Assessing Deterrence – Disclaimer

JFCBS has conducted a project that has had several names. The most accurate is ‘a mutual perception of behaviour’ but it is most commonly referred to as the ‘assessing deterrence project’.

The reason that is referred to as the ‘assessing deterrence project’ is because that is what everyone is asking for, and has been asking for since the RUS annexation of Crimea in 2014. Indeed there was a Bi-SC experiment into how to assess deterrence in 2016 that failed to deliver anything meaningful because it only considered objective data.

The JFCBS approach uses subjective data. It is not and never has been JFCBS’ position that only subjective data should be used to form an assessment of deterrence but there are enough other organisations already collecting objective data that there was no added value in JFCBS addressing this aspect. Therefore, JFCBS addressed the missing piece – the use of subjective data.

One definition of empirical science is ‘a systematic approach to knowledge that relies on observation, experimentation, and evidence to draw conclusions about the natural world.’ The JFCBS approach is a systematic approach to observe, *categorise* and *grade* how different actors perceive each other’s behaviour. It still requires further analysis in combination with the use of objective data (and better defined deterrence objectives) to be able to draw conclusions on whether one actor is deterring the other or not.

The system of categorisation is extensive:

- NATO strategic interests (9)
- RUS strategic interests (14)
- Direct versus indirect (2)
- Instruments of Power: DIME-FIL & cyber (8)
- System of the operating environment: PMESII & cyber, space, public administration (9)
- Goldstein Scale (61)
- ‘Conventional approach’
- Security threats: TESSOC (5)
- *Jus ad bellum* (9)
- *Jus in bello* (69)
- Tools of hybrid threats (38) *RUS only*
- Counters & responses to hybrid threats (42) *NATO & NATO Nations only*
- RUS activity: IIOW (4) *RUS only*
- NATO activity: PIDS (4) *NATO & NATO Nations only*

Behaviours are graded against each actor’s Continuum of Competition.

As an example of the further analysis that could be conducted consider these two hypotheses:

- The effect of behaviours accumulate over time, therefore the aggregate effect should be considered.
- A behaviour is most effective on its first use. After that it becomes routine activity.

These hypotheses have some intuitive validity but how would you test them? The JFCBS approach provides a body of evidence against which such hypotheses can be tested. For example there are multiple instances of ‘influence actions’ that have > 10 behaviours. These provide multiple sets of data for further analysis.

The JFCBS work is not an assessment of deterrence but it is an essential precursor to being able to assess deterrence.

Carl Linnaeus formalised binomial nomenclature, the modern system of naming organisms, in “*Systema Naturae*” published in 1735. This formed the foundation for further investigation of evolutionary theory that led to Charles Darwin’s “*On the Origin of Species*” in 1859.

The JFCBS approach is more comparable to Carl Linnaeus’ work than Charles Darwin’s but we will never get to ‘On the Origin of Deterrence’ without a systematic approach to observe, categorise and grade how different actors perceive each other’s behaviour.