

The Bolt From The Blue

Air Power in the Cycle of Strategies

Sanu Kainikara



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BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

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

Friends in High Places: Air Power in Irregular Warfare (editor)

Seven Perennial Challenges to Air Forces

The Art of Air Power: Sun Tzu Revisited

At the Critical Juncture: The Predicament of Small Air Forces

Essays on Air Power

CONTENTS

About the Author	v
Books by the Author	vi
Author's Preface	xi
Acknowledgements	xv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
INFLUENCE AND SHAPE.....	15
What is Influence?.....	17
<i>Sphere of Influence</i>	18
<i>Strategic Influence</i>	19
<i>Shaping the Environment</i>	21
The Strategy of Influencing and Shaping	23
Influencing and Shaping with Air Power	25
<i>Monitor</i>	27
<i>Assistance</i>	27
<i>Physical Intervention</i>	28
<i>Active Policing</i>	29
<i>Stabilisation</i>	30
The Advantages of Air Power	31
Conclusion	34
DETERRENCE.....	39
The Concept of Deterrence.....	43
Air Power and Deterrence.....	45
Influence of Air Power on the Principles of Deterrence	46

<i>Intelligence</i>	46
<i>Credibility</i>	47
<i>Perception</i>	48
<i>Applicability</i>	50
<i>Summary</i>	51
The Spectrum of the Strategy of Deterrence	52
<i>Denial</i>	53
<i>Proactive Diplomacy</i>	55
<i>Explicit Threat</i>	55
<i>Punitive Action</i>	56
Challenges to the Strategy of Deterrence	57
Conclusion	60
COERCION	67
Coercion Explained	68
The Fundamentals of Coercing with Military Forces	70
<i>Perception Regarding the use of Military Force</i>	70
<i>The Application of Force</i>	71
<i>Enforcing Sanctions</i>	72
Air Power and Coercion	73
<i>Advantages of Air Power</i>	74
The Spectrum of the Strategy of Coercion	75
<i>Denial</i>	77
<i>Lethal Force</i>	78
<i>Combat Operations</i>	78

Challenges to Implementing a Strategy of Coercion	79
Conclusion	83
PUNISHMENT	89
Understanding Punishment—A Military Perspective	91
Spectrum of the Strategy of Punishment	95
Punishing with Air Power	97
<i>Punitive Actions.</i>	98
<i>Targeting the Leadership</i>	100
<i>Prevention.</i>	100
<i>Focused Targeting</i>	101
<i>Escalation.</i>	103
<i>Destruction.</i>	106
<i>Post-Conflict Actions</i>	108
Conclusion	109
CONCLUSION	115
BIBLIOGRAPHY	125

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Military forces normally focus on 'doing' things rather than thinking about what needs to be done and how. However, it is evidently clear even through a casual analysis of wars fought in antiquity or in recent times that military forces that base their actions on well-thought-through strategies tend to do better than the forces that either do not have clearly articulated strategies or fail to follow them. History has shown that it is possible for well-trained men and women of action to win every battle they are engaged in and yet lose the war unless there is an overarching direction provided through enunciated strategy.

No nation can continue to prosper for long in the current competitive environment without putting in place satisfactory methods to protect its sovereignty and core interests. Strategists strive to ensure sufficient security at acceptable costs through developing optimised concepts that can be employed to further national interests. This undertaking is challenged by the rapid pace of political, demographic, societal, economic, scientific and technological changes taking place across the world. The need to be innovative in influencing and shaping, deterring, coercing or even punishing an adversary has never been more important.

Strategies influence every field of human endeavour. Those that nations use to secure themselves fall within a complex hierarchy that permits sufficient interaction between all levels. National strategies are at the apex and are designed to achieve national objectives. They take into consideration an entire, diverse range of elements that concern the nation and the society within—starting from health and housing to environment and agriculture and to commerce, economics and the armed forces. These are further tinged with the national ethos regarding laws, values and lifestyle expectations. The National Strategy of a nation directs the

appropriate application of the most suitable element of national power, or an optimised combination of one or more elements, during peace and in war to achieve national objectives even if confronted by foreign or domestic threats. The national military strategy provides guidance for the employment of military forces to achieve the objectives that contribute to securing the nation. This book looks at the spread of military strategies.

Former French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau is reported to have proclaimed that: 'War is much too serious to leave to generals.' John Collins has framed a corollary statement that reads, 'National security is much too serious to leave entirely to civilians.' This is because politico-military affairs are intertwined both during peace and in war. National security interests, the threats to them and focused objectives form the framework within which national policies and military strategies must fit comprehensively if a nation is to feel secure. This is a complex undertaking and fraught with the danger of not having a chance to redo or replan if one strategy fails. The volatile environment of the modern world adds further pressure to this onerous task.

Strategy deals with successfully achieving objectives; it is about translating military effects into political results. The most distinctive characteristic of strategy is that the most effective one will depend on what the adversary does with its forces. In order to win, it therefore becomes necessary to have a clear understanding of one's own capabilities and a continuous assessment and analysis of the opponent's likely courses of action. It is highly unlikely that one particular strategy will create maximum effects irrespective of the adversary's actions. Success will depend on the ability to adapt—at times rapidly—the strategy that is being employed, based on unfolding circumstances, and if necessary change the strategy while the battle, campaign and war is ongoing. This adroitness requires an in-depth understanding

of the spread of strategies that can be employed to optimise the effects that military forces can create.

While the development of strategy may be an intellectual activity, wherein strategists try to explain in a general manner the reasons why a strategy has succeeded in the past; it also remains a purely practical activity. Even though strategists analyse the nature of strategy itself and its relationship to theory and policy, the purpose of strategy is to optimise the employment of military forces in the real world—the ultimate test being in the reality of the battlefield. However, military strategy cannot be devoid of all connection with other activities that the nation performs. In effect, strategy should not be constrained within set boundaries. It needs to consider realities in the employment of lethal force and also relate to the nation's non-military objectives and be aligned with its political objectives. Of necessity it reaches out to ethics and morality, economics and diplomacy, and sociology and cultural ethos; whatever influences the objectives and the means to achieve them. A strategist must therefore be able to relate the military activities to the wider context of the nation and be able to directly link national well-being and military strategy. This is the litmus test for the veracity of a strategy, and the strategist.

Broad strategies are relatively easy to understand in a generic manner. Their complexity is in the nuances that each one contains and in understanding how each of these subtleties combines with others to produce what normally would be more than their sum. Exploding each broad strategy into sub-spectrums produces an intricate set of activities that are at the same time interrelated and independent. Each discrete set of activities can also be understood in terms of military operations that are intended to create the desired effects.

The monograph looks at the spread of strategies—influence and shape, deterrence, coercion and punishment—and examines each in detail. It further introduces the activities that air power

can undertake to contribute to the successful implementation of these strategies. No military strategy can be fully implemented with air power, or for that matter land power or maritime power, alone. Therefore it is important to view the opinions expressed in this monograph as part of the whole, albeit a critical part. Unless the nuances of the application of air power is understood in consonance with the distinctions that are natural to the strategies, the employment of air power and the implementation of the selected strategy will remain flawed. No nation can allow this to happen and still prosper as an independent entity.

Sanu Kainikara

Canberra

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Ayudhanam aham Vajram...

(Of all the weapons I am Vajra, the Divine Thunderbolt...)

The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, Verse 28,
1st century AD

PROLOGUE

INTRODUCTION

To be effective a strategy must fulfil several requirements. It must be able to win domestic consensus, among both the technical and political leadership. It must be understood by the opponents to the extent needed for effective deterrence. It must receive allied endorsement if alliances are to remain cohesive. It must be relevant to the problems in the uncommitted areas as to discourage international anarchy. Unfortunately, the reconciliation of these various tasks is far from easy and perhaps impossible.

Henry Kissinger¹

In order to prosper, every nation must have sufficiently robust measures in place to protect and promote their fundamental interests and the myriad of requirements that emanate from this primary requirement.² In the extremely competitive current global environment, political, economic, demographic, social and technological changes create unprecedented challenges that politico-military policy makers are hard pressed to consistently overcome. This situation is not conducive to ensuring uncontested security and stability of a nation and therefore is a challenge in

1 Henry Kissinger, 'American Strategic Doctrine and Diplomacy', in Michael Howard (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War*, Cassell & Company Ltd., London, 1965, p. 277.

2 John M. Collins, *Military Strategy: Principles, Practices and Historical Perspectives*, Brassey's Inc., Washington, DC, 2002, p. 3.

itself. National security has grown far beyond being considered a predominantly military challenge that 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.’³

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 exceptions, and nations face a range of challenges that can spread across a wide spectrum. Armed conflict, as an entity, encompasses the full spread of activities from minor skirmishes to major state-on-state encounters and is situated at the higher end of the spectrum of national security undertakings. The challenges that emanate from being engaged in armed conflicts, therefore, require a nation to develop a spread of strategies to deal with emerging situations in a contextual manner.

The need for security, and flowing from that, the development of security strategies, has long been accepted as a fundamental necessity to ensure the prosperity of a nation. In order to be successful, security strategies must be developed with the availability of adequate and reliable information that can be

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

analysed in sufficient detail; the centres of gravity of the nation must be identified and the security objectives listed accordingly; as many options as possible must be considered within a risk assessment before the strategy to be implemented in a particular context is ultimately chosen; and the failure of one strategy must be identified as early as possible so that another one more suited to the unfolding events can be speedily adopted. The national security strategy encompasses all the strategies formulated to ensure the appropriate application of the elements of national power in a concerted manner so that the desired end-state is achieved in the most resource-optimised manner.

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. Accordingly, national security strategies span a broad continuum from benign influencing activities to the application of lethal force. The inherent complexity of the global security environment makes it obvious that national security cannot, and never has been, predicated on the implementation of a single strategy.

It is in this murky and dynamic area that strategists operate and strive to develop concepts that would assure the security of the nation within acceptable costs—a fine balancing act if ever there was one. The trend in evolving challenges is towards increasing complexity associated with increasing rates of their development. The importance of developing appropriate strategies to counter and overcome these challenges has been never more important than in the contemporary security environment.

Even in the same language, interpretation of one word or term can, and does, vary with the context of its use. Strategy is one such word, which is difficult to define because it can be connoted to have different meanings and also because the general understanding of the word itself has evolved over time. The word

has a military heritage⁴ and traditionally was considered purely as a wartime military activity regarding how, when and where military commanders employed their forces to win wars. In the classic sense it was the art of 'employing' available forces to achieve ultimate victory and not concerned with the individual actions of soldiers or small groups of soldiers. These individual actions were tactics that would be used to effectively apply force on the adversary to ensure their defeat. In other words, tactics came into play once the forces were engaged in battle. Strategists also accepted the fact that the art of strategy could not be confined to military power and warfighting, but needed to include other national power elements like diplomacy and economics in order to be successful. This obviously means that a strategy to pursue national security will need to function both in peacetime and in times of war. This is the realm of grand strategy that provides the basic guidance for all elements of national power to operate in isolation or in conjunction with other elements within an aligned process that is pursuant of national security imperatives.

Grand strategy, considered to be almost synonymous with the policy that guides the conduct of war, is actually distinct from the higher national policy that lays down the objective to be achieved through the implementation of the grand strategy. This is a subtle nuance in terms of the understanding of national policy and its relationship with policy at the lower plane. In essence, the role of grand strategy is to coordinate and direct all elements of national power towards achieving the desired objectives within the national security strategy.⁵ It is now well understood that these objectives would be political in nature.

4 J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., 'A Survey of the Theory of Strategy', in, Bartholomees, Jr. (ed.), *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, p. 13.

5 B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, Second Revised Edition, Meridian, Penguin Group, London, 1991, pp. 321-322.

All nations develop strategies to secure their sovereignty. These strategies are, or at least in a realistic way should be, crafted taking into account a number of factors—both tangible and intangible—all of which exert different levels of influence in their development. 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 social cohesion. 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 also 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.

Military strategy is an application on a lower plane and concerned with the optimum utilisation of the resources available to a commander to achieve the desired end-state. It is concerned not only with wars, campaigns and battles but also with the application of force or the threat of force and its maintenance so that it contributes optimally to the achievement of the desired objectives, which is always political.⁶

6 Alastair Buchan, *War in Modern Society: An Introduction*, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, pp. 80-82.

