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Air Power and the Strategy of 'Influence and Shape'

Sanu Kainikara

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Foreword

The notion of 'influence and shape' as the basis of a strategy is one that is probably familiar to most of us in Defence or a related security community. It is a phrase that rolls easily off the tongue having been in Defence parlance for some time, and is generally accepted as a sensible approach to national security. But what exactly do we mean by influence and shape? Who or what might we mean to influence or shape? And to what ends might we consider influencing or shaping to be a useful plan of action? In this meticulously presented and well argued paper, Dr Sanu Kainikara lays out for his audience the who, the what, the why and the when of a strategy of influence and shape.

As ancient and well pedigreed as any security strategy, influence and shape has, in recent years, reasserted itself as a prudent, sensible and cautious approach to national security, and in this paper the nuance and sophistication of this strategy is very well explained. Beginning with a clear and useful depiction of the spread of security strategies across the spectrum of conflict, Dr Kainikara methodically describes and explains the nature and utility of influence and shape within the continuum of possible strategies a government or nation may choose to employ. By carefully defining the terms 'influence' and 'shape' in the national security context, Dr Kainikara lays a solid foundation upon which he builds his conceptual structure of the phases of the implementation of this strategy, affording his readers a clear and logical framework within which to place the role and tasks of the military. This is a very useful and necessary explanation, which highlights the whole of nation context in which our Government employs its national power.

No doubt of most interest to the Air Power Development Centre's audience is the discussion of the role of air power in a strategy of influence and shape. The paper elaborates on how air power's particular characteristics may afford governments a variety of military options, both kinetic and non-kinetic, which can be tailored to the circumstance and need. Again, this is a very useful and necessary explanation that highlights the versatility and utility of air power as a component of joint military force.

Dr Kainikara's paper is a stimulating read that considerably adds to the wealth of air power knowledge and strategic thinking. I commend it to you.

Group Captain Mark Hinchcliffe
Director
Air Power Development Centre

About the Author

Dr Sanu Kainikara is the Air Power Strategist at the Air Power Development Centre of the Royal Australian Air Force and also a Visiting Fellow at the University of New South Wales. He is the author of nine books: *Papers on Air Power*, *Pathways to Victory*, *Red Air: Politics in Russian Air Power*, *Australian Security in the Asian Century*, *A Fresh Look at Air Power Doctrine*, *Seven Perennial Challenges to Air Forces*, *The Art of Air Power: Sun Tzu Revisited*, *At the Critical Juncture* and *Essays on Air Power*. He has presented extensively in international forums and published numerous papers on national security, strategy and air power. He is the recipient of the RAAF Chief of Air Force's Commendation.

Dr Kainikara is a former fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force who retired as a Wing Commander after 21 years of commissioned service. During his service career, he has flown over 4,000 hours on a number of modern fighter aircraft and held various command and staff appointments. He is a Qualified Flying Instructor and a Fighter Combat Leader. He is also a graduate of the National Defence Academy, the Defence Services Staff College, and the College of Air Warfare. He is a recipient of the IAF Chief of Air Staff Commendation and the Air Force Cross.

After retirement from active service, he worked for four years as the senior analyst, specialising in air power strategy for a US Training Team in the Middle East. Prior to the current appointment he was the Deputy Director Wargaming and Doctrine in the Strategy Group of the Department of Defence. He has also taught Aerospace Engineering at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, Melbourne.

He has two Bachelors degrees, a Masters degree in Defence and Strategic Studies from the University of Madras and his PhD in International Politics was awarded by the University of Adelaide.

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INTRODUCTION

National security has grown far beyond the simple military challenge it used to be in the days prior to the Napoleonic Wars; it is now perhaps the most complex policy issue that governments have to address. Carl von Clausewitz summarised this complexity when he wrote, 'there can be no question of a purely military evaluation of a great strategic issue, nor of a purely military scheme to solve it'.[1] Thus, national security strategies must link the individual actions of all elements of national power together, to achieve the desired political objective. This will require a thorough understanding of national policy, the level at which strategy coalesces with policy.

Most nations are focused on achieving an acceptable standard of living for their people through the development of industry, trade and commerce. This requires a minimum level of stability, both regionally and globally, which can only be achieved through a collaborative process with other nations. Even minimal imbalances in a region can escalate into instability that in turn can create challenges to peaceful growth. Unfortunately, in the contemporary global security environment, regional imbalances are more the norm than the exception, and nations face a range of challenges that can spread across a very large spectrum. Armed conflict, as an entity that encompasses minor skirmishes to major state-on-state encounters, is situated at the higher end of the spectrum. The challenges that emanate, therefore, require that a nation develop a spread of strategies to deal with emerging situations in a contextual manner. Accordingly, national security strategies span a broad continuum; from benign influencing activities, to the application of lethal force, as shown in Figure 1. The inherent complexity of the security environment makes it obvious that national security cannot, and never has been, predicated on the implementation of a single strategy.

