


WINNING BEFORE THE FIGHT

AN ARMED SUASION APPROACH TO COUNTERING NEAR PEER COMPETITION

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AGENDA

- 
- Concept
 - Context
 - Continuum
 - Categories
 - Considerations
 - Principles
 - Challenges
 - Conclusion

CONCEPT

“...armed suasion is nothing less than power, or more precisely that portion of the power of states that derives from their military strength.”

--Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*

1. Framework for arranging non-combat military activities by coercive or persuasive intent
2. Explanation of different threat and persuasion structures and associated considerations
3. Set of principles for arranging military activities in competition

The desired result is that United States be able to:

- Build, maintain, or regain credibility
- Shape near peer competitor decision making and behaviors
- Manage risk of unintended escalation to crisis and conflict

DETERRENCE

Presentation of a credible threat of counteraction that causes target to choose not to act for fear of failure, risk, or consequences.

--JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*

COMPELLENCE

“The threat that...requires the punishment be administered *until* the other acts, rather than *if* he acts.”

--Tom Schelling, *Arms and Influence*

INDUCEMENT

“...opportunities for cooperation but from a position of strength and based on our national interests.”

-- 2018 NDS, *Unclass Summary*

CONTEXT

“The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by what the National Security Strategy classifies as revisionist powers.”

--2018 National Defense Strategy, Unclassified Summary

DOD strategy: Compete, deter, and win in complex security environment:

1. Reemergence of near peer “revisionist power” competitors

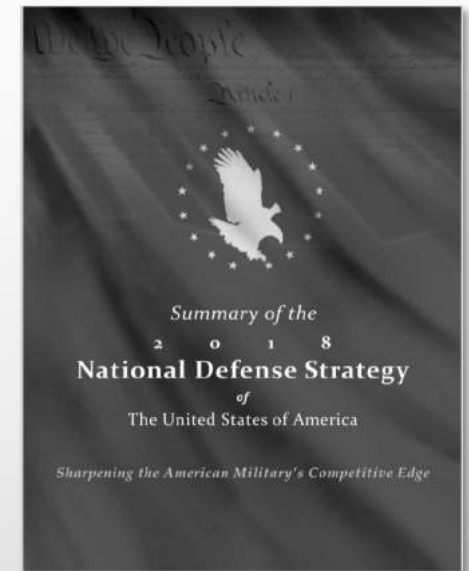
1. Modernizing militaries and/or nuclear arsenals

2. Coercing neighbors short of armed conflict and undermining international system from within

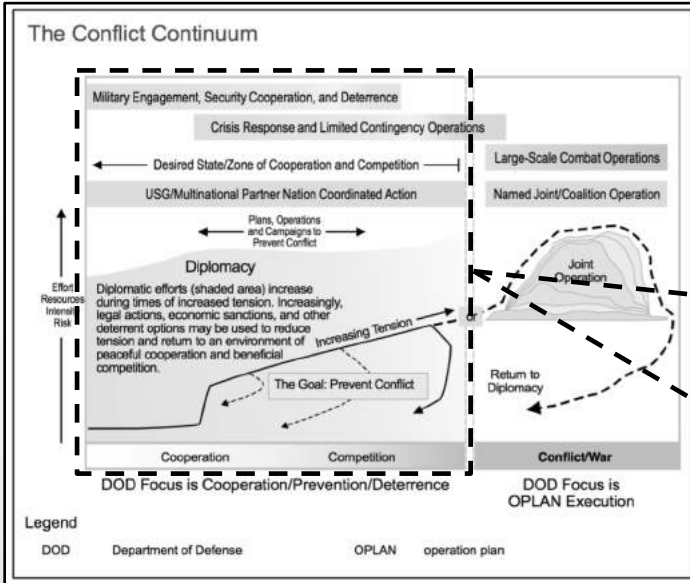
2. U.S. military advantage contested in every domain