The desired political end-state is laid down by the government and therefore, it can be assumed that if the commander considers that the resources being made available are inadequate to achieve the laid down objectives, then it is justifiable to point this out. This brings out the direct correlation between ends and means. However, the ways in which the means are employed to achieve the desired ends is a dynamic concept. By virtue of the fact that it is the government that formulates the policy on the conduct of the war or campaign it may be compelled to alter the objectives as the war progresses because of changing circumstances. The military strategy—the ways—may therefore have to be adapted while the war or campaign is still in progress.

The success or failure of a strategy is dependent on correctly calculating the relationship between the end and the means. At the purely military level, the object of strategy is to achieve the desired end-state by maintaining freedom of action while limiting that of the adversary. Appropriate military strategy controls the progression of events in such a way that the ends, ways and means are balanced—even against the adversary's attempts at disruption. Thus, strategy is concerned with the creation of the necessary effects and is not merely about the movement of forces. Ideally, military strategy must be directly linked to the achievement of the desired political end-state. In armed conflicts, other than in wars of national survival, it may be necessary to tailor the political objectives to ensure that the end-state is achievable by the available forces. However, this is the responsibility of the government and in the domain of policy. Military objectives should be derived from political end-states and should be clear and unambiguous, although political realities and the need for consensus and compromise often make this difficult to achieve. When political and strategic circumstances change, and the government finds it necessary to alter its political objectives, it will become necessary to review and recast military objectives. The end-state and military objectives

to achieve it are very seldom fixed and immovable, but the effort must always be to lessen the volatility of the ultimate political end-state.

Even though there are many methods to implement a chosen military strategy, it is generally recognised that the best method is to identify and target the adversary's centre of gravity. A centre of gravity is defined as the characteristics, capabilities or localities from which a nation, an alliance, a military force or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength or the will to fight. In lengthy campaigns, centres of gravity may change and therefore, their identification requires continuous review and assessment, which is inherently a dynamic process. The optimum way to prosecute an armed conflict is to seize and maintain the initiative through offensive action, preferably conducted before the adversary can react or respond. However, military strategy cannot be purely offensive since it must take into account the geopolitical factors in order to align campaign planning and execution with national priorities. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to adopt a defensive posture, even if on a temporary basis, and the strategy must be flexible enough to reflect this reality.

After a strategy has been devised and campaign planning completed, forces—personnel, equipment and processes—are the available means at a commander's disposal to implement the strategy to achieve the desired military objectives. If the strategy being pursued is defensive in nature, it is particularly necessary to ensure that sufficient flexibility is retained to respond rapidly to evolving situations. The adequacy of the means available must be ascertained before commencing a campaign and this falls into the area of joint responsibility of the government and the highest levels of military command. Such a joint responsibility is also the zone of contention between the civilian leadership and the military in most democratic nations. Under these circumstances, the ability

to adapt flexibly to evolving situations becomes a great, if abstract, capability for a military force.

THE SPREAD OF MILITARY STRATEGIES

Within the broader national security strategy and policy, military strategy deals primarily with theories, hypotheses and concepts that apply to the employment of military forces rather than facts and scientific sureties. Further, military strategy cannot be developed in isolation of the broader national security paradigms and is strongly influenced by both foreign and domestic policies of the government.⁷ It is also apparent, even from a cursory historical overview of the evolution of military strategy that no two situations were amenable to being contained by the application of the same strategy. In other words, strategy has to be dynamic and the strategists have to be agile-minded to recognise the changing situations to adapt to them optimally.

Traditionally, military strategies were classified in a basic manner as either offensive or defensive in nature. Both the strategies in themselves had sub sets of a lower order strategy, which in turn gave rise to the tactics to be used when the battle was joined. With the advent of extremely sophisticated weapons of war and the broadening of the employment envelope of the military forces, this simplistic precept of strategy has undergone a sea change. Military forces are still primarily employed in conflict; however, the common understanding of what conflict entails has altered to an extent where the spectrum of conflict now spans the entire gamut of activities ranging from delivering humanitarian assistance at the lower end, to conducting a war of national survival on the other. Military strategy now caters for this full spectrum of 'conflict' and has therefore, become extraordinarily complex. While the requirement for military strategy to be able to cater for this wide

⁷ Collins, *Military Strategy*, p. 2.

swathe of activities makes it necessary, or rather imperative, for it to retain as much flexibility as possible, there is a fundamental constant that underlines its development—military strategy is always oriented towards ensuring and furthering national security, irrespective of the fact whether it is for the benign employment of the force or for the concerted application of lethal force.

The spread of military strategies is very broad and there is a continuum of four overarching strategies that military forces normally adopt: influence and shape, deterrence, coercion, and punishment. These four strategies encompass the full spread of military activities oriented towards ensuring national security and they can be further expanded in a nuanced manner to examine the full details of the application of a particular strategy. Further, the lethality of the employment of military forces increases incrementally across the continuum of these strategies. This extends from the use of the military forces to carry out relatively benign influence and shape activities through providing humanitarian assistance as a response to man-made or natural calamities; creating the necessary posture to deter a would-be adversary; coercing a recalcitrant opponent to refrain from initiating actions that are inimical to one's own security requirements, if and when necessary; and as a last resort implementing the strategy of punishment and, in extremis, destroying the adversary's capacity to oppose one's own will, both physically and in the cognitive domain.

The application of each strategy has its own peculiar nuances, making the employment of military forces a sophisticated undertaking at all times. They cannot be used as blunt instruments of national policy to create effects that in themselves will have repercussions contrary to the ones intended. Within the four major strategies that have been enumerated, the employment of military forces takes on an extremely refined, matured and complex character. In the politically charged contemporary

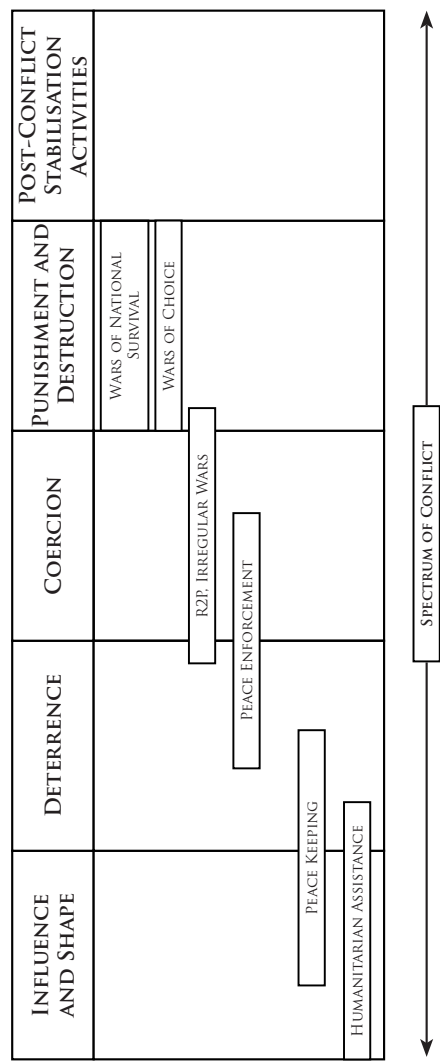


Figure 1: The Spread of Strategies

scenario, understanding the subtleties of a chosen strategy has added importance.

Air power does not exist in a vacuum and is an indispensable part of military capabilities. In fact, in contemporary conflict situations, all mature military forces are increasingly adhering to the concept of joint operations where the three environmental capabilities—land, maritime and air—are optimally combined to create the required effect. Therefore, air strategies must be intimately aligned with the broader military strategy in order to ensure that the desired end-state is achieved with the minimum expenditure of resources. Ideally, at the highest level of decision-making the spread of military strategies should be superimposed on the air strategies, so that the air power contribution to a particular strategy can be correctly evaluated. This in turn will ensure that each activity within the detailed spectrum of a chosen strategy would contribute directly to achieving the desired end-state.

There are two fundamental factors that underpin a clear understanding of military strategies: one, that there is an indelible connection between the four strategies and the spectrum of conflict; and two, that the strategies are not linear progressions that indicate an increasing use of force as it progresses from the benign to the lethal, but that the spread is cyclical.

The spectrum of conflict can be superimposed on a linear spread of the strategies and the indicative operations of the conflict spectrum will often be placed broadly on the most appropriate strategy to be employed to contain the situation as shown in Figure 1 (opposite). It can be noticed that each of the indicative conflict activities straddle at least two strategies and as the intensity of the conflict increases, they straddle three out of the four broad categories.

This demonstrates the flexibility of the fundamental strategies to be able to ramp up or down dependent on circumstances.

More importantly, it indicates that each of the broad strategies have within them an independent spectrum of activities that in themselves move from a relatively benign position through escalation to a higher level of the employment of the military forces and increasing use of force.

Although the spread is depicted in a linear manner, it will always be necessary to carry out post-conflict stabilisation after the employment of the strategy of punishment and destruction, which is essentially the implementation of an influence and shape strategy.

The strategies should therefore be viewed as a cycle that could start at any point in the continuum, but would almost always have to end with the force taking recourse to the strategy of influence and shape to direct their activities. This is an imperative because unless stabilisation activities are undertaken (to be followed by normalisation), the primary objective of resorting to the use of force, or the threat of force, will not be achieved.

At the basic level, the political objective to be achieved is to effect the necessary change in the belief system of an actual or potential adversary. Even if the behaviour pattern of the adversary is altered through the use of force, the belief system will only be influenced through the more benign employment of resources to stabilise and normalise the nation. The precept of the cycle of strategies (Figure 2, opposite) can also be extrapolated to the national security strategy of a nation at the highest level.

This book explores the cycle of strategies in a holistic manner and then analyses the role of air power in their effective implementation as part of a joint defence or military force. In doing so it clearly brings out the distinct and inherent advantages that air power provides to implementing any or all of the strategies. Each strategy is distinctly evaluated and its individual nuances brought out with the employment of air

power superimposed on them, which effectively brings out the relative relevance of air power in pursuing any military strategy. The four chapters explain, and at times debate, the four broad strategies that military forces employ to achieve stated objectives with a decidedly air power focus.

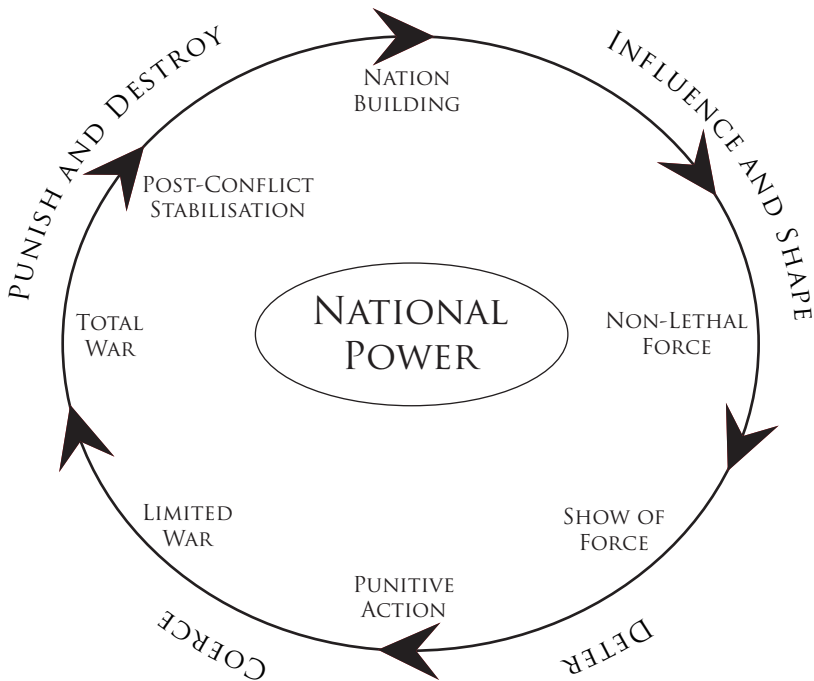


Figure 2: Cycle of Strategies

The next four chapters offer an explanation of the progression of strategies that can be adopted by military forces in the pursuit of national security, as defined from time-to-time by the government. The strategies identified have to be understood in a contextual manner, particularly the role of air power, and have been elaborated in considerable detail. For any strategy to be considered resilient it must retain an in-built flexibility. Optimum flexibility can only be exploited by professional masters of the art of war if the nuances of the cycle of strategies are clearly understood. When applied to the employment of air power in turn, the professional mastery of air power becomes the first stepping-stone. Much like the cycle of strategies, the professional mastery of air power is also achieved within a self-perpetuating cycle of knowledge and application—only through a masterful understanding of the manner in which air power fits within the broader military strategy and through it the national security strategy can overall professional mastery be achieved.