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1   Carl von Clausewitz, *Two Letters on Strategy*, Peter Paret and Daniel Moran (ed., trans), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle PA, 1984, p. 9. [As quoted in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy*, J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr (ed), Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle PA, June 2012, p. 4.]

Another aspect that needs to be borne in mind in the analysis of national security strategies is that in the spread of the continuum of fundamental strategies, there will always be an overlap between succeeding strategies. In addition, within the sub-spectrum of one of the fundamental strategies, the linear progression of subsidiary activities will also overlap with the next activity, that will be apparent when it is being examined in detail. For example, Figure 1 illustrates how the high-end subsidiary activity of one fundamental strategy would normally overlap, at least to a small degree, on the low-end activity of the next strategy in the continuum. Similarly, the same process holds true within the expanded sub-spectrum of a single fundamental strategy, as shown in Figure 2 later in this paper.

Further, national security is dependent on achieving a fundamental level of influence on developments within the area of national interest. Therefore, it is logical for the continuum of strategies that support national security to start with a strategy that aims at its most basic: to influence and shape the environment that impacts national security. This strategy is situated at the lowest and most benign end of the continuum. The spread of strategies thereafter can be elaborate or succinct, depending on the level at which they are being considered. At the highest levels, the continuum generally consists of a spread of no more than five or six fundamental strategies. These higher or fundamental strategies—influence and shape, deterrence, coercion, punishment and destruction—can then be individually defined, and their nuances elaborated within their own individual sub-spectrums.

The sub-spectrum within a fundamental strategy cannot be considered a linear progression. It is not necessary to always start the implementation of a particular strategy at the lowest point in the sub-spectrum and then progress through the continuum. In fact it is possible, depending on the unfolding circumstances, to start at a certain mid-point in the sub-spectrum, and to move from that point to a higher level without going through the intermediary stage. This nuance is also true in the spread of the continuum of fundamental strategies. For example, a nation might opt to, or be forced to, implement the strategy of punishment without having taken recourse to either deterrence or coercion in the first place. However, it must also be recognised that if a nation has to implement a strategy at a higher level in the continuum without taking recourse to a lower level—and
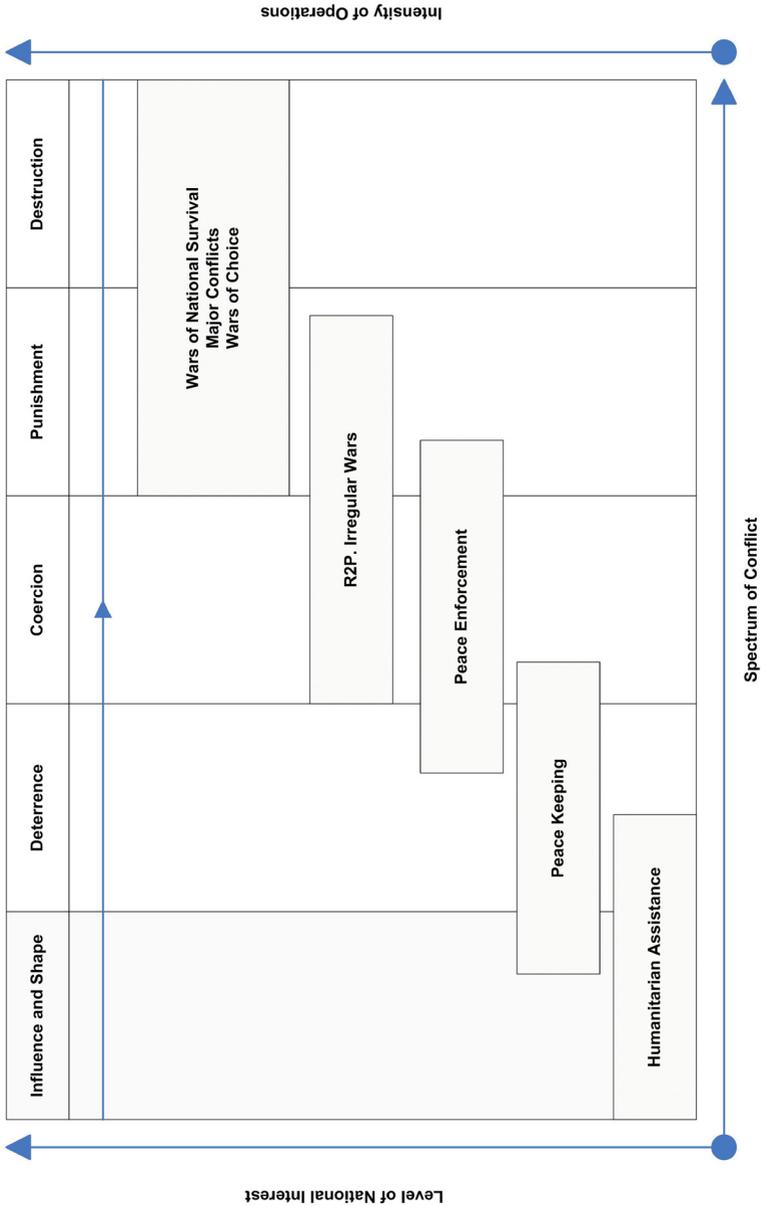
Figure 1: The Spread of Strategies across the Spectrum of Conflict

obviously more benign—strategy, it indicates a failure of the national security apparatus at the highest levels of decision-making.