3. Rogue nations and violent extremist organizations destabilizing regions

4. Lethal and disruptive battlefield; operations conducted at increasing speed and reach

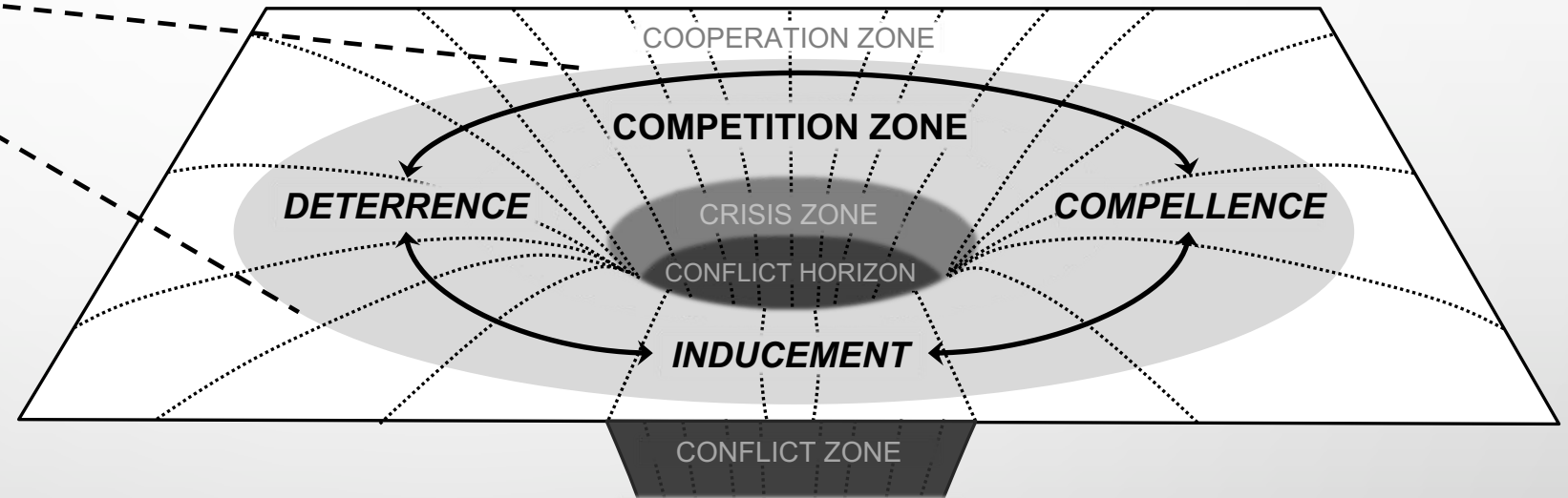


CONTINUUM



Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations, VI-2.

Armed suasion attempts to shape near peer options in competition by assessing U.S. deliberate and dynamic non-combat military activities through their value as **deterrents, compellents, or inducements.**



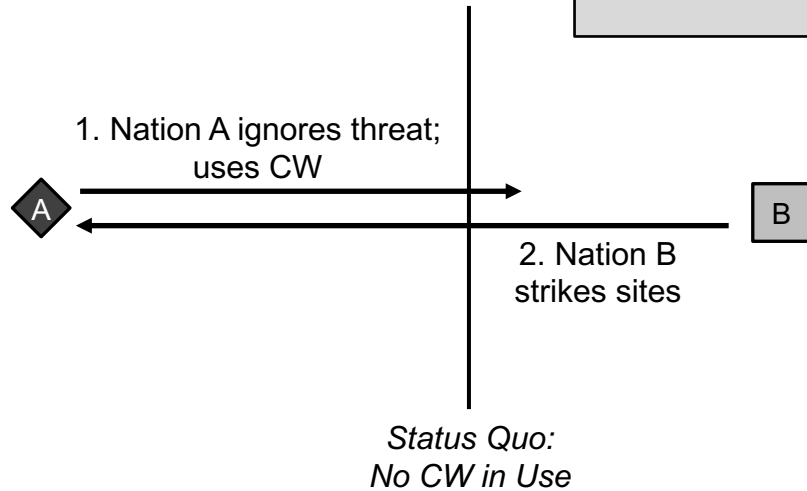
Challenge: deterrence, compellence, and inducement operate according to different structures and considerations but are often confused, leading to suboptimal outcomes.

DETERRENCE

Simplified Graphical Illustration of Threat Structure

Scenario: Nation A (Target) has chemical weapons and is in the midst of a civil war, though no chemical weapons have been used (status quo). Nation B (Challenger) is concerned Nation A will use chemical weapons.

Challenger's Threat:
If CW used, then we will strike CW-related sites.



Terms

Coercive Threat: In armed suasion, a demand made by one actor to another, backed by the implicit/explicit threat of military force.

Challenger: the actor that issues a deterrent or compellent threat.