CHAPTER ONE

INFLUENCE AND SHAPE

For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.

Sun Tzu¹

National security is predicated 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 is situated at the lowest end of the continuum and aims to influence and shape the environment. Each strategy within the continuum can be individually defined and their nuances elaborated within their own individual sub-spectrums. The sub-spectrum within a fundamental strategy should not be considered a linear progression—it is not necessary to always start the implementation of the strategy at the lowest point in the sub-spectrum and then progress methodically through the entire continuum. In fact, it is possible, depending on the unfolding circumstances, to start at providing assistance within the sub-spectrum of the strategy on influence and shape and to move to active policing without going through the intermediary stage of physical intervention. This nuance is also true in the spread of the continuum of

1 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B. Griffith (trans.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1963, p. 77.

fundamental strategies. For example, it is possible to start with the implementation of the strategy of influence and shape and, in keeping with the changing circumstances, subsequently move to the strategy coercion without having employed the strategy of deterrence; 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 an obviously more benign one at a lower level, it would be indicative of a failure of the national security apparatus at the highest levels of decision-making.

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. This pattern becomes apparent when it is being examined in detail. For example, 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.

This chapter 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 options that a nation has to influence and shape an 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—human relations at the fundamental level and those between nations at the more involved and complex level. A basic definition of influence is: ‘the power or capacity of a person or thing to produce an effect on the actions, behaviours, or opinions of others through either imperceptible or tangible means.’ There are two important points that stand out from this simple definition: influence is a direct bi-product of power, and 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, as the ability to do or act in such a way that creates an effect in the physical and/or the non-physical domain. The application of this power to create influence could be either overtly visible or completely imperceptible when it is being applied.

There is a certain subtlety involved in the actual act of influencing a person, the environment or a nation. It does not normally 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, and could even alter hostile perceptions that may have existed earlier. The indirectness of actions that create influence is itself a source of strength to the 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 align another's perceptions to their own through strategic influence, there will be lesser chances of discordant 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 the sphere of influence of a nation is a virtual region based on conceptual borders over which the state exercises significant influence. Such influence could also be sufficient for the region to be held under almost complete sway of the influencing nation. Physical borders do not always coincide with the virtual borders of a particular sphere of influence and it is even possible to have two conflicting spheres of influence overlap each other.

There are two aspects to understanding the sphere of influence of a nation. First is that a 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 to trade agreements, and even the exchange of information. As a corollary, it is also not necessary that a formal alliance always leads to one nation being within another's sphere of influence. Second is that a sphere of influence can be created without any formal agreement, but through the adept application of 'soft' power. Historic cases of conquest and colonisation could also be considered as bringing the conquered nation within the sphere of

influence of the conquering nation through the employment of 'hard' power. 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—will 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, primarily of military force. 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. In the case of a democratic nation this 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, neither political advocacy nor public diplomacy can generate strategic influence on its own. The absence of any independent capacity to embark on military operations in part explains the reason for the United Nations (UN) being challenged in exercising an acceptable level of strategic influence. In the 21st century, applying a carefully orchestrated combination of all the elements can generally create strategic influence, while their independent application is unlikely to produce the desired effect.²

There is clear evidence that the timeliness of decisions and associated activities are as crucial to creating strategic influence as the veracity and contextual correctness of decisions. 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.³ History suggests 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.

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

3 *ibid.*, p. 34.

SHAPING THE ENVIRONMENT

In terms of strategy, bringing to bear the influence of a nation is almost always associated with shaping the environment to be benign towards one's own intent. 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 automatically shape the political, economic, diplomatic or security environments; however, from a military perspective, shaping the environment is an operational-level concept aimed at creating an operating environment that is conducive to one's optimal employment of 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. 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, which also encompasses a large number of sub-elements within each of them. In this framework, if the influencing and shaping activities are being conducted with the military in the lead, then two factors must be considered.

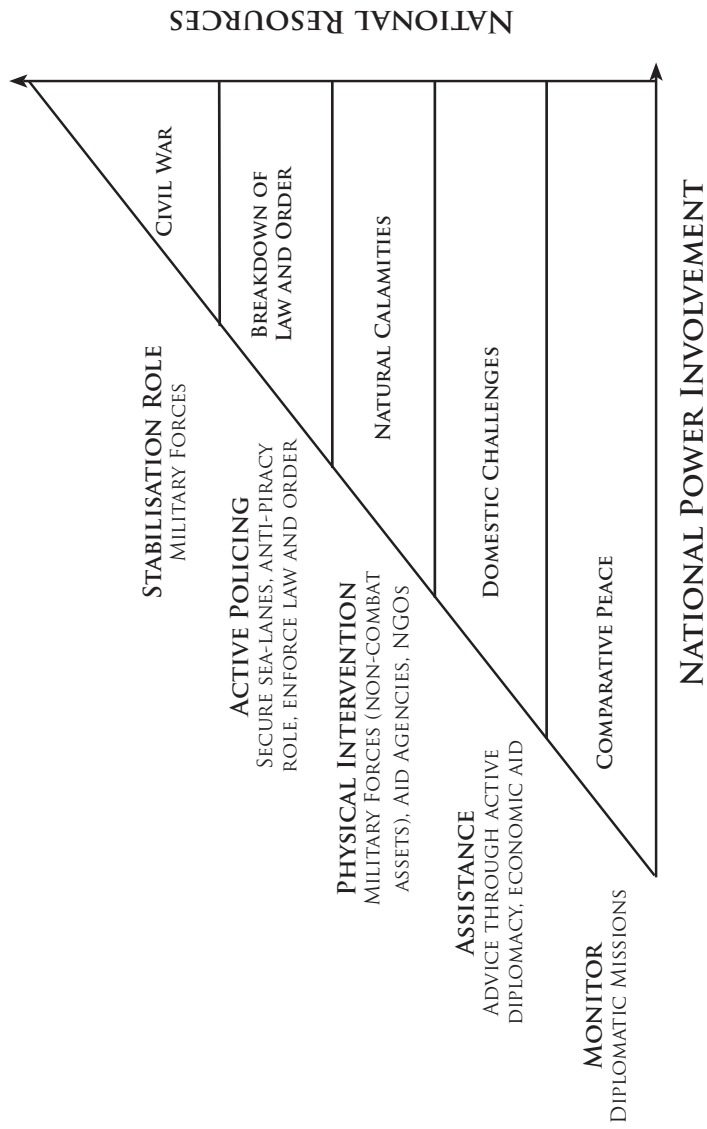


Figure 3: The Sub-spectrum of the Strategy of Influence and Shape

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 the military forces brings with it the inherent potential of escalation—either planned or unplanned—that could 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 INFLUENCING AND SHAPING

In a universal manner, national security could be considered to be ensured by developing a number of strategies that 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 will develop independent processes to model the strategy to fit their unique circumstances and requirements. At this stage, the factors mentioned above will influence the development and employment of strategies. The sub-spectrum of the strategy of influence and shape is shown in Figure 3 (opposite).

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 will 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 geopolitical environment? It is commonly accepted that 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, as explained in this paper, 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 subsidiary activities that could be undertaken to implement a strategy of influence and shape ranges 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 geopolitical environment, or its inability to put in place remedial measures at an earlier stage of the deterioration in the stability of the neighbour/region.

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 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.

INFLUENCING AND SHAPING WITH AIR POWER

Subsidiary activities aimed at influencing and shaping the environment are undertaken by all elements of national power, and military forces are only one of the tools available to the government to carry out such activities. In order to carry out these activities with relative safety, they must be backed by demonstrated and visible military power. Lacking adequacy in military capability will always lead to dilution of influence, as the recipient nation or entity will perceive the inability to enforce any necessary action. This is not 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. Firstly, as the linear progression of the sub-spectrum moves towards a situation of civil war, the proportion of military contribution increases incrementally. This means that the nation would have to determine the quantum and level of military force necessary to 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.

All arms of the military force—land, maritime and air—will be involved in influencing and shaping activities; however, 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 trend and practice of not placing military forces in an interventionist manner in other sovereign nations. Physical presence of foreign troops make it difficult to win the 'hearts and minds' of a community when that military force would be considered an invading force. The impermanence of air power has often been viewed as a disadvantage; although in trying to influence and shape, the impermanence of air power is perhaps the defining characteristic that makes it so appealing. The impact of air power in the subsidiary activities within the strategy of influence and shape are described next.

MONITOR

The absolute basic method to influence another nation is the use of diplomacy through the establishment of embassies, 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 actions and 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 unobtrusive.

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 (and further into 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 responsiveness of airlift makes it easier for the donor nation to provide necessary physical aid in a timely manner.

The provision of aid can, and usually does, have a long-term impact on the recipient government and the people, depending on the perception that is generated. If the aid is viewed as being 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. This is particularly so when humanitarian aid to assist during natural calamities are air-delivered like during the Tsunami Relief operations carried out in South-East Asia in 2006. 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 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 point of origin, especially in the current globally 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 crisis and its speed and global reach can be leveraged to ensure that relief is provided to the disaster 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 have to host any overtly military personnel during this operation. 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 for aid delivery. 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 be 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 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. That being said, 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. 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 in 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. However, the deterioration of law and order that necessitates an external involvement would also need the military to secure the operational environment for other agencies to function effectively and also to ensure the safety of the personnel involved.

In an active policing situation, 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. 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 and vulnerable to 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 achieving responsiveness and effectiveness.

STABILISATION

At the high end of the strategy of influence and shape are the activities to stabilise an unstable 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, it has limited overlap with deterrence, which is usually the next fundamental strategy in the spread of the continuum. Stabilisation activities are undertaken when there is armed insurgency, the prospect of civil war or the

actual occurrence of civil war-like conditions. In turn, this amounts to the use of 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 UN mandate. This being said, at times even without such a mandate, if a great power or a group of nations believe that such actions are the only option to curtail a spiralling instability, stabilisation may be considered. The role of air power encompasses the use of its ISR capabilities to establish the areas that need to be watched, air mobility to transport men and materiel necessary to control and then stabilise the affected area, and 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 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. Influencing is a benign activity with limited imposition on the recipient nation. At best, influence adds value to the bilateral and multi-lateral relationships within the region concerned, and at worst, it is only non-committal. If for some reason the activities tend to vitiate the relationships

then they are not achieving the desired objectives, and therefore must be carefully discontinued. For this reason, all influence and shape activities must be monitored at all times with the clear understanding that reactions inimical to the delivering nation's interest might not become apparent immediately. 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. This reinforces the fact that all national security strategies can only be optimally employed in a joint and/or combined manner, with one 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 are highly prized. 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. Air power's ISR capabilities can also be used to provide information to the host nation in circumstances where they do not have sufficient capacity to do so, thus increasing one's own influence in a subtle manner. Most airborne ISR assets have little or no lethal capabilities and therefore, even deploying them to the recipient nation for brief periods of time, or over flights in that nation's sovereign airspace will have only 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 almost overnight. There are many historical instances of prompt delivery of disaster relief changing the core basis of a bilateral relationship between nations. In the case of active policing and stabilisation operations, air mobility has to be an assured capability before even 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, then 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, with conscious care taken 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 that line has been crossed and also when the effects have started to create negative influence. Therefore, use of lethal force must be avoided as far as 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 strategy of influence and