So what does influence and shape mean for an air force? It would invariably mean the employment of the non-combat assets in providing humanitarian assistance in times of natural or man-made calamities; securing destabilised regions without the actual application of lethal force; the use of high-end air power capabilities to demonstrate intent, and the will of the nation to employ them if necessary; and employing the reach, responsiveness and penetration of air power to respond to, and contain, emerging challenges to the nation's strategic interests.

This paper explores the sub-spectrum and subsidiary activities and nuances of the implementation of a fundamental strategy of influence and shape. It also examines the notion of 'hard' and 'soft' power, exercised by a nation from a fresh perspective to highlight and amplify the soft power options that a nation can adapt to achieve influence and shape the environment. While it provides a generic explanation of the details of how this strategy works and its constituents, it elaborates the nuances with particular reference to the contribution of air power.

What is Influence?

Influence is a commonly used word, especially in connection to relationships—between human at the fundamental level, and between nations at the more strategic and complex level. A basic definition of influence would be 'the power or capacity to cause an effect in indirect or tangible ways'.[2] There are two important points that stand out from this simple definition: first, influence is a direct by-product of power; second, some of the effect it creates is achieved through indirect means. No individual or entity can bring to bear any definite effect without possessing some amount of power. In this instance, power must be understood in its broadest meaning; the ability to do or act in such a way that creates an effect from in the physical and/or the non-physical domain. However, influence is generally brought to bear indirectly through actions that may be overtly visible or imperceptible. There is a certain subtlety involved in the actual

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2   A. Delbridge & JRL Bernard (general eds.), *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, Third Edition, Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, 1998, p. 578.

application of influence. It normally does not manifest itself as a direct physical action, but is an indiscernible stimulus in the cognitive domain of the person or entity being influenced as a result of a physical action. For example, prompt provision of aid to a community that has been affected by a natural calamity, like a flood or fire, will create tangible goodwill for the providers in the minds of the recipients, which could alter even hostile perceptions that could have existed earlier. The indirectness of actions that create influence is itself a source of its strength as a strategy.

Influence as a strategy that contributes to national security is not a new notion. From the earliest times, nations have attempted to influence their neighbours so that acrimony could be kept to a minimum. It is apparent that disharmony starts with different viewpoints being expressed on the same issue by nations, and if not contained through cordial discussions, can escalate into deeper divisions that could, *in extremis*, lead to war. On the other hand, if one nation can influence the other to change its perception to be in alignment, there will be lesser chances of discordant behaviour or beliefs. This influence can be achieved by a number of means: cultural exchanges that increase awareness of each other; economic aid with or without caveats that improve the overall stability of the recipient; diplomatic initiatives that induce better behaviour of recalcitrant nations; and military assistance to ensure a nation's sovereignty. In a utopian world, the strategy of influencing others through indirect and intangible actions would be the best practice in international relations.

Sphere of Influence
In international politics, a virtual region based on conceptual borders over which a state exercises significant influence sufficient for the region to be held under almost complete sway, is considered the sphere of influence of the influencing nation. Physical borders do not always adhere to a particular sphere of influence, and it is even possible to have two conflicting spheres of influence exist within the same region. There are two aspects to understanding the sphere of influence of a nation. First is that the sphere of influence could be created by a larger power through formal treaties and agreements with lesser powers. Such agreements could range from high level security pacts such as the NATO alliance, to trade agreements and even the exchange of information. As a corollary, it does not mean that a formal alliance will always lead to one nation being within another's sphere of influence. A classic example of such a situation is the case

of New Zealand moving out of the direct sphere of influence of the United States, although none of the three signatories to the formal ANZUS Treaty—Australia, New Zealand and the United States—have officially repudiated the treaty. Second is that a sphere of influence can be created without any formal agreement, but through the adept application of soft power, and in some historic cases through conquest and colonisation. In the contemporary socio-political and economic environment, creating a sphere of influence purely through the astute spreading of soft power is far more difficult than achieving the same through covert demonstrations of hard power. Irrespective of the prevailing environment, nations of stature—with sufficient strategic depth, creative soft power, and more importantly a surfeit of hard power—will continually try to create and enhance their own sphere of influence.