Target: the actor that is the intended recipient of the threat.

Action Type

**Deterrent
(by punishment)**

Challenger Objective

**Defend Status Quo -
Target Chooses Inaction**

Key Words

“If...Then”

Related Concepts

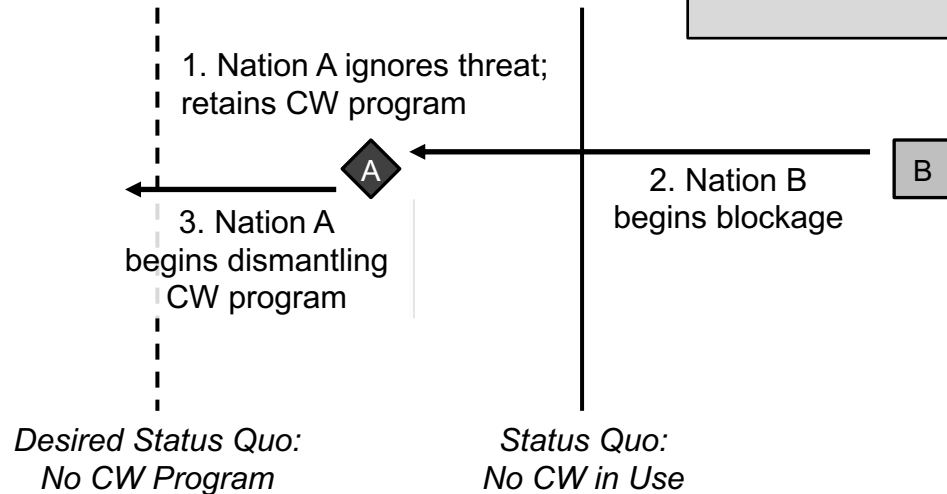
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COMPELLENCE

Simplified Graphical Illustration of Threat Structure

Scenario: Nation A (Target) has chemical weapons and is in the midst of a civil war, though no chemical weapons have been used (status quo). Nation B (Challenger) is concerned Nation A will use chemical weapons.

Challenger's Threat:
We will blockade ports **until** CW program dismantled.



Terms

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Challenger: the actor that issues a deterrent or compellent threat.

Target: the actor that is the intended recipient of the threat.

Action Type

Compellent

Challenger Objective

Change Status Quo -
Target Chooses Action

Key Words

“Until”

Related Concepts

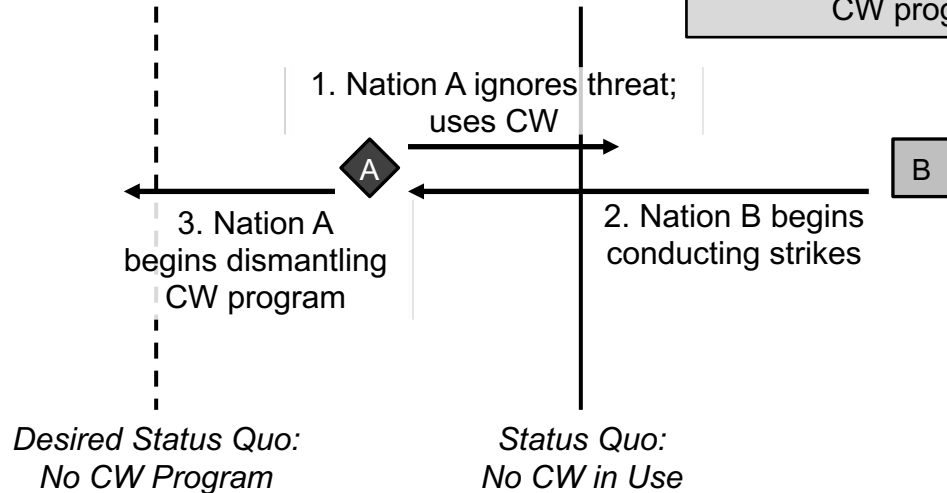
De-escalation
Roll-back

DETERRENCE-COMPELLENCE HYBRID

Simplified Graphical Illustration of Threat Structure

Scenario: Nation A (Target) has chemical weapons and is in the midst of a civil war, though no chemical weapons have been used (status quo). Nation B (Challenger) is concerned Nation A will use chemical weapons.

Challenger's Threat:
If CW used, then we strike CW-related sites until steps taken to dismantle CW program.



Terms

Coercive Threat: In armed suasion, a demand made by one actor to another, backed by the implicit/explicit threat of military force.

Challenger: the actor that issues a deterrent or compellent threat.

Target: the actor that is the intended recipient of the threat.

Action Type

Deterrence- Compellence Hybrid

Challenger Objective

Change Status Quo After Target Ignores Deterrence

Key Words

"If...Then...Until"

Related Concepts

De-escalation Roll-back

INDUCEMENT

“A sophisticated approach to conflict management...would seek to discourage confrontation by attempting to reduce both the need *and* the opportunity to carry it out.”

--Richard Ned Lebow, The Deterrence Deadlock: Is There a Way Out?

- Inducements are activities designed to give the competitor options
- Inducements provide face-saving benefits; NOT just a promise to withhold punishment
- Should be consistent with the challenger’s desired goals yet appealing to the competitor
- Inducements should allow the competitor to save face, especially its domestic audience

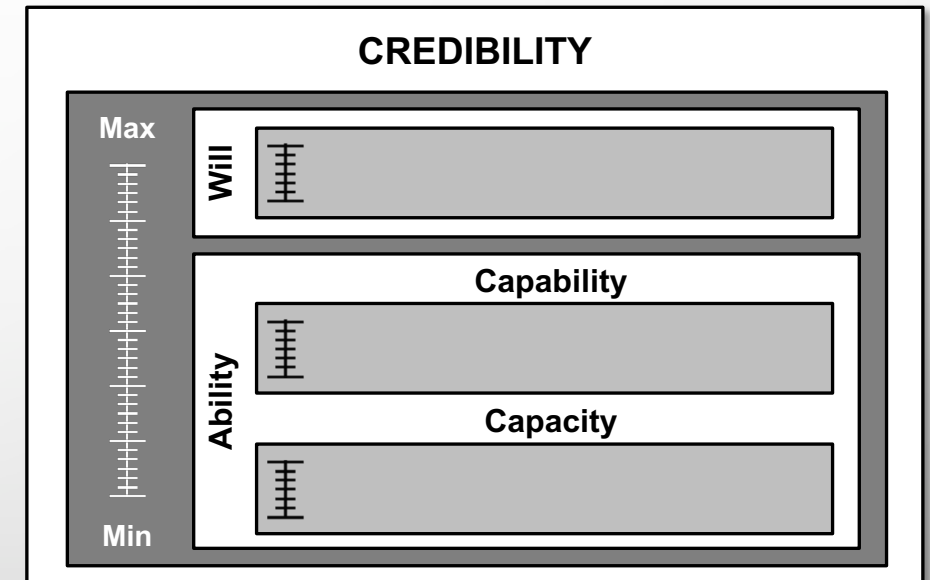
Action Type	Inducement
Challenger Objective	Provide Target Options
Key Words	“Offer/Give”
Related Concepts	Off-ramps Face-saving

CREDIBILITY

“...the power to hurt is most successful when held in reserve. It is the threat of damage, or of more damage to come, that can make someone yield or comply.”

-- Tom Schelling, *Arms and Influence*

- Credibility derived from perceived will and ability to use military power
- Paradox: using military power depletes will and ability - future credibility tied to current availability
- Managing risk to credibility in deterrence is easier because threat is structured around target inaction
- Risk to credibility greater with compelling actions
 - If threat is ignored, challenger acts first; imposes costs until target changes behavior
 - Must have next steps planned if target does not comply

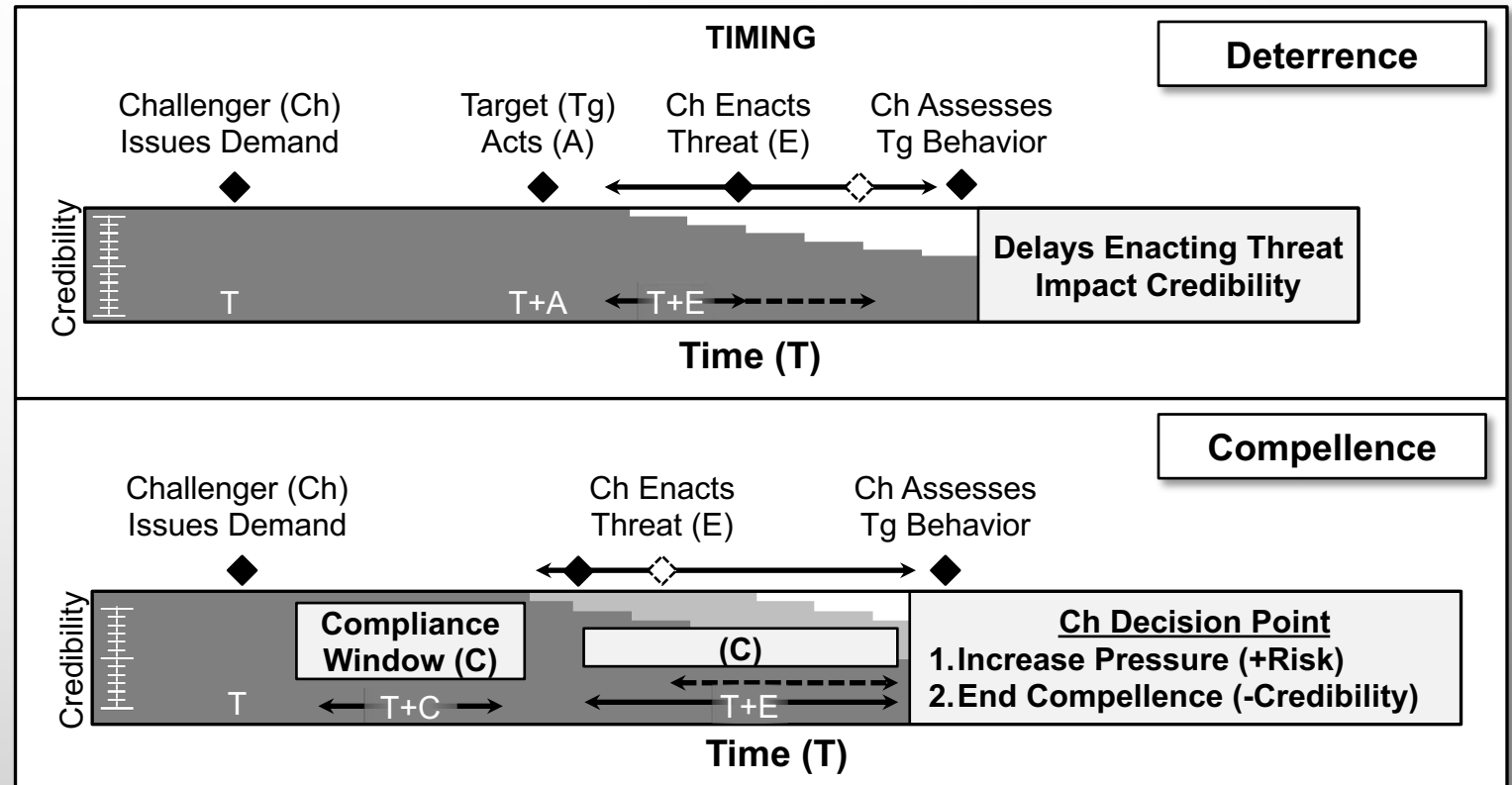


TIMING

“Too little time, and compliance becomes impossible; too much time, and [it] becomes unnecessary. Thus compellence involves timing in a way that deterrence typically does not.”

-- Tom Schelling, *Arms and Influence*

- Armed suasion is primarily a threat employment model
- Timing relates to the conditions under which the challenger must make good on the threat
- Accordingly there is a relationship between timing and credibility

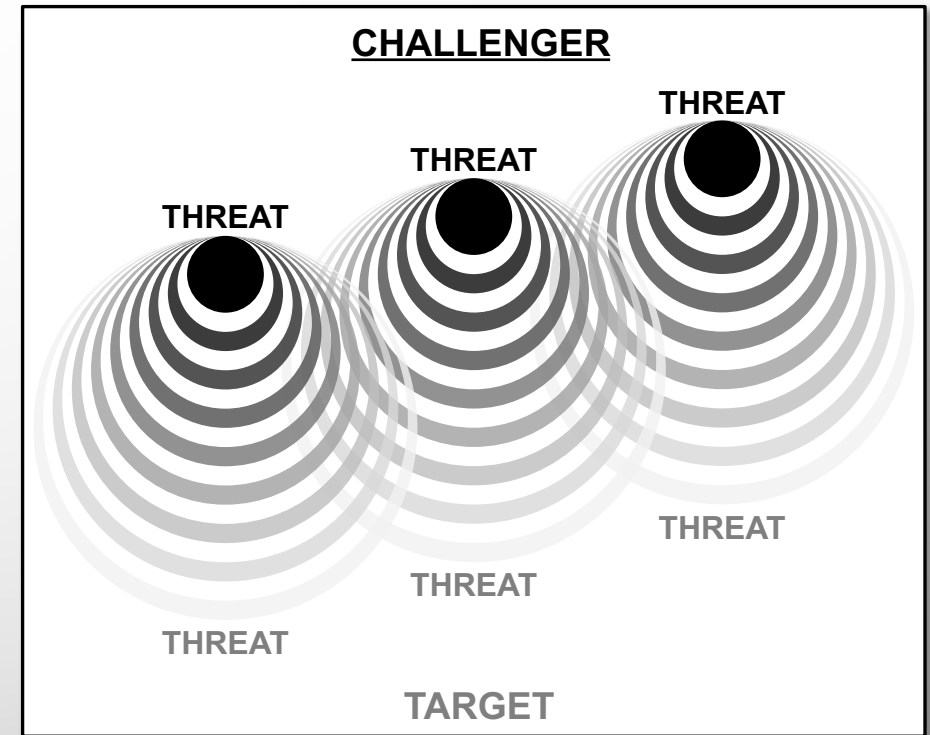


COMMUNICATION

“Carefully calibrated signals most often fail to make the desired impression because they are based on distinctions that seem obvious to the sender but to which the receiver is oblivious.”

--Richard Ned Lebow, *Psychology and Deterrence*

- Communication is a two-part transaction
- Challenger sends - harder than it seems
- Multiple activities can amplify the message or dampen it, creating too much or too little suasion
- Opportunity for challenger to identify and leverage widest range of activities that might support a coherent message
 - Can include R&D, testing, budgeting & programming, fielding, exercising, demonstrations, etc.
- Channels include Combatant Commands, Services, Office of the SecDef, Joint Staff, Combat Support Agencies, Congress, and defense industry



ASSESSING THE COMPETITOR

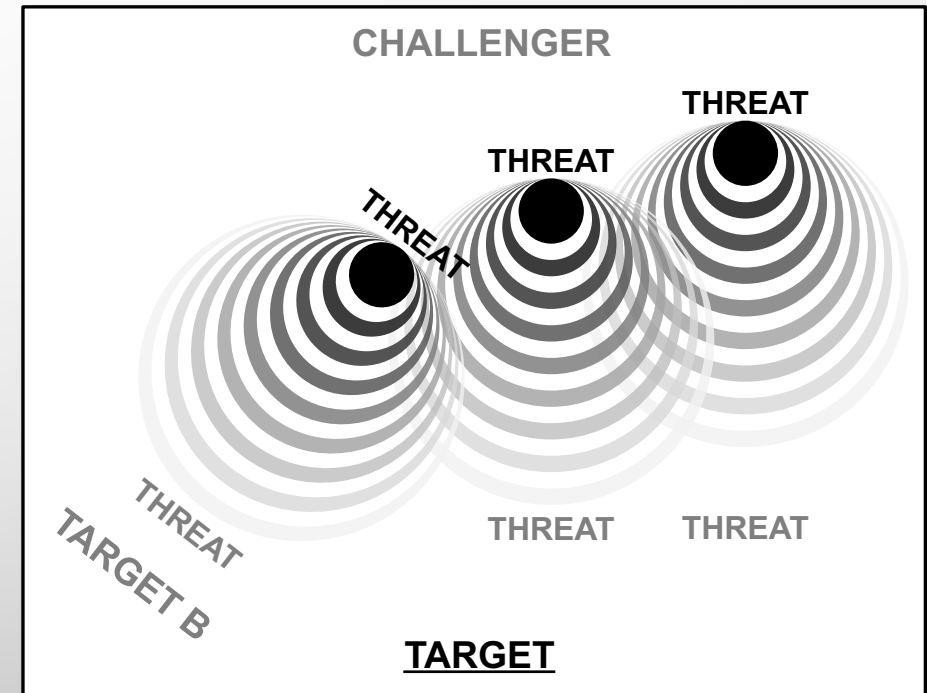
“After that it became a creed in ‘A’ Force to ask a General ‘What do you want the enemy to *do*’, and never ‘What do you want him to *think*?’”.

--Barton Whaley, *Textbook of Political-Military Counterdeception*

- Must know what target is intended to do - or not do - in response to armed suasion efforts and have a plan to monitor and assess how the target’s behaviors change

Cannot assume:

- The target will understand that specific activities are intended to communicate a threat
- The target will correctly identify which of the challenger’s activities are meant for the target instead of someone else
- The target will understand what specific acts must be taken or avoided to be in compliance with the challenger
- The target shares the challenger’s perception about where both are on the conflict continuum



ARRANGING THREATS/INDUCEMENTS

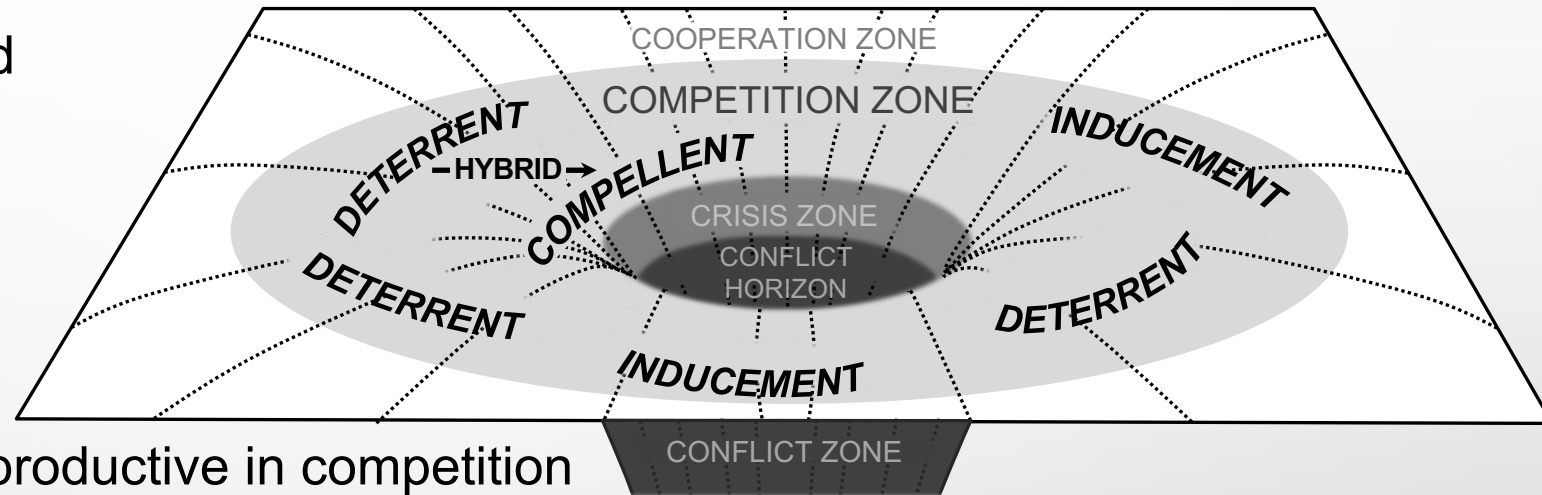
“The more an attempt at dissuasion is effective in achieving its goal, the more likely it is that it will be circumvented or even directly attacked by the frustrated aggressor...”

-- Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*

- Armed suasion includes threats and inducements:

- Threats must reflect the stakes and cause genuine pause

- Too many credible threats, too quickly or frequently is counterproductive in competition



- Coercive strategies generally emphasize punishments and neglect incentives that allow the target to save face in acceding to U.S. demands

- Should assess planned coercive and persuasive activities for risk of inadvertently enabling the competitor greater future freedom of action

- Assessing where the U.S. and competitor perceive themselves and each other on the continuum enables effective armed suasion

DETERRENCE

Credible threat of counteraction that causes target to choose not to act for fear of failure, risk, or consequences.

COMPELLENCE

“The threat that...requires the punishment be administered *until* the other acts, rather than *if* he acts.”

INDUCEMENT

“...opportunities for cooperation but from a position of strength and based on our national interests.”

PRINCIPLES

- **Objective:** ensuring actions conducted in armed suasion move the U.S. closer to a desired objective and identifying what conditions constitute success.
- **Perseverance:** preparing for measured, protracted military operations because building credibility and shaping a competitor's decision-making process both take time.
- **Restraint:** applying appropriate military capability prudently to remain within the competition zone and managing the risk of unintended escalation.
- **Unity of effort:** synchronizing unity of effort across Combatant Commands and Services to communicate a coherent message to the competitor.
- **Clarity:** ensuring military activities planned will convey the intended message and assessing time/space/frequency of planned activities against risk of unintended escalation.
- **Awareness:** considering the non-U.S. factors that drive competitor decision-making, and how the effects of past U.S. actions shape the competitor's perception of planned activities.

PRINCIPLES OF JOINT OPERATIONS

Legitimacy

Perseverance

Restraint

Objective

Unity of Command/Effort

Security

Simplicity

Economy of Force

Offensive

Mass

Maneuver

Surprise

Use with extreme caution in competition to minimize risk of unintended escalation

CHALLENGES



- Armed suasion needs to be able to generate tangible, measurable, attributable results, early
- Identifying legitimate, purely military inducements may be a limiting factor
- If inducements primarily rest with instruments of national power, U.S. whole of government suasion becomes critical, with armed suasion being only one aspect
- Identifying and overcoming gaps and seams in the current Department of Defense structure that hinder the planning and execution of coherent armed suasion messages
- Further complications or friction points may emerge when using armed suasion against multiple near peer competitors

CONCLUSION

“A long-term strategic competition requires the seamless integration of...national power—diplomacy, information, economics, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and military.”

-- 2018 National Defense Strategy, Unclassified Summary

- **Armed suasion is a military framework** - but relies on the planners to be, at minimum, aware of U.S. competitive activities occurring through other instruments of national power
- **Armed suasion is dynamic** - can be used to develop new opportunities and leverage existing operations and activities in support of the competition narrative
- **Armed suasion is not easy** - requires mapping military activities to US policy goals while anticipating, assessing, and countering the competitor’s response
- **Armed suasion is better than the alternative approaches to competition** - a reactive-mindset that cedes the initiative, or an ad hoc approach to planning non-combat activities that squanders opportunity

CONTACT INFO



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PLANNING QUESTIONS



Q: What is the U.S. policy toward the competitor and issue against which you are planning armed suasion activities?

Q: Are you trying to prevent the competitor from taking action (deterrence), or forcing the competitor to act (compellence)?

Q: Is the competitor considering changing the U.S.' preferred status quo or has the competitor already changed it?

Q: What ongoing activities can be leveraged as part of the armed suasion framework?

Q: Will the competitor be swayed by the planned activities, and how will you assess how well the competitor understands the demand?

Q: If you are planning compellence, what secondary actions are you considering if the competitor does not comply?

Q: What actions do you want the competitor to take or avoid taking as a result of armed suasion?

Q: Where do you assess the U.S. and the competitor are on the conflict continuum? Where do you judge the competitor assesses it and the U.S. are on the conflict continuum?

Q: What are possible unintended consequences: 1) the worst way in which the competitor could misinterpret the armed suasion activity or, 2) the most dangerous course of action in response?

Q: What other previous or ongoing U.S. activities (DOD and/or USG) might be influence the competitor's response?

Q: What military activities are ongoing to address other challenges in the security environment? Is there evidence the competitor is misinterpreting those activities as directed at the competitor?

ARMED SUASION SMART SHEET

DETERRENCE

Presentation of a credible threat of counteraction that causes target to chooses not to act for fear of failure, risk, or consequences.

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Action Type	Deterrent (by punishment)	Compellent	Deterrence- Compellence Hybrid	Inducement
Challenger Objective	Defend Status Quo - Target Chooses Inaction	Change Status Quo - Target Chooses Action	Change Status Quo After Target Ignores Deterrence	Provide Target Options
Key Words	“If...Then”	“Until”	“If...Then...Until”	“Offer/Give”
If Threat Fails, Who Acts First?	Target	Challenger	Target	N/A
Time Considerations	1) Interval Between Action and Response	1) Interval b/w Threat & Action 2) Duration of Compellent Action	1) Interval b/w Threat & Action 2) Duration of Compellent Action	1) Interval b/w Offer & Provision
Related Concepts	N/A	De-escalation Roll-back	De-escalation Roll-back	Off-ramps Face-saving

REFERENCES



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- Department of Defense, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge”
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- Richard Ned Lebow, “The Deterrence Deadlock: Is There a Way Out?,”