shape onto 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

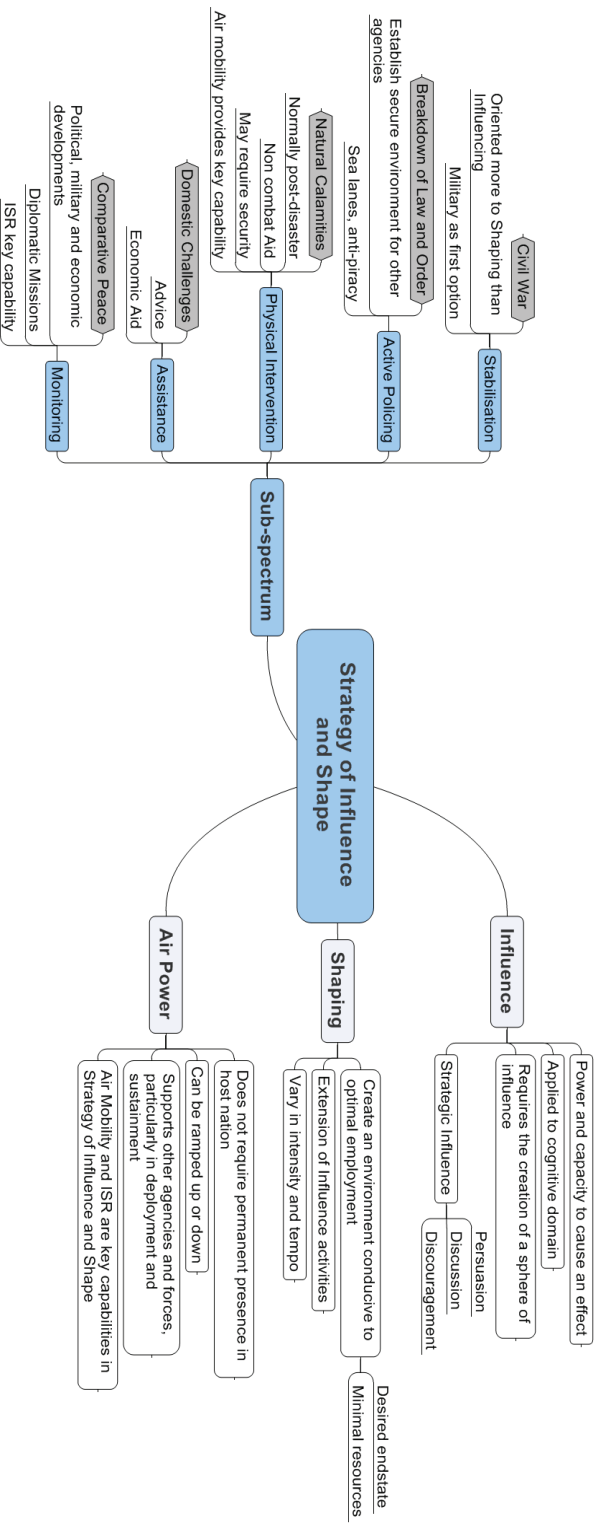
The strategy of influence and shape is the most benign of all the strategies that can be, and is, employed by nations to further their national interests and to ensure the viability of their sovereignty. However, the spread of its sub-spectrum can in rare occasions incline towards minimal use of force. All nations aspire to having a dedicated sphere of influence, within which its interests are always a priority and only limited effort is needed to maintain their overarching influence. Normally it is seen that each nation attempts to create its own sphere of influence; though in this situation, the spheres of influence of neighbouring nations would overlap and therefore is likely to come under competing influences. All nations, therefore, continually strive to maintain and expand their spheres of influence depending on their relative power status and spread of interests. 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 tension between nations,

the role of the military becomes increasingly critical, even if the situation does not deteriorate into conflict. In fact, the military forces could be directly contributory to de-escalating 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 of these activities is an escalation of the involvement of the providing nation, and also overlaps onto the previous and next subsidiary activity. In each subsidiary activity, air power's contribution is distinct, and can vary from essential to critical. Irrespective of the level of contribution, all 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.

There is a certain subtlety involved in the actual act of influencing a person, the environment, or a nation. 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.

In most cases, the ability of a nation to influence and shape the geo-political environment, which also envelops the security environment, within its sphere of influence will be best realised through an optimum combination of all elements of national power.



CHAPTER TWO

DETERRENCE

If there is a pervasive and enduring weakness in the articulation of the theory of deterrence, it is the lack of emphasis placed upon explanation of the structural point that deterrence, unlike defence, is voluntary. An intended deterree may be unwilling, or unable, to be deterred. No excellence in efforts at deterrence can guarantee successful deterrent effect. The deterree has to agree to be deterred, no matter how unwillingly.

Colin S. Gray¹

In its simplest form, deterrence aims to inhibit or prevent someone from doing something. From a national security perspective, deterrence is situated at the low end of the spread of strategies that could be employed to ensure the protection of the state's interests. The strategy of deterrence derives its strength from being supported by a higher and perhaps moralistic requirement for all nations to abide by accepted international norms, and the belief that peace is better than war; though this precept may not always be adhered to by all nations. The primary purpose of deterrence is to avoid conflict by employing an appropriate combination of national power elements in order to persuade a potential adversary from initiating any action inimical

¹ Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 337-338.

to one's own interests. Deterrence, in the classic military sense, includes a number of steps that provide graded responses to emerging situations. Thus, employing a strategy of deterrence sees conventional military methods and nuclear forces as last resort options.

A nation that adopts a strategy of deterrence has to ensure that its response capabilities in case of direct or covert attack are extremely robust and that potential adversaries perceive them as such. This perception of possessing a credible and powerful capability can be rapidly undermined by demonstrated ineptitude in the application of force—the line dividing the two is thin, but clearly visible to astute observers. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the assessment regarding one's own nation is such that the perception of great strength and the ability to retaliate by employing it suitably is maintained.

In the past few decades it has become apparent that the conventional military forces of the developed world are overwhelmingly superior to those of rogue states or non-state groups who pose threats to international security. While this superiority deterred these quasi-state or non-state entities from initiating any action for a period of time, it also accelerated the move towards the adoption of asymmetry as a viable warfighting concept. In turn, the conventional forces have adapted themselves, and countered these strategies. At the highest operational level the conflict scenario is dynamic as the 'cat and mouse' game of asymmetrical warfare and counter-solution is played out in the ongoing battles across the world. It is under these circumstances that the strategy of deterrence based on conventional military capabilities must be examined.

Employing the concept of deterrence to ensure national security is not a modern phenomenon, yet it has assumed the status of an explicit defence strategy only in the 20th century. Most of the militarily powerful nations of the world accommodated some form

or the other of deterrence in the broader calculation of national security throughout the first half of the century. For example, in the early 1900s, German naval strategy, formulated by Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, relied on deterrence in an oblique manner for its success. The calculation was that Great Britain would not fight a weakened German navy if the Germans could inflict sufficient damage to the British fleet to ensure that other rivals could then challenge it.

The introduction of nuclear weapons post-World War II brought in a completely new strategic dimension to the concept of deterrence. Three major factors accounted for this change: first, there was no effective defence against a nuclear attack and therefore, the only defence was to ensure that an attack did not occur; second, nuclear retaliation by a nation that was attacked would be devastating; and third, the scale of destruction could, and in most cases would, exceed any benefit that the initiating nation had expected to achieve. This was the beginning of deterrence by what is known as mutually assured destruction (MAD) that was part and parcel of the entire Cold War era. The US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) that became an umbrella for the Western nations to withstand the communist threat emanating from the Soviet Union made up for its inferiority in conventional weapons by ensuring a substantial nuclear capability. The threat of nuclear retaliation was used as the deterrence tool even against possible conventional aggression.

With the passage of time, and greater awareness of the extreme devastation that nuclear weapons would bring, the understanding of nuclear deterrence changed. While MAD was applicable between states that possessed nuclear weapons, the moral and ethical dimensions of using nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear state became central to the humanitarian debate. This posed challenges to the concept of deterrence based on nuclear capabilities. Even as the Soviet Union went into decline

and MAD started to move away from the centre stage, deterrence as a concept was being realigned.

The end of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s changed the perceptions of national security across the world, leading to a ripple effect on prevalent national security strategies. The primary change was the dramatic alteration in the context of the deterrence strategy that had existed between the US and the Soviet Union up to that time. From a stable nuclear deterrence posture of MAD, the context shifted rather rapidly to an unstable world, with power becoming widely dispersed between nation-states and groups that are transnational, and at times, have quasi-state status. The application of a deterrence strategy in the contemporary strategic scenario is more complex and requires more measured and flexible actions than ever before.

In the 21st century, the relative roles of nuclear and conventional weapons have changed and the likelihood of conflicts that lead to wars of national survival has receded, at least in the democratic world. Deterrence today is focused on averting conventional wars and lesser types of conflicts, either between states or between states and non-state adversaries. However, it must also be admitted that the slow proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) including nuclear weapons, possibly even to non-state entities, is an issue that cannot be ignored within the concept of deterrence. The difficulty in enforcing deterrence on transnational extremist groups that may possess (and are inclined to use) WMDs is exacerbated by the moral dilemma that faces a democratic government in retaliating in kind.

THE CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE

Deterrence is an exercise in seduction and compulsion—involving the use of promises and threats—to ensure that a potential or actual adversary is dissuaded from pursuing actions detrimental to one's own interests. It involves maintaining the status quo by ensuring that the cost of challenging it will be prohibitive, thereby making the status quo more acceptable than any other situation. The viability of deterrence is completely dependent on a nation's demonstrated physical capacity and preparedness to deliver on both promises and threats and the perception of its collective will to do so. This could mean the willingness to inflict unacceptable damage to aggressors so that they refrain from committing any act that is potentially damaging to the nation's security. The combination of will and resources has to be credible for the concept of deterrence to succeed.

Deterrence presupposes that all decisions are made after an unbiased and rational cost-benefit analysis of the actions being contemplated, and that this analysis is susceptible to outside manipulations, essentially by making the cost side of the equation far too high vis-à-vis the perceived benefits. This may be a major challenge to employing deterrence as a basis for national security strategy.

All sovereign states, irrespective of their size and capability and the threats and challenges that they face, strive to ensure adequate national security. One of the major elements that most nations examine while formulating their security strategy is the effectiveness of maintaining a deterrent military capability as a cornerstone; however, effectiveness of the military is only one crucial element. Within the national security strategy, deterrence should be studied as a dynamic, process-oriented concept that involves determining who should attempt to deter whom from doing what, when and where, and by what means rather than as a

simplistic cost-benefit analysis. This is an involved and complicated process with a myriad of variables in each of the steps, some of which cannot be tangibly measured.

The concept of conventional deterrence is a contested idea that is not analysed easily. This is mainly because the efficacy of the concept is critically dependent on the context of its application. Adopting conventional deterrence as the basis of a security strategy is a complex and sophisticated undertaking, based on a broad spectrum of escalating activities that range from denial to punishment.

There are two basic flaws in adopting deterrence as a foundational basis for a national security strategy. The first is that the concept is built on the assumption that the adversary's rationale in selecting a particular course of action—as well as casualty acceptance and tolerance of material and/or psychological damage that would come with the pursuance of that course of action—is the same or fairly similar to one's own. For example, it is fairly obvious that a suicidal opponent will not be stopped by any kind of deterrence. In that situation, the deterrent effectiveness of a particular capability that a nation possesses, or an action that it can undertake against a potential adversary, is dependent on the adversary's perception of that capability or action vis-à-vis their own contemplated or proposed course of action. Building effective deterrent capabilities will need to take into account the overall cultural ethos—including religious persuasion—of the adversary because what is reasonable behaviour to one nation, culture, ethnicity, religion and social order may not seem rational to another. Effective deterrence is reliant on the perception of the adversary.

The second flaw is that the ultimate aim of deterrence is to preserve the status quo. This means that when it is successful there is 'nothing much happening'. Deterrence as a concept is aimed at the cognitive domain of a human being and it is extremely difficult to measure its effectiveness. Security policies based on

the assumption that adversary minds have been deterred can very easily be frustrated. In addition, maintenance of the status quo in a volatile strategic context that is permanently in flux requires adept manipulation of deterrent capabilities and dynamic adaptation of strategic security priorities. The dexterity necessary to achieve this is normally beyond the capabilities of most democratic nations.

In the current international security scenario, and wherein it is assumed that asymmetric unconventional conflicts will be the norm, the options available to a sovereign nation and its conventional military forces are limited and present difficult choices at best. A nation has to decide between a military response that would, in all probability, lead to an indecisive stalemate or adopting the concept of deterrence with no assurance of certain success. At the best of times it is difficult to measure the success of a deterrent strategy and know the degree to which it should be enforced; the current strategic security environment makes this challenge almost insurmountable. The dilemma is all-pervasive.

AIR POWER AND DETERRENCE

Despite the significant shifts in the strategic environment, the strategy of deterrence continues to be one of the central elements in national security considerations. This is mainly because of the reluctance of the developed world to initiate lethal action against diffused adversaries that might lead to unintended casualties and collateral damage. That being said, the unquestioned capability to carry the war to the adversary and inflict unacceptably heavy damage is also central to pursuing deterrence as a viable security strategy. The capacity to inflict such damage while avoiding unacceptable collateral damage requires the capability to carry out decisive and precise strikes at will over long distances. This is well suited to the inherent characteristics of air power.