Strategic Influence
At the fundamental level, all conflicts are clashes of ideas and/or ideologies. Therefore, every action initiated by a government in pursuing the conflict will impact on both the physical and cognitive domain of the adversary. For example, the movement of military forces into a particular area—even when they are not employed to apply force—could directly impact the nations into whose region the forces have been moved, and indirectly influence the global audience monitoring the deployment. Such movements can be deliberately orchestrated to coincide with other government initiatives in the same region, and in combination can create strategic influence. The concept of strategic influence is not new. Persuasion, dissuasion and discouragement have been used throughout history to influence recalcitrant opponents without having to take recourse to physical action through the application of force, which is achieved primarily by the employment of military forces. Strategic influence is the influence that one nation or organisation can bring to bear on another independent entity, either state or organisation, at the highest levels of decision-making, which in the case of a democratic nation will be at the strategic political level of government.

A number of elements combine to create strategic influence—the important ones being political advocacy, diplomacy both overt and covert, information operations, military overtures, economic initiatives, and perception management. It is to be noted that any one element, or even a combination of two by themselves do not usually create strategic influence, although each element contains some amount of persuasive function in it. For example, political advocacy or public

diplomacy cannot by themselves generate strategic influence. This in part explains the reason for the United Nations being challenged in exercising an acceptable level of strategic influence. In the 21st century, strategic influence can generally be created by applying a carefully orchestrated combination of all the aforementioned elements. Their independent application is unlikely to produce the desired effect.[3]

There is clear evidence that the timeliness of decisions and associated activities are as crucial as the veracity and contextual correctness of decisions to creating strategic influence. In addition, the rapidity of the spread of information in the contemporary environment gives only a very limited window of opportunity for the decisions to be made, making it even harder to create the overall ambience required for a nation to establish strategic influence. A nation is able to create and sustain strategic influence when it has permanent organisations within the government as opposed to ad-hoc departments, clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for all agencies, and oversight from the highest level of government.[4] History would suggest that irrespective of their inherent power, all nations—small and large—aspire to possess strategic influence and create their own sphere of influence. This aspiration is one of the fundamental reasons for the development of tensions between nations that could overflow into conflict.

Shaping the Environment
In terms of strategy, bringing to bear the influence of a nation is almost always associated with shaping the environment so as to be benign towards one's own intent. Therefore, although the term 'shaping' is used in conjunction with influence, it needs to be understood in a slightly different manner. In the context of national security, the act of influencing is almost always aimed at other nations; immediate neighbours within the region and even internationally. At the strategic level, influencing activities are designed to shape the political, economic, diplomatic or security environments. From a military perspective,

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3   Susan L. Gough, '*The Evolution of Strategic Influence*,' U.S. Army War College, Carlisle PA, April 2003, pp. 2-3, http://www.fas.org/irp/eprint/gough.pdf, accessed 2 August 2012.

4   ibid., p. 34.

shaping the environment is a concept aimed at creating an environment that is conducive to one's optimal employment of strategic and operational concepts.

At the strategic as well as the operational level, shaping the environment is essential to achieve the desired end-state with the least opposition, while expending minimum resources. In some cases, the shaping activity by itself would be sufficient to create the necessary effects to achieve the chosen objectives. Therefore, as a national security strategy, shaping the environment is a distinctly connected extension of the activities that are aimed at influencing the targeted audience. Influencing and shaping are interconnected activities that vary in intensity and tempo depending on the context, and more importantly, the element of national power that is being employed to achieve the preferred level of influence. It is generally accepted that the fundamental elements of national power are diplomacy, information capability, military forces, and the economy. These elements also encompass a large number of sub-elements. In this framework, if the influencing and shaping activities are being conducted with the military in the lead, then two factors need to be considered.

First, the use of military forces to influence and shape brings the advantage of being able to ramp up or down the activities at will at a swift pace. This ability creates an inherent flexibility in the application of a strategy that if implemented with the employment of other elements of national power, could only be considered long term in creating the necessary effects. Second, the employment of military forces brings with it the inherent potential of escalation—either planned or unplanned—that could in turn lead to the deterioration of an otherwise relatively peaceful situation. In an indirect manner, the use of the military to influence and shape is a double-edged sword.

The Strategy of Influence and Shape

All nations develop strategies to secure their sovereignty. These strategies should be crafted by taking into account a number of factors—both tangible and intangible—that all have different levels of influence in their development. Further, the level of influence of each factor is also contextual as well as dependent on the strategy being developed. The major tangible factors are threat perception, national resource availability, alliances and their veracity, economic stability, and the state of development of the nation in terms of governance, education, indigenous industry, and cohesion. However, intangible factors such as the ethos of the nation towards conflict, ethnic and religious constitution of the population, the ability to create influence through the application of soft power, and the prevalent political ideology, would have the same influence on the development of strategies. Since these are intangible factors, it will be difficult for an external observer to accurately fathom their influence on national security strategies. In fact, even an internal audit will not provide a clear indication of the prominence or otherwise of each individual factor in the final development of a particular strategy. In effect, strategies are developed through a process of amalgamation of these factors, and a number of sub-factors, that could have varying degrees of influence.

In a universal manner, national security could be considered to be ensured by developing a number of strategies that would normally form a continuum from the most benign to the most extreme in terms of the use of national resources. This generic spectrum starts with the strategy of influence and shape at the lower end, and finishes with the strategy of destruction at the higher end. Within this spectrum, individual nations may develop independent processes to model the strategy to fit their unique circumstances and requirements. At this stage, the tangible and intangible factors mentioned previously will influence the development and employment of strategies.

The strategy of influence and shape can be applied by all elements of national power individually, or in combination of two or more. In most cases, the ability of a nation to influence and shape the geo-political environment, which also envelopes the security environment, within its sphere of influence, would be best realised through an optimum combination of all elements of national power. In such combinations, one element would be in the lead and supported

by the others as required. However, it must also be understood that the lead element could be replaced as the operation progresses and changes are observed within the environment. In other words, employing the strategy of influence and shape is a dynamic enterprise and needs to be closely monitored.

So what exactly is the process of influencing and shaping the geo-political environment? It is a commonly accepted theory that generally all nations, with a few exceptions, aspire to peace and prosperity. This cannot be achieved in isolation in the contemporary interconnected world. Even a minor instability within the region of interest of a nation has the potential to cascade into greater regional instability and create security challenges. The need to contain such aberrations is the primary reason for a nation to continually attempt to influence its neighbours and the broader region. The activities undertaken to implement a strategy of influence and shape encompass a broad range, once again from benign undertakings to active physical operations.

The strategy of influence and shape also has its own spread of subsidiary activities that contribute to national security in a contextual manner. The activity to be chosen to cater for, or contain a particular challenge, will depend on a number of factors, primarily the national ethos regarding the employment of the elements of power in furthering national interests. The sub-spectrum of the strategy of influence and shape is shown in Figure 2. The subsidiary activities that could be undertaken to implement a strategy of influence and shape range from benign monitoring of the geo-political situation in relation to the region of interest, and even globally, to assuming a stabilisation role with the use of military forces if required. There are two features of this model that must be clarified before the spread is explained. First, this model provides a linear progression of the involvement of the elements of national power and the probable expenditure of national resources to implement the strategy. However, it is not necessary that the implementation by itself will always follow the linear progression. For example, it may become necessary in some instances to apply the stabilisation role, at the high-end of the spread, without having taken recourse to any of the other activities. Of course, this would also indicate the failure of the nation to carry out basic monitoring of its geo-political environment, or its inability to put in place remedial measures at an earlier stage of the deterioration in the stability of the neighbour/region.
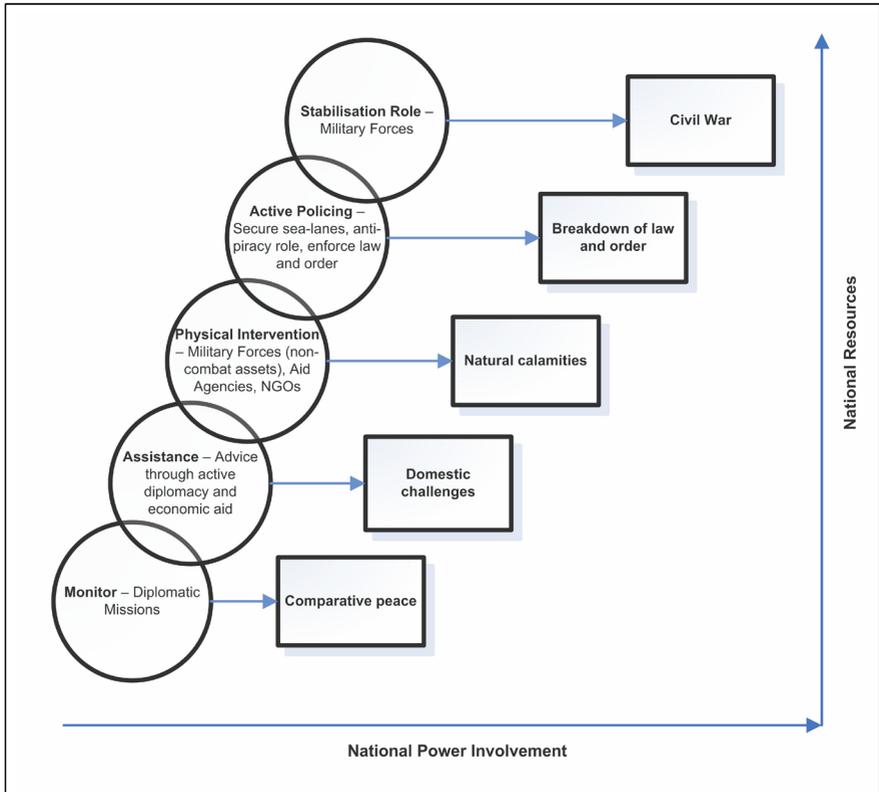
Figure 2: The Sub-spectrum of the Strategy of Influence and Shape

Second, while this model is a generic depiction, it does not take into account the willingness and resolve of a nation to intervene even at the lowest end of the sub-spectrum. The will of a nation to shape their environment is affected by a number of factors—both domestic and external—and is extraneous to the discussion in this paper. Military forces have a role across all of the subsidiary activities that constitute the implementation of the strategy of influence and shape, even though it may not be necessary to employ lethal military capabilities to achieve the desired outcome.

Role of the Military Forces

Subsidiary activities aimed at influencing and shaping the environment are undertaken by all elements of national power, and the military forces are only one of the tools available to the government to carry out such activities. However, in order to carry out these activities with relative safety, they will have to be backed by demonstrated and visible military power. Lacking adequacy in military capabilities will always lead to dilution of influence, as the recipient nation or entity will perceive this as an inability to enforce any action, if necessary. This is not to say that influence and shape activities involve physical application of military power, but that perception of capability is an important factor in ensuring a high level of influence. There are two factors that affect the employment of military forces in pursuing even benign strategies. First, is that as the linear progression of the sub-spectrum moves towards a situation of civil war, the proportion of military contribution increases incrementally. This would mean that the nation must determine the quantum and level of military force necessary to exert influence in relation to what is available, as well as its willingness to employ it, before embarking on influencing and shaping the nation's area of interest. Second, is that the military force's ability to apply non-lethal force if necessary, requires a different set of capabilities and training ethos in comparison to its core function of defence of the nation. This is important because the requirements from the military in influencing and shaping activities are distinctly different from their primary role of warfighting.

Influencing and Shaping with Air Power

All arms of the military force will be involved in influencing and shaping, but in some instances air power would seem to have an added advantage over other capabilities. This is more noticeable in contemporary situations, because air power has the ability to carry out the necessary mission without having to enforce a permanent presence in the host nation. This is in sharp contrast to other military capabilities that require physical presence in the recipient nation, which is contrary to the current political correctness of not placing military forces in an interventionist manner in other sovereign nations. In essence, it is difficult to win the 'hearts and minds' of a community when the military force is considered an invading force. The impermanence of air power has often been viewed as a disadvantage; however, in trying to influence and shape, the impermanence of air power is perhaps the defining characteristic that makes the employment of air power appealing. The impact of air power in the subsidiary activities within the strategy of influence and shape are described below.

Monitor. The absolute basic method to influence another nation is the use of diplomacy through the establishment of embassies or high commissions and consulates. This facilitates dialogue between the nations at a much more congenial manner and also facilitates the clarification of issues that are of mutual interest. A less visible role of the diplomatic mission is to monitor the political, economic and military developments of the host country, and to inform the home government of any occurrences or changes that are inimical to its interests. This monitoring is devoid of any direct involvement or action, but is a totally passive activity. Monitoring is sufficient during times of comparative peace within the host nation and the general region. Monitoring is also a function of air power through its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) role. Such monitoring can take the form of mere observance, or focused surveillance of a particular area of interest. In all cases, the monitoring will be non-intrusive.

Assistance. The next step is the offer of advice through active diplomacy, as well as the provision of economic aid if required, to assist the host nation in overcoming minor domestic challenges. The assessment of a domestic issue that could escalate into a challenge, or even a larger regional stability issue, if not contained early enough, is a critical factor in the success of non-physical assistance. This option can only be attempted if the emergence of the situation

is gradual, and has been monitored correctly. Failure to anticipate the issue through adequate analysis of the geo-political and socio-economic situations, will invariably lead to this option being unavailable when a deteriorating situation has to be contained. On the other hand, prompt assistance by way of advice and aid may have a salutary effect in providing the incumbent government with an opportunity to stabilise a deteriorating situation. Providing assistance is also a non-intrusive process, and therefore more acceptable to the recipient nation. The provision of aid can, and most of the time does, have a long term impact on the recipient government and the people, depending on the perception that is generated. If the aid is seen to be without 'strings' attached, it is more likely to have long term influence as opposed to aid that is delivered with caveats, even if such stipulations are meant in good faith. While the general population of a nation might offer aid in times of international crisis, governments tend to offer aid in a more measured manner to align with their national interests. However, it may not be always possible for the donor nation to provide such assistance and aid, thereby reducing their overall value as strategic tools.

Physical Intervention. Physical intervention to assist a nation is normally done in the wake of natural calamities, and in extraordinary circumstances, to deliver aid during or after man-made disasters. The reason for intervention is primarily that both these circumstances create the potential for instability to take hold, and if not promptly addressed, could spread into neighbouring areas. It would create a ripple effect that may be felt at great distance from the origin, especially in the current inter-connected world.

Although termed intervention, the fundamental input into the disaster area would be in the form of aid; consisting of food, water, clothing and shelter. Air power is ideally suited for this task. It can respond swiftly to all emerging crises, and its speed and global reach can be leveraged to ensure that relief is provided to the affected area with the minimum of delay, and with a minimal footprint while undertaking transportation of goods. Even though military aircraft could be used to deliver aid, the recipient nation will not usually have to host any overtly military personnel during this operation. Further, air delivered aid reaches the affected population and areas much faster than by any other mode of transportation. Air power can also compensate for its load carrying limitations through increasing the sortie rate to deliver the necessary aid. These factors make the use of air power more attractive than other capabilities in the provision of assistance.

In most of these cases, only non-combat assets would have to used, unless the intervention is during a conflict such as a civil war. In this case, the security of the intervening personnel would have to be ensured and combat elements may have to be deployed in a purely defensive and protective role. In most cases there will also be non-military elements such as governmental aid agencies and non-governmental organisations also involved with the delivery of necessary assistance. In the case of a diminished security environment, the deployment of defensive forces can also be undertaken through air transportation, thereby reducing the deployment footprint considerably. Similarly, the withdrawal of combat elements can also be facilitated by air power, which will avoid the potential for mission creep that accompanies deployment of surface forces.

Active Policing. The physical provision of aid to avert or ameliorate catastrophes is almost always benign in nature. However, when law and order breaks down in an area that could have direct effect on the well-being of the nation, it might have to resort to active policing, undertaken at the direction of the Government. As the name suggests, policing brings order to a situation that may have unintentionally gone out of control for a variety of reasons. In these circumstances, provision of active policing capabilities will be needed to ensure that the breakdown of law and order is contained at the earliest possible opportunity. Active policing is normally a combined function of the military and other law enforcement agencies, including at times the judiciary. The military forces effectively set the conditions for other agencies to operate in a secure manner to uphold law and order. However, the deterioration of law and order that necessitates an external involvement would also need the military to sanitise the operational environment for other agencies to function effectively, and also to ensure the safety and security of the personnel involved.

Air transportation would almost always be the preferred method for deployment since a swift response has the capacity to stem the downward slide of law and order into anarchy. Further, breakdown of law and order in a nation carries with it the potential to disrupt the trade routes that it uses; either land, or more importantly, the sea-lanes. In the case of maritime nations, the probability of the sea-lanes in its immediate vicinity becoming insecure as well as the possibility of piracy activities is very high. Air power's ISR capabilities become a critical element in controlling such deterioration and can have a salutary effect in reinstituting law and order. In extreme cases it may also be necessary to deploy

combat elements of air power to display capability and intent to would-be law breakers. However, such deployments could very easily move out of pure influencing actions into the regime of deterrence. In all cases of active policing, air power is central to responsiveness and effectiveness.

Stabilisation. At the high end of the strategy of influence and shape are the activities to stabilise a destabilising or already destabilised nation or region. In fact, stabilisation actions are more oriented towards shaping the environment rather than influencing it. Being at the higher end of the sub-spectrum of the strategy of influence and shape, it has limited overlap with deterrence, which is the next fundamental strategy in the spread of the continuum, although this need not be the case in all instances. Stabilisation activities are undertaken when there is armed insurgency, the prospect of civil war, or the actual occurrence of civil warlike conditions. In turn, this amounts to the necessity to use the military forces as the first option with other elements of national power being brought in only after the situation has been stabilised, and no further violence is expected. Stabilisation is essentially military intervention, normally with a United Nations mandate. However, at times, even without such a mandate, if a nation believes that such actions are their only option to curtail a spiralling destabilisation process, then intervention may be deemed as a necessary action. The role of air power will encompass the use of its ISR capabilities to establish the areas that need to be watched, air mobility to transport personnel and materiel necessary to control and then stabilise the affected area, and identify combat elements to be employed in extreme cases as punitive action to demonstrate intent. In some cases, where the supply of the deployed forces is not feasible through surface means, air power would have to establish an air bridge to sustain the operations for the duration desired. Establishing an air bridge could, in certain circumstances, involve control of the air activities, especially the neutralisation of ground-based and portable air defence systems. In some situations, the next step after stabilisation could be the fundamental strategy of coercion, or even punishment, depending on the level of destabilisation and the timing of intervention, thereby not strictly adhering to the spread of the continuum of strategies.

The Advantages of Air Power

Influencing and shaping a nation's neighbourhood and other areas of interest is a continuous process, with all actions that involve interaction with other nations contributing in some manner to influencing—positive or negative. Further, influencing is a benign activity, with the recipient nation not feeling imposed upon, and should at best, add value to the bilateral and multi-lateral relationships within the region concerned, and at worst, be only non-committal. If for some reason the activities tend to corrupt the relationships, then they are not achieving the desired objectives and therefore must be carefully discontinued. For this reason, all influence and shape activities have to be monitored at all times with the clear understanding that reactions detrimental to the delivering nation's interest might not become apparent immediately. In fact, such reactions might be consciously kept suppressed, especially if the influencing activity is being delivered in the form of much needed economic and other aid packages.

Across the sub-spectrum of subsidiary activities that constitute the strategy of influence and shape, air power plays a dominant part; although independently the influence it can bring to bear will be minimal. On the other hand, air power is a crucial element in almost all activities to influence and shape. Essentially, this reinforces the fact that all national security strategies can only be optimally employed in a joint and/or combined manner with one or the other element of national power being the lead agency in a contextual manner with contributions from all other elements as required. It is equally important to retain the flexibility, at the highest levels, to change the lead element as the implementation of the strategy progresses, depending on emerging circumstances.

In influencing and shaping, air power's comprehensive ISR capabilities will be highly prized. Fundamentally, it is necessary to know the developments on the ground to be able to assess their implications, and initiate remedial actions to alter the flow of events if required. The ISR capabilities can also be used to provide information to the host nation in circumstances wherein they do not have sufficient capacity to do so, thus increasing one's own influence in a subtle manner. Even deploying airborne ISR assets to the recipient nation for brief periods of time, or over flights in that nation's sovereign airspace, will have very limited political implications for either country—this is in sharp contrast to surface forces being deployed. The transient nature of air power deployments—the ability to insert and extract assets rapidly, with minimal footprint—is a significant advantage, unrivalled by any other military capability.

Air mobility is another air power capability that creates influence far in excess of the actions involved. Delivering humanitarian aid and carrying out aeromedical evacuation almost immediately after a disaster, creates a lasting impression on the recipient people that could neutralise previous animosities rapidly. There are many historical instances of prompt delivery of disaster relief changing the core basis of bilateral relationship between nations. In the case of active policing and stabilisation operations, at the high end of influencing and shaping activities, air mobility has to be an assured capability even before other elements are committed. It will be prudent for a nation to ensure the adequacy of its air mobility assets to sustain the proposed deployment for the desired timeframe before embarking on these operations. If sufficient air mobility is not assured, these operations risk becoming unfounded adventures with a high potential to become disastrous failures.

The use of the high-end, lethal capabilities of air power in influencing and shaping is very limited. Ideally these capabilities should never have to be used and even if they are employed, it must only be for a fleeting instant and consciously to deter or coerce. Any sustained use—meaning anything more than two missions—excludes the action from being contributory to the strategy of influence and shape. The line that divides the effects of the application of lethal force from influencing to being considered as deterrence, coercion or punishment, is very thin and grey. The result is that it will be difficult to clearly understand when it has been crossed, and also when the effects have started to create negative influence. Therefore, use of lethal force must be avoided where possible. The other side of the coin is that if the use of lethal force becomes necessary, for whatever reason, to escalate the situation and overlap the fundamental strategy of influence and shape on the strategy of deterrence or even coercion, then air power is the optimum capability in comparison to any other power projection capability.

Air power has a number of noteworthy advantages when used adeptly in contributing to the strategy of influence and shape, especially in circumstances where benevolent actions can create effects that are long lasting and also far higher than the effort involved. This is a fact that must be considered at the fundamental level of strategic planning to maintain and increase the level of influence of the nation. After all, conflict resolution depends almost completely on the influence that can be brought to bear on the antagonists.

Conclusion

The strategy of influence and shape is the most benign of all the strategies that can be, and is employed by nations to further their national interests and to ensure the viability of their sovereignty. Even though it is benign, minimal use of force may have to be resorted to, on rare occasions, when the strategy is being employed at the furthest end of its spectrum. All nations aspire to having a dedicated sphere of influence, within which its interests are a priority and only limited effort is needed to maintain their overarching influence. In an ideal world, each nation should have its own sphere of influence that would be sacrosanct and devoid of external and competing influences. This is sadly not the case in the real world. All nations therefore, continually strive to maintain and expand their spheres of influence depending on their relative power status and spread of interests. Further, they also try to shape the environment in their favour, which is more an operational level activity and of an immediate nature. In shaping activities, the military forces have a predominant role to play, even if their non-lethal attributes are more likely to be of use. In times of tensions between nations, the role of the military will become increasingly critical, even if the situation does not deteriorate into conflict. In fact, the military forces could be directly contributory to deescalating rising tensions and avoiding conflict.

The sub-spectrum of the strategy of influence and shape consists of the subsidiary activities of monitor, assist, intervene, police and stabilise, each being an escalation of the involvement of the providing nation and also overlapping into the previous and next subsidiary activity. In each subsidiary activity, air power contributes distinctly—such contributions could vary from essential to critical. Irrespective of the level of contribution, the full spread of air power capabilities can be brought to bear in furthering the influence of a nation and to shape the environment advantageously. The strategy of influence and shape is primarily oriented towards conflict avoidance, since that is the surest path to creating a peaceful world.

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