisiting certain processes, it is imperative for the leadership to deliberate on the feasibility aspects of potential operations thoroughly. Numerous historical examples highlight the consequences of incorrect information provided to political leadership, leading to ill-advised decisions and exacerbating problems (Dunne, 2011; Bassil, 2012)

For instance, the Kargil conflict of 1999 in South Asia was launched without proper knowledge and approval from political leadership (Lavoy, 2009). Similarly, in the Middle East, President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair were presented with manipulated data regarding Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) (Davies, 2010). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the research team to present accurate data to the decision-making body of the state, accompanied by clear, concise, and focused recommendations regarding the feasibility of potential operations.

### ***Preferability***

Correctly assessing preferability is another crucial aspect before finalizing a decision to undertake certain operations. Even if the evaluation of deterrent value is positive and the operation is deemed feasible, it is essential to question whether it is the preferable course of action. This assessment should take into account the global and regional environment, as well as the timing of the operation in relation to the state's current priorities.

For instance, Pakistan's Kargil operation was not a preferable option when the political leadership was actively engaged in efforts to mend relations with India following the nuclear tests of May 1998, initially conducted by India and subsequently by Pakistan. Similarly, while Iraq's invasion of Kuwait might have been feasible due to Kuwait's limited capacity to resist, it should not have been deemed a preferable option for the invaders, given the broader geopolitical ramifications.

### ***Affordability***

Indeed, every operation undertaken by a state carries an inherent cost, which extends beyond material expenses to include socio-cultural ramifications. It is imperative to conduct a rational cost-benefit analysis to weigh these factors. For example, numerous military operations led by the US and its allies faced vehement protests from the public across the US and Europe. Public opinion, particularly in the developed West, holds significant sway, especially with the advent of social media. Additionally, the political cost of a decision must be calculated before reaching a conclusion. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 serves as a stark example of failing to consider the political repercussions of such actions.

### ***Acceptability***

Lastly, the acceptability of a planned operation must be carefully deliberated both internally and externally, perhaps even involving allies. It is essential to assess whether a state's actions will be acceptable to both domestic and international audiences. Moreover, the legality of the action must always be evaluated alongside ethical and moral considerations.

Examples abound where actions were not accepted by the international community: Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait (Hoagland, 2024), the Saudi-led quartet's blockade of Qatar in June 2017 (Cherkaoui, 2018; Nonneman, 2022), and Pakistan's incursion into Kargil in 1999 (Lavoy, 2009). These instances underscore the importance of considering the broader implications and potential reactions to state actions. Only after conducting thorough evaluations can it be reasonably assumed that

necessary precautions have been taken, thereby enabling states to make informed decisions on strategic matters.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the inseparable connection between deterrence and security cannot be overstated. Therefore, understanding the significance of deterrent value is paramount, necessitating careful evaluation and precise execution to achieve desired outcomes. The Framework Model C-7, when coupled with considerations of ‘Doability, Preferability, Affordability, and Acceptability’ (DPA2), offers a comprehensive approach to planning future operations and retrospectively analyzing past events to glean valuable insights. Ultimately, researchers must analyze the probability of success for proposed operations, enabling decision-makers to make informed choices. It is therefore argued that academic experts should thoroughly examine the C-7 Model and provide recommendations for improvement before its integration into strategic literature, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance in contemporary security discourse.

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