Since its inception as a military capability, air power has played a crucial role in all aspects of warfighting and is also a primary contributor to the strategy of deterrence in many aspects. When deterrence is viewed as a process, it can be envisioned as a succession of related, sometimes parallel steps. Logically, these steps would be to detect the beginning of threatening plans; dissuade the potential adversary from making such moves; deter by ensuring that the adversary understands the capabilities that can be brought to bear on them; defeat any move if it is made; and destroy the adversary's capability to make such moves in the future. Air power contributes directly to all these steps.

All military strategies that draw on national security strategy for their relevance will have to take into account the vital and critical contribution that air power makes to ensure their success. In the contemporary whole-of-government approach to national security, the role of air power as an enabling and protecting agent has become ingrained. In the acceptance of the strategy of deterrence as a major building block in the pursuit of national security in an ever-changing world—where threats are more amorphous than ever before and response options are often constrained—air power with its inherent flexibility will be a prized capability.

INFLUENCE OF AIR POWER ON THE PRINCIPLES OF DETERRENCE

The strategy of deterrence is built on four cardinal principles: intelligence, credibility, perception and applicability.

INTELLIGENCE

In very generic military terms, intelligence can be described as the means and processes employed for collecting, interpreting and disseminating data that could enhance operational efficiency. There are two dimensions for intelligence to be useful in terms of

supporting the concept of deterrence. First, from an operational perspective, it needs to provide relevant information regarding an adversary's manoeuvres that should be monitored and interdicted if necessary. The second dimension is more important and requires the capability to gather timely and accurate intelligence that can be interpolated with future scenarios so that issues that could become problems at a later stage can be identified and addressed. Essentially, the contribution of intelligence to deterrence revolves around it being accurate, well analysed and distributed in a timely manner to the required personnel. These are activities in which air power can play a critically important role.

The increased availability of a number of long-loiter, armed and unarmed uninhabited aerial vehicles has transformed air power's capacity for intelligence gathering. Capable of wide-area and narrow-field reconnaissance for extended periods, they represent a completely new dimension in detecting and monitoring adversary activity. Developments in airborne ISR capabilities have major implications for the enforcement of a deterrent strategy, especially when directed against irregular adversaries who tend to operate from within the civilian population. It is now possible to watch a single individual for days on end from the air, and then initiate appropriate action to apprehend or neutralise as required. This capability is not lost on potential insurgents or terrorists and acts as a very powerful deterrent tool.

CREDIBILITY

Deterrence is dependent on the combination of threats and incentives being credible and is as much a function of capability as political will. Political will involves the willingness of the nation as a whole to incur casualties, bear the costs (morally, politically and financially) and accept the risks involved in asserting its will to deter potential adversaries. The credibility of capability rides on the political will to use such capabilities to inflict unacceptable

damage to would-be adversaries if they initiate action contrary to the national interest. The credibility of a strategy of deterrence is dependent on the opponent being convinced that fearsome punishment will be forthcoming; through an optimum combination of capability and the will to employ it; if any action inimical to the state's well-being has been initiated.

High-technology air power has the capacity to bring to bear precision and persistence of a degree that creates opportunities to apply lethal force or demonstrate such capabilities graphically as a precursor of action. This can dislocate the psychology of the adversary and make it difficult for them to anticipate how air power will put them at risk. This creates stress and uncertainty for the adversary's forces and diminishes their fighting efficiency. In a modern example, NATO forces in Afghanistan have had significant success in targeting Taliban commanders with pinpoint accuracy through air attacks. This has created both physical and psychological impact on the Taliban's operations. Credibility in modern operations is also dependent, to a certain extent, on avoiding collateral damage whenever force is used. It is also important to ensure that the local population—the uninvolved opinion makers—does not see the external military forces as an occupying force, since that will lead to the gradual erosion of the moral aspect of any operation. With this in mind, a number of situations will preclude the use of forces on the ground to pursue the concept of deterrence. Under these circumstances and operating from friendly air bases, air power can deliver credible attacks in support of deterrence with its reach, penetration and accurate firepower in geographic and political environments where traditional military forces may not be able to do so.

PERCEPTION

Since deterrence is a matter of perception, it is of the utmost importance to be able to understand the adversary in terms of

their vulnerabilities, values and needs. In military planning, the adversary leaders' risk acceptance or aversion must be judged and used as a central factor in the larger analysis of the application of the strategy of deterrence. The overall assessment and estimates of adversary perceptions must identify the level of confidence in them for the military to be able to pursue deterrence with any modicum of success. In the application of military force, calculating what constitutes unacceptable loss and destruction for a particular adversary is extremely difficult. For example, even though deterrence was not part of the US strategy in Vietnam, destroying the ability of the North Vietnamese forces to pursue the war was part of the overall strategy. Although this is second order deterrence by punishment, it did not work because of the willingness of the North Vietnamese to accept extraordinarily high attrition and heavy damage.

The four very broad functions of air power—detect, decide, deter and defeat—can be employed in varying degrees to understand and possibly alter the perception of an adversary and ensure the veracity of the concept of deterrence. Air power contributes directly to influencing the perceptions of the adversary by monitoring and analysing the actions being initiated against one's own forces and then deciding and executing the ideal course of action to deny any advantage to the adversary. Directly indicating to the adversary that their value system and centres of gravity have been identified by overt non-kinetic air action is a very potent tool of deterrence. In the contemporary environment, irregular adversaries are intelligent and adaptable with adequate understanding of the differences in perceptions between different cultures and nations. They capitalise on this by adequately diffusing their own weaknesses while targeting the vulnerabilities of conventional forces and a larger state's inability to be indifferent to casualties. However, if adversaries are convinced that their own vulnerabilities have been correctly identified and that they can be

targeted effectively, the risk involved would become unacceptable, leading to their acceptance of the status quo. Modern air power has the capacity to ensure adequacy of such actions from detection to neutralisation, with minimal political fallout.

Communication is a crucial element in altering perceptions. Communication can also be manipulated to deny the adversary clear understanding of the actions being initiated or can be direct to demonstrate intentions. Once again, movement of troops by air and over flights can be used to communicate to the adversary latent capabilities in support of deterrence. For example, the movement of British forces to Kuwait in 1961 and the 1994 US deployment to the Middle East were both movements of forces to communicate a warning to the adversary. Rapid movement of forces sends a more effective message to would be adversaries than even very powerful forces that remain in their peacetime posture and locations. Air power is at the vanguard of such actions since time is of the essence in executing such communication in order to avert any unfortunate incidents that would require the actual employment of force to ensure deterrence by punishment.

APPLICABILITY

In recent times it has become increasingly difficult to identify the perpetrators of various acts until after the event, which brings into focus the 'deter whom' component most poignantly. This is more so in the case of insurgents and terrorists who employ the tactic of suicide bombing to bring indiscriminate death and destruction. Threats or even substantial damage or destruction to the infrastructure of these entities are inconsequential. It is apparent that not all actions can be deterred.

Even under these circumstances, deterrence must be pursued since it is not possible to clearly understand how much worse this type of threat might be without deterrent actions. Applicability

of deterrence is dependent on the quantum of influence that can be brought to bear in a particular situation and the amount of resources that can be committed. Sustained ground operations in insurgent areas will invariably lead to mounting casualties and therefore, punitive actions—ranging in severity from a show of force with minimum use of force to use of lethal force as required. Air power can carry out all these actions efficiently.

Through on-call precision strike capabilities, air power sends a very powerful message to all irregular forces; that they are being constantly monitored, that they can and will be targeted at will from the air and that there is very limited countermeasures to this other than air power capabilities themselves. This inflicts a kind of disconcerting sense of vulnerability to the insurgents, similar to what they seek to inflict on conventional forces by the use of asymmetric attacks with improvised explosive devices. Even kinetic air attacks can enforce deterrence by targeting insurgents in areas where they are known to oppress the local population and thereby also contributing to the ‘hearts and minds campaign’. For example, the destruction of an al-Qaeda detention and torture compound in Iraq by aerial attacks from a B-1 bomber brought the local population out in jubilation and also marked the end of sustained insurgent activity in the area.

SUMMARY

Conventional air-launched weapons have evolved dramatically in terms of accuracy, discrimination and proportionality. They can be launched from extreme ranges and project power into hostile territories without being inhibited by physical barriers or national boundaries, and have a relatively low risk of friendly casualties; therefore, air-launched precision weapons are effective tools in enforcing deterrence by punishment. Despite air power’s inherent strengths, the effectiveness of air strikes is based on accurate and timely intelligence and updated situational awareness about

the status of the targets. Intelligence is at the other end of the air power capability spectrum and is a non-kinetic contribution to its application as a deterrent capability. No other military capability so comprehensively encompasses the full spectrum of activities required for the efficient projection and application of force as air power, especially when supporting a strategy of deterrence.

It must also be borne in mind that the deterrent effects of the application of lethal force are relatively slow to become clearly apparent and it may take days or even weeks for their full impact to be felt. Therefore, the deterrent capability of a particular force projection capability is proportional to the adversary's ability, perceived or otherwise, to respond to it.

Two major changes in the security environment—the proliferation of missiles and the shift to low intensity conflict—have had a detrimental impact on the contribution of air power to the concept of deterrence. Air power will not be able to interdict airborne missiles or reach the launch base of long-range missiles in time to deny missile launch, which confers on irregular groups an effective capability to question deterrence built on maintaining the status quo. Building and maintaining an effective security strategy based on deterrence is difficult even under normal circumstances within the traditional concepts of threats and security. It becomes almost impossible in politically unstable conditions wherein threats are unconventional and diffused and the adversary itself is not clearly defined, except as an amorphous entity of questionable capability.

THE SPECTRUM OF THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE

The implementation of a strategy of deterrence, across the full spread of its spectrum, is dependent on two fundamental factors. First, the nation must have demonstrated its will to employ all elements of its national power, and second, deterrence is

presumed on the rationality of the adversary in understanding the consequences of violating an invisible line in terms of posing a threat to the deterring nation. The lower end of the spectrum will be almost completely dependent on perception management, followed by military action towards the higher end of the spectrum. However, perception management also has a military element to it.

The strategy of deterrence can be considered to have four stages with increasing military involvement: the first stage is the concept of denial, increasing the pressures on the recipient state through proactive diplomacy; second is creating an explicit threat through overt actions; and third, moving to carry out punitive actions before the strategy is considered a failure and abandoned. These first three stages are all in the realm of perception management through actions that fall below the threshold of the actual application of force. The fourth stage, punitive action, is the application of lethal force in a controlled manner. This will have a limited overlap with coercion, the next in the spread of strategies, and will involve the military forces as the lead agency, although other elements of national power can also be involved. The spectrum of the strategy of deterrence is illustrated in Figure 4 (p. 54).

DENIAL

Deterrence through denial is perhaps the most difficult of the sub-spectrum strategies to achieve, especially for nations that are considered 'middle' powers. This is because denial needs fully demonstrated geographic, political, economic and strategic strength of a very high order to be effective. The slightest weakness, either actual or perceived, in any of these areas will almost immediately collapse the deterrent capability. From a military perspective, denial will require an open show of force through mechanisms such as the conduct of realistic exercises, live fire demonstrations as well as open source interpretation of the military capabilities of the deterring nation. Air power

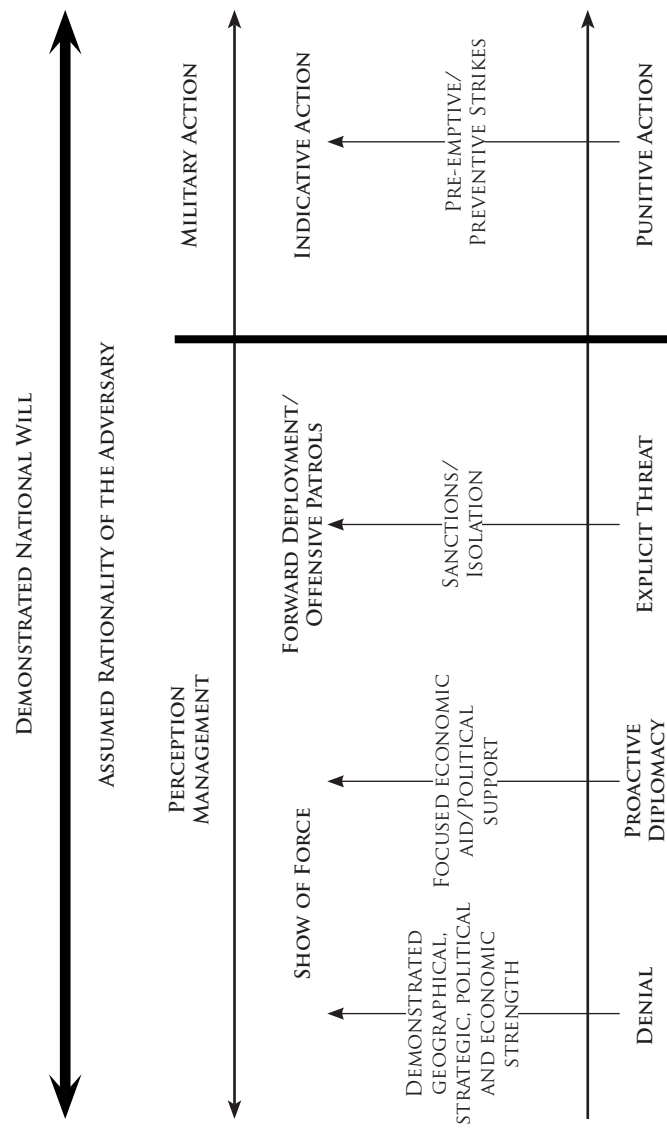


Figure 4: The Sub-spectrum of the Strategy of Deterrence

is well suited to carry out any of these activities and can create a very visible demonstration of the inherent power of a nation. Even the rapid provision of humanitarian assistance in remote regions through the exercise of airlift capabilities provides a nation with the opportunity to demonstrate its denial capabilities—show of force need not necessarily be of lethal capabilities alone.

PROACTIVE DIPLOMACY

The next step in ensuring that a state does not initiate any action inimical to the interest of one's own nation is to engage in proactive diplomacy through the provision of focused economic aid and political support on an as required basis. Such assistance could also involve military advice and assistance on matters of domestic security issues as well as on external national security challenges. Proactive diplomacy could also lead to the formation of alliances if the nation being courted with aid and support can be gradually brought into the same line of thinking as the influencing state. The primary function of the military forces would continue to be force projection, but on a more intrusive scale, wherein training of the foreign forces could also be an option to influence them. With air power being cost-intensive, the provision of non-lethal air power capabilities, such as airlift and ISR, to a nation will have dual influence—one of creating an atmosphere of openness in discussing matters of national interest and the other of indirectly influencing the doctrine and strategy of the recipient nation.

EXPLICIT THREAT

When both denial and focused diplomacy fails to elicit the desired response, that of a non-threatening stance of the nation in question, the deterrent posture would have to be enhanced to indicate and demonstrate resolve. Demonstrated resolve is a fundamental factor in the success of a strategy of deterrence. Explicit threat in this case is not only to be conveyed through

diplomatic overtures but through the forward deployment of forces and the conduct of offensive patrols. These actions are intended to bolster the enforcement of sanctions that would be the diplomatic initiative. At a more intensive stage of explicit threat, actions could be initiated to isolate the offending nation through the enforcement of no-fly zones. For both these actions, air power becomes the mainstay primarily because of its ability to overcome national boundaries and geographical obstructions without having to physically impinge on the sovereignty of another nation. Air power can carry out these operations from great distances and at increased rapidity, which is an added advantage in circumstances wherein the pace of deterioration of the situation is high. The reach, responsiveness and flexibility of air power become coveted capabilities in this context.

PUNITIVE ACTION

The strategy of deterrence moves from the realm of perception management to military action once punitive actions are undertaken. Punitive actions are first and foremost only indicative of the actions that can be conducted against an adversary, and is meant to be a formal and open warning to recalcitrant adversaries regarding the intention of the deterring nation. Punitive actions can either be pre-emptive or preventive, depending on the circumstances and the proclivity of the nation to continue the enforcement of sanctions. If the political ethos were such that punitive action will only be initiated as a last resort, then military action would take the form of preventive strikes at selected centres of gravity. However, if the security situation is such that rapid deterioration is expected and the adversary is of such a nature as to deny being influenced through deterrent action, it may be necessary to resort to pre-emptive strikes to neutralise their offensive potential. In either case, air power is the optimum

capability to carry out punitive actions to enforce deterrence in a more forceful manner.

Air power has the necessary precision, proportionality and discrimination necessary to carry out punitive strikes—either pre-emptive or preventive—effectively and efficiently within the ambit of the strategy of deterrence. Implementing a strategy of deterrence does not permit the violation of the geographic borders by land forces, unless it is being done as a drawdown after a higher strategy, such as coercion or punishment, has been successfully implemented. More often than not, the employment of air power may be the only option available when punitive actions through limited and focused strikes have been approved. The characteristics of air power are almost tailor-made to support the implementation of the strategy of deterrence at the high end of the spectrum.

CHALLENGES TO THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE

The majority of contemporary conflicts around the world are being conducted between states and non-state entities that have assumed a number of identities: insurgents, terrorists or guerrillas to name a few. The strategy of deterrence is susceptible to failure when it is applied by a nation-state against such adversaries who have very limited and obscure aims, both politically and materially. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Middle East, where Israel has been employing the concept of deterrence for the past four decades with varying degrees of success. Irregular adversaries normally initiate limited action that bring into focus a strategic dilemma for the nation-state every time it is encountered—whether to escalate the encounter to ensure decisive victory or to limit retaliation in order to contain the situation. Both have downsides; escalation could potentially become very costly in terms of casualties, international opinion and finances, whereas limited retaliation would normally

leave those who have challenged the status quo—the basis of deterrence—unpunished. Throughout history, nation-states reliant predominantly on the strategy of deterrence for their security have tried to walk a fine balance between these two opposing options, not always with complete success.

With change and conflict becoming increasingly common, the prevalent international politico-strategic environment is extremely complex. This environment is affected directly and indirectly by the interplay of domestic, regional and international politics. In the last two to three decades, three major challenges have made it progressively harder for nation states to assure national security through an enforced strategy of deterrence.

The first challenge is the significant and evolving changes in the international strategic security environment brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. For smaller and middle-power nations these ongoing changes have necessitated constant fine-tuning of their national security interests. The inability of these nations to sustain a broad international strategic security outlook has made it increasingly difficult for them to define national security interests outside ever-narrowing regional contexts. This in turn adversely affects the formulation of long-term priorities in the allocation of resources to national power elements.

For a time, it seemed that the world would become unipolar with the US as the sole super-power who would lead the world in comparative peace. The collapse of the Soviet Union also brought about a reappraisal of the US' international diplomatic priorities. At least in the immediate aftermath, the US consciously advanced the peace process in the Middle East and other volatile regions and also brought about considerable political pressure on even their traditional allies, like Israel, to arrive at negotiated settlements to seemingly intractable problems.

The second challenge is the influence of the proliferation of cheap but effective missile systems—surface-to-air and surface-to-surface—in the security environment of the developing world. This has two implications on global security. First, the relative ease of acquiring and operating these missiles provided a hitherto unknown capability to smaller and economically unstable nations as well as non-state disruptive entities. At the strategic level, the UN and the developed world had to come to terms with the fact that these nations, who until then had not featured in the larger geo-strategic calculations in any meaningful way, now had capability that fuelled their intentions to disrupt peace enforcement and peace-keeping campaigns that did not suit their own interests. The second implication is more at the operational level, but it has become an increasingly difficult problem for conventional military forces to counter. Missiles permit an adversary to attack from a distance, without having to cross borders, with almost no warning and can cause serious damage to infrastructure and lower civilian morale significantly. From a deterrence viewpoint, missile attacks make targeted retaliation almost impossible. For these reasons, insurgent and terrorist groups use missiles, of varying calibre and effectiveness, to carry out limited and sporadic attacks on nation-states that they consider adversaries.

The third and perhaps the most important challenge in terms of its impact on the whole concept of deterrence is the shift in warfighting to an unconventional conflict—a now global phenomenon. In the more volatile areas of the world, despite the regional arms build-up and the weakening of super-power patronage and control in the wake of the end of the Cold War, the likelihood of the outbreak of a conventional, large-scale, state-on-state conflict has actually receded—though this situation has not automatically transformed these regions into areas of benign and peaceful coexistence. If at all, the move seems to be in the opposite direction. More regions in the world have become susceptible to low intensity conflicts

fuelled by religious extremism, ethnic intolerance and ideological discontent. Belligerent groups with radical agendas thrive in these collective dysfunctional mindsets.

These three major challenges have a direct bearing on the efficacy of the strategy of deterrence and adversely affect the international strategic security environment. The combined effect has been to diminish the capacity of an overwhelmingly conventional military force to be an effective deterrent. In addition, the threats facing traditional nation-states have changed radically and are not as obvious as the threats that were encountered in earlier, more stable times. Ill-defined threats that have widened their operational capabilities ominously bring about rapid geo-political changes and instability that have an almost immediate impact on the concept of national security. Countering these threats is complex, with a state's international influence becoming only a minor element in the broader enforcement of national security. Nations will be compelled to initiate complex actions against unidentified threats in the pursuit of national security and this will characterise the world of the future.

CONCLUSION

Deterrence as a security strategy is as old as warfare itself. Often, wars erupt when deterrence has failed, for whatever reason. At its core, the strategy of deterrence is reliant on perception management of the adversary, since the entire concept is based on the potential adversary perceiving the power of a nation as being far too great to be overcome or to be trifled with lightly. The consequences of initiating any action that could bring about a retaliation from the deterring nation has to be considered debilitating and therefore not worth risking. This is most easily achieved when the potential adversary's thinking is within the same rationale as one's own. In the contemporary context this

situation has gradually receded into one wherein the adversary is not necessarily rational or concerned with the repercussions of their actions. In these circumstances the strategy of deterrence, especially at the lower end of the spectrum, does not normally yield the necessary result. The attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 is a compelling and illustrative example of this situation. The power—military, economic, diplomatic and informational—of the US is unquestionably greater than that of any other nation. Given this fact, it follows then that the US must be considered to be the only global power in existence at the moment. Even then, the perpetrators of the attack did not consider the possible catastrophic reaction of the US as a deterrent factor to carrying out their attack.

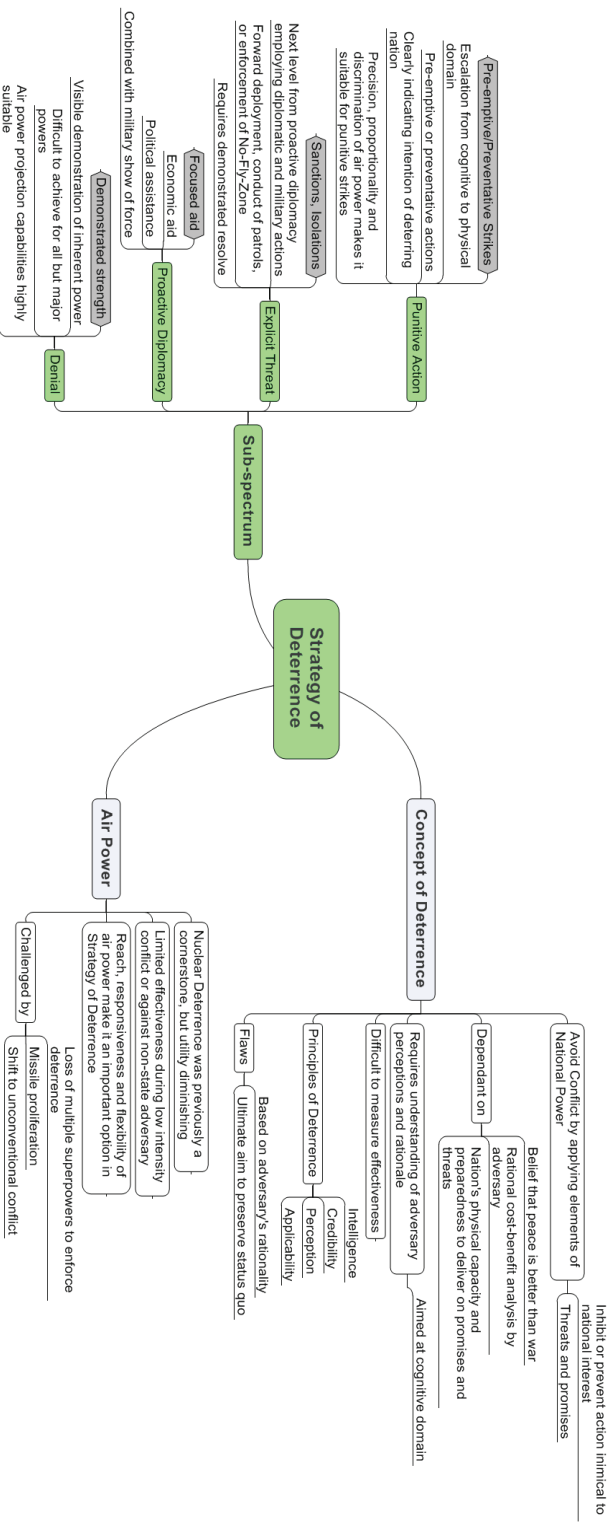
Deterrence works best when there is well-demonstrated capability on display and the nation has also clearly proven its credentials in enforcing its will when required. The litmus test for the success of deterrence is to analyse and identify the point within the spectrum when deterrence forced the adversary to stop hostile or unfriendly actions. The lower this point is in the spectrum, the higher the effect of the deterrent posture that one has assumed. In other words, if punitive actions must be resorted to, then failure of the strategy of deterrence is almost imminent. Deterrence is a nuanced and sophisticated strategy to adopt and perhaps cannot be considered as the mainstay of national security. On the other hand, the capabilities required to back up deterrence, especially in the case of the air power capabilities, requires the full spread from low-end and non-lethal, all the way to high-end and extremely lethal capabilities. Deterrence, if it can be made to work, is an attractive strategy to adopt and perhaps the least resource-intensive to implement.

However, the question remains of the ability of any nation to be effective in the management of perceptions on a continual basis, especially when the adversary is prone to be irrational. Deterrence

works best when a belligerent adversary is rationally conscious of the potential 'loss' that can be incurred by them in a conflict. The greater the loss is likely to be, the greater the deterrent effect. On the other hand, a strategy of deterrence will not have any effect on an adversary who has an irrational mindset and is willing to sacrifice lives purely for the sake of ideology—religious or political.

The viability of deterrence is completely dependent on a nation's demonstrated physical capacity and preparedness to deliver on both promises and threats, and the perception of its collective will to do so. This could mean the willingness to inflict unacceptable damage to aggressors so that they refrain from committing any act that is potentially damaging to the nation's security. The combination of will and resources has to be credible for the concept of deterrence to succeed.

The credibility of a strategy of deterrence is dependent on the opponent being convinced that fearsome punishment will be forthcoming, through an optimum combination of capability and the will to employ it, if any action inimical to the state's well-being has been initiated.



CHAPTER THREE

COERCION

Military forces are not primarily instruments of communication to convey signals to the enemy; they are instead instruments of coercion to compel him to alter his behaviour.

Samuel Huntington¹

In the continuum of strategies that are employed to ensure national security, the strategy of coercion is placed at a higher level to that of deterrence. It starts at the point at which deterrence is not seen to be working and the adversary needs to be made aware of the implications of continuing to resist the influences that are being brought to bear to avoid unnecessary employment of the lethal capabilities of the military forces. It also surmises that diplomatic and other overtures have not had the desired effect on the adversary. Implementation of the strategy of coercion does not start with the employment of military forces; however, implicit in any attempt to coerce is the underlying threat of the use of force, emanating from the military forces and the coercing nation's ability and demonstrated willingness to use it appropriately. This is similar to the strategy of deterrence wherein the military capabilities underpin, even if covertly, the deterrent stance of a nation.

¹ Samuel Huntington, *American Military Strategy*, Policy Paper 28, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1986, p. 16.

Normally employed only when deterrence has not produced the desired effects, the strategy of coercion starts with the application of diplomatic coercion or soft sanctions, almost as an overlap to the deterrent activities that would have preceded this action. From a viewpoint of coercion, soft sanctions are considered very minor and almost always would progress to denial through the implementation of extreme sanctions and/or punitive action that would involve the concerted employment of military forces.

This chapter analyses the challenges to the implementation of a strategy of coercion through the employment of military force and the deliberate use of air power within it as a pre-eminent tool. Moreover, it provides a holistic understanding of the nuances of the application of air power as a coercive instrument of national power.

COERCION EXPLAINED

Coercion is the art and practice of forcing another person, group or entity to act in an involuntary manner—whether through action or inaction—by employing threats, intimidation, or another form of persuasion or force. These actions are leveraged and oriented towards ensuring that the targeted entity behaves in a particular way, and could involve the actual infliction of damage to enhance the credibility of the threat. This is premised on the belief that the threat of further harm may lead to the entity that is being coerced becoming compliant with the demands placed on it. The effect of coercion manifests in the cognitive domain, although the methods that are used encompass both non-lethal and lethal means—the highest end of the spectrum can lead to selective destruction of life and property. Like the strategy of deterrence before it, the success of coercion is also dependent on the adversary being rational in their thinking and cognisant of the ability of the coercer to escalate

the coercive action. An irrational adversary is unlikely to be coerced even when lethal force is being used.

At the lower end of the coercion spectrum, the role of the military is almost the same as that of implementing the strategy of deterrence. Coercion through denial itself has a spectrum of sub-activities. Further, with the employment of military force as a coercive instrument, the implementation of the strategy moves to the higher end of the spectrum of the strategy of coercion. This overlaps with the lower end of the strategy of punishment in employing lethal force to dissuade an adversary from initiating actions that are contrary to one's own objectives.

In the contemporary international politico-security scenario, the use of military force is a double-edged sword, regardless of the initiator's motivations or the strategy within which it is done. When military forces are used in furthering the strategy of coercion, the tolerance is further reduced with the use of ground forces being considered politically unacceptable. Under these circumstances, air power has increasingly become an instrument of choice for a nation attempting to coerce a reluctant adversary. In the recent past it has assumed the role of the primary power projection capability when a nation is pursuing the strategy of coercion, irrespective of the reason for doing so.

In any discussion of coercion, the term 'coercive diplomacy' is frequently used. With this in mind, the distinction between implementing the strategy of coercion and understanding the term 'coercive diplomacy' must be clearly made, since there is a slight dissonance in the meanings of the terms. Diplomacy, in a broad definition, is the conduct of negotiations and other relations between states. The employment of lethal force as part of 'coercive diplomacy' cannot be considered a diplomatic gesture by any stretch of imagination. Coercive diplomacy is meant to imply forceful diplomacy with a veiled threat of the use of force. On the other hand, the use of lethal force is indeed a part of the spectrum

of the strategy of coercion, albeit at the highest end. The strategy of coercion is therefore, a much broader and overarching concept and encompasses coercive diplomacy within it at the lower end of the full spectrum. Because the actual application of force is at the highest level of coercion, hard bargaining—situated at the higher end of coercive diplomacy—becomes part of direct coercion.

The model for the employment of military power in pursuing the strategy of coercion has evolved over the years. The spectrum of the strategy now spans from non-lethal applications to focused kinetic employment of military power to create the effects that are deemed necessary to ensure that the adversary adheres to the required norms of behaviour.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF COERCING WITH MILITARY FORCES

There are three fundamental points regarding the use of military forces within a strategy of coercion that underpins all application of force.

PERCEPTION REGARDING THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Coercive diplomacy works best when all initiatives stop short of the use of force—the extreme instance being a show of force. The actual use of force within this strategy is coercion by other means; however, in reality the demarcation that separates the threat of the use of force and its actual use is very difficult to discern, especially when the strategy is being applied in on-going engagements that tend to be extremely dynamic in their conduct. This demarcation is a very thin line, making it problematic to distinguish when it has been crossed, and therefore, pure coercive diplomacy can be confused with other acts of coercion. The broader strategy of coercion encompasses both coercive diplomacy and the

limited or controlled use of force, with military intervention being at the highest end of the spectrum.

The difficulty in applying coercion at the higher end of the spectrum is exacerbated by an expectation that in implementing a strategy of coercion, there will be no casualties, even if force is used. At times, this expectation transcends even the requirements of International Law governing the application of force. Application of military force has the potential to create unintended consequences, although professional conduct of operations greatly reduces the probability of error to acceptable levels. Thus the challenge is to deliver politically desired results with minimal casualties—within one's own forces as well as the adversary's—and to avoid collateral damage. It also becomes necessary to manage government expectations and public opinion regarding unintended and unfortunate collateral damage. Since the strategy of coercion is below the level of full military operations, collateral damage is normally considered unacceptable. Therefore, perception management is of fundamental importance and should be done by preparing the government and the larger public for the possibility of collateral damage, even before military forces are employed to coerce an adversary.

THE APPLICATION OF FORCE

The application of force, whether it is in pursuance of a strategy of coercion or of some other strategy, will normally create a situation that is both complex and unpredictable. Since the employment of military forces is a part of the implementation of the strategy of coercion, it generates an envelope of risk and unintended consequences with the capacity to render random and at times uncontrollable effects. The challenge in these circumstances is to ensure that the application of force is discriminate and proportionate, so that the chances of unintended consequences can be minimised. Such discrimination would also have to take

into account the political viability (or otherwise) of the use of invasive surface action; although in the planning stage, all options within the use of military forces must be considered. This is necessary to ensure that the strategy of coercion has an even chance to succeed, since the option thereafter would be to escalate the employment of force to a level of punishment, which would result in open conflict.

The success of the application of force is also dependent on the ability of the military forces involved to maintain the necessary tempo that becomes unsustainable for the adversary. The tempo of operations is affected by the fact that military forces implementing a strategy of coercion are more prone to operating under highly restrictive rules of engagement than when other strategies like punishment and destruction are being employed. This may require maintaining a less than optimal tempo that could translate to slower than desired progress. In turn, this situation will require considerable political will to stay the course until the desired end-state is achieved. For example, in Operation *Allied Force* conducted in Kosovo in 1999, it took 78 days of air strikes to achieve the desired objective. This was criticised by many analysts as being too slow.

ENFORCING SANCTIONS

The enforcement of soft sanctions and denial is predicated on the use of limited force on an 'as required' basis. The use of limited force to achieve inconsistent effects is anathema to the traditional doctrine of the armed forces of Western nations. Ever since World War II, Western military forces have operated under a doctrine that provides for capability superiority, attained through the mobilisation of adequate forces, to create the necessary quantum of power before employing military forces in all contexts. The Weinberger and Powell doctrines are both examples of the concept of possessing a superior force for the employment

of the proposed strategy before they are employed. Therefore, the application of limited force is a new concept within the set doctrines of these forces. Since achieving the desired end-state is the primary objective of all military operations, and imposing a strategy that demands the sparse use of force is contradictory in a purely military context, the situation tends to create tensions in the application of force; however, limited use of military power supports the concept of economy of force and suggests a move towards risk mitigation for one's own forces. Fundamentally, limited application of force needs to be carefully tailored to achieve the desired end-state to avoid unintended escalation to ensure success.

AIR POWER AND COERCION

Coercion through military intervention is not a new concept; however, in the past few decades the physical presence of foreign troops in an area of unrest has tended to exacerbate the local opposition to such an intervention, pushing it incontrovertibly into the realm of irregular war. This invariably leads to escalation and normally increases the tempo and intensity of the combat operations conducted within the ambit of the coercive intervention. Such interventions also tend to bring about greater international scrutiny than before, and could at times even lead to condemnation. In other words, the traditional 'boots-on-the-ground' approach to coercive intervention has become politically unacceptable. The need to implement the strategy of coercion and the pitfalls associated with the physical presence of troops in a foreign nation, has combined to place the employment of air power as a viable option, since it somewhat mitigates the challenges of coercive military intervention. The employment of air power in a coercive role is also not new—it has been used to coerce recalcitrant adversaries to toe the line from the earliest days of military aviation. The employment of the Royal Air Force

in the Middle-East in the 1920s in the 'air control' role is a classic example of the use and success of air power in a coercive role.

ADVANTAGES OF AIR POWER

There are four distinct advantages that accrue with the use of air power as the first choice option in this slightly nuanced role as an instrument of coercion. First, it carries comparatively low operational risk vis-à-vis one's own casualties. The risk of incurring casualties in operations, which may not be viewed in the domestic dialogue as an intervention of necessity, will not normally appeal to a democratic government. Therefore, the relative reduction in risk through the use of air power as opposed to the employment of land forces becomes an attractive proposition, and a clear advantage in situations that demand a certain degree of coercion. It also has the benefit of avoiding land forces becoming embroiled in a range of domestic issues.

Second, since operational risk is low, it is relatively easier to obtain political support for initiating action. Further, since it does not normally involve basing troops in the area/country being coerced, minimal diplomatic challenges are posed. Both these factors have a direct influence on the decision-making process at the highest level of government and on the directives that are given to the military forces. The success or otherwise of the application of force in a coercive mode is always dependent on the government's ability to deal with complex situations by being able to make sophisticated and correct decisions.

The third advantage of air power is its scalability. Scalability is the capacity to ramp up or down the intensity and tempo of operations at will to suit emerging situations. This is one of the primary reasons for air power almost always being the first choice option for the application of power, especially within a strategy of coercion. This scalability is critical to the success of a coercive

strategy and is dependent on the force possessing the full suite of air power capabilities. This is an inherent strength of air power and translates directly to seizing and thereafter retaining the initiative in any operation or campaign. In addition, the ability to deploy at short notice and respond rapidly to unforeseen developments is an added advantage that air power brings to military interventions. The combination of scalability and rapid response makes air power the ideal coercive instrument that can be employed flexibly to achieve the necessary level of coercion.

The fourth major advantage is air power's ability to respond rapidly to evolving threats. Rapid response from air power assets can contain fast-deteriorating surface environment; however, a very effective and swift decision-making process across strategic and operational levels of conflict is necessary to ensure the efficacy of such responses. The effectiveness of this process is dependent on a high level of coordination between land and air forces, which is of particular importance when air power is being employed in a coercive manner to avoid fratricide. Although the rapid response capability of air power is a clear advantage and contributes directly to its success as a coercive instrument, leveraging it is critically based on the ability of the force to make speedy but correct decisions and ensuring coordination.

THE SPECTRUM OF THE STRATEGY OF COERCION

In the prevalent geo-political circumstances the employment of air power has gradually become the first choice option for nations committing to coercive military intervention. The spectrum of employment of air power in this nuanced role spans from denial, through non-lethal applications to focused combat operations to create the effects that are deemed necessary to ensure that

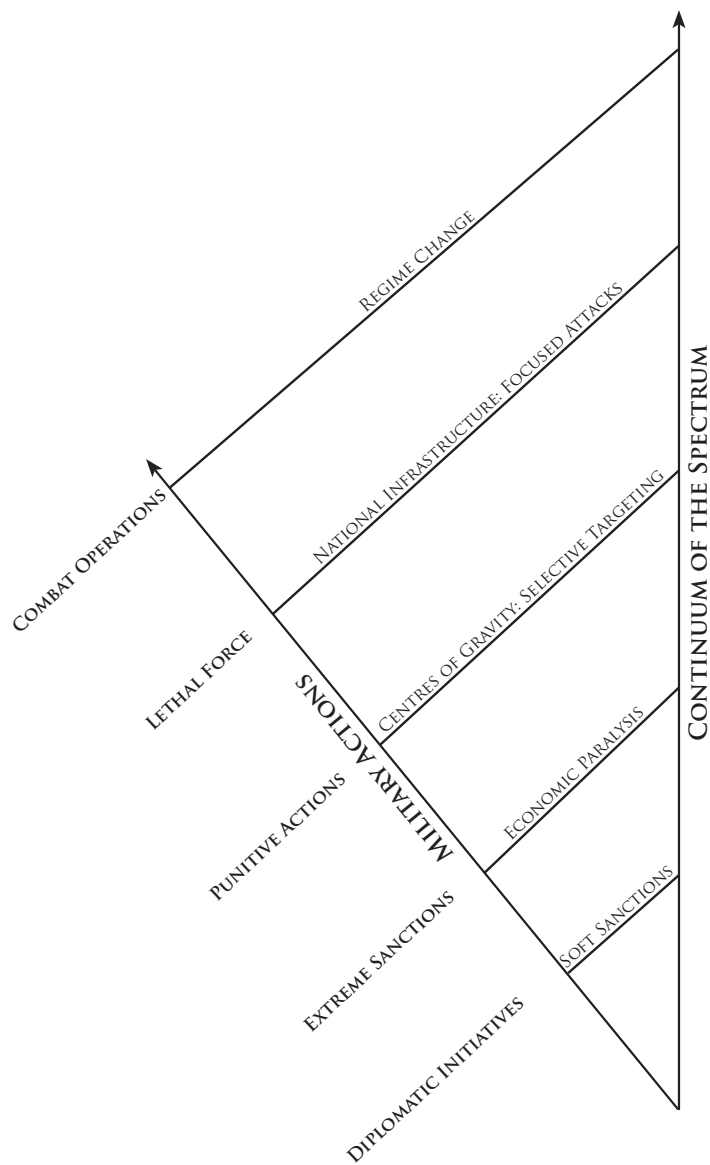


Figure 5: The Spectrum of the Strategy of Coercion

the adversary adheres to the required norms of behaviour. The spectrum is illustrated in Figure 5 (opposite).

DENIAL

At the lowest end of the spectrum of coercion are diplomatic actions, such as hard bargaining and soft sanctions, aimed at creating a situation that makes normal functioning of the offending state increasingly difficult. However, the military has no role to play in these circumstances. The role of the military starts when diplomatic overtures have not been able to create the desired effect and it becomes necessary to actively deny the adversary the freedom to function without hindrance. Denial itself has two distinct phases, the first being the enforcement of extreme sanctions aimed at creating economic paralysis of sufficient intensity to make the recalcitrant nation review its actions. The conduct of Operation *Southern Watch* over Iraq following the 1991 Gulf War is a classic example of the use of denial as part of the implementation of the strategy of coercion. The second involves the initiation of punitive actions through attacking selected targets that have been identified as important centres of gravity. By carrying out this graded denial, the intention is to guarantee that the adversary is left in no doubt regarding the intention of the coercer to ensure that the necessary instructions are obeyed. Air power is ideally suited to carry out denial missions, both in the enforcement of extreme sanctions as well as in carrying out punitive actions. Coercion is most effective if the coercing military force does not have a permanent presence in the recipient nation and air power provides the wherewithal to conduct these actions with minimal intrusion. Air power can carry out focused targeting of identified centres of gravity with the necessary proportionality, discrimination and precision, considerably increasing the impact of punitive actions.

LETHAL FORCE

From the initiation of punitive actions, the application of force increases incrementally, starting with the employment of lethal force more broadly through the targeting of infrastructure necessary for the nation to function effectively. This is a serious and almost irreversible step to take because by targeting the common infrastructure as opposed to military centres of gravity, the coercing nation is crossing an invisible line that will invariably lead to escalation if coercion at this level does not work. Further, targeting national infrastructure that could be dual-use could also create moral and ethical issues since the civilian population will be affected by their destruction, while a nation is not legally at war. The attack on the electricity grid in Belgrade during Operation *Allied Force* was one such instance. Targeting national infrastructure without having to resort to ground invasion is perhaps the biggest contribution of air power. In effect, coercion through intrusive action that violates the sovereign borders of a country indiscriminately could create an unviable situation that is more than likely to spill out of control. Only the dispassionate employment of air power will ensure that mission creep does not escalate a situation that is already at a decisive point between coercive action and full-fledged conflict. More than in any other situation, the application of lethal force to neutralise selected national infrastructure has to be achieved in the most non-intrusive manner. Air power is perhaps the only military capability that can achieve this with minimum unsavoury fall-out.

COMBAT OPERATIONS

As a focused action at the highest end of the spectrum of coercion or the first actions initiated in pursuing a strategy of punishment, combat operations may be conducted and as a last resort, a regime change could be enforced to stop actions that are inimical to one's interests being continued. This is obviously an extreme step

and must take into account the legitimacy of the regime from the perspective of the broader population of the state. Enforcing regime change will be far easier in autocracies and dictatorships, with only limited connection between the ruler and the ruled, than in the case of even semi-democratic governments. However, the nation enforcing the regime change must have the legal, moral and ethical correctness on its side if a back lash is to be avoided. Regime change as a part of coercion is an extreme step and normally steeped in issues that may not find amicable solutions even after the regime has been displaced. Effecting regime change as part of coercive action, even if legally supported, can be a double-edged sword. The regime change that took place in Libya through NATO intervention in the civil war could perhaps be viewed in this context. The onus of responsibility to ensure that the nation that has been subjected to regime change continues in a stable and peaceful manner to be part of the international community of nations rests with the coercing nation(s). In almost all cases, this may not be an achievable goal and therefore regime changes must always be treated with caution and carried out only if there is no other alternative option. The role of air power in this case would be to be an integral part of the military force and if necessary the lead in carrying out the actions that are necessary to depose the regime. Such actions could vary from benign airlifts to lethal strikes in a contextual manner. The second challenge is the need to maintain the required tempo of operations. The effectiveness of air power is directly influenced by its ability to maintain the necessary tempo of operations. Any loss of tempo will dilute the air power effectiveness in a coercive role.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY OF COERCION

There are four fundamental challenges and two potential pitfalls to the use of air power within a strategy of coercion. At the lower

end of the spectrum of the strategy of coercion the attempt is to deny the adversary the opportunity to function effectively through the imposition of extreme sanctions and if necessary initiating punitive actions. Sanctions will be effective only if they can bring on severe economic disruption, which in turn requires that they be enforced for a sufficiently long period. In the case of autocratic regimes against which these sanctions are imposed it becomes even more difficult to employ coercion in this manner because there is almost always a 'disconnect' between the apex of the regime and the common people. The years-long sanctions and the enforcement of the no-fly zones in Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, which did not stop Saddam Hussein from continuing to rule the nation in his own fashion is a demonstrative example of such a disconnect negating the effects of extreme sanctions as a coercive action. There are two issues that influence achieving success in this kind of a situation. First, there must be the political will to continue enforcing the sanctions for as long as necessary—with the duration to be counted in years rather than months—provided the circumstances on the ground provide the intervening nation(s) with this luxury of time. Second, achieving sufficiently robust effectiveness of the sanctions with limited force will require adroit application of essentially non-kinetic capabilities of air power. When these factors are combined and analysed it is not difficult to visualise that coercion through sanctions—both soft and hard—and denial, has only a very slim chance of success from a strategic perspective.

The second challenge is equally important to understand and solve. Coercion is primarily aimed at the cognitive domain—both the belief system and the behaviour pattern. Control and manipulation of the cognitive domain of another person or group of people is difficult and complex. The first requirement in attempting to influence the cognitive domain is to ensure that actions that are initiated to create predetermined effects must both be aligned

to, and have a direct connection to the desired end-state. This needs careful consideration of the impact that coercion will have on the nation/entity being coerced. There are two challenges that emerge when attempting to coerce and influence the cognitive domain of an adversary. First is that air campaigns normally generate a perception of impermanence as compared to an intervention by troops on the ground. Therefore, its coercive power, especially when in the non-kinetic phase of its application, is considerably less. However, it can be considered a clear demonstration of political will to be involved in the issue and of the intervening nation's ability to escalate the actions if necessary. Second, influencing the cognitive domain with the selective and limited use of force is much more difficult than if unconstrained use of force is possible. In pursuing the strategy of coercion, primarily dependent on influencing the cognitive domain, this could at times become an insurmountable challenge. It is appropriate to state here that this challenge can never be fully mitigated.

The third challenge is to manage the international perception regarding the interpretation of UN Resolutions primarily by the Western nations that permit the employment of the strategy of coercion. There is a damaging perception prevalent, especially in the developing world after the recent Libyan intervention that Western nations tend to interpret UN Resolutions unilaterally to suit their own agendas and serve their security needs. This has been reinforced because the manner in which coercive intervention is actually conducted normally has the potential for unintended, or at times intended, mission creep to set in as demonstrated in Bosnia in 1995, Kosovo in 1999, Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011. In Libya particularly, a clear mandate to operate within the concept of the responsibility to protect very rapidly shifted to regime change as the desired end-state, something that was not even debated at the UN. The challenge therefore, is to limit the political objectives when employing coercion to ones that can be

achieved without mission creep and secondly, if the objectives require a change in the mandate, to be able to get the necessary legal and moral authority to do so. Air power does avoid mission creep at the operational level, but when the creep takes place at the strategic level air operations will also be drawn into it.

The fourth challenge is to match the ends, ways and means. National ambition, which could be equated to the desired 'ends,' must be matched with robust security strategies or the 'ways,' which are in turn aligned with the 'means' available—the military capabilities. The starting point in this calculation is the desired end-state that must be clearly defined and articulated prior to the commencement of any campaign. This is necessary for the ways and means to be balanced to ensure success. Aligning the ends and means and developing a strategy to achieve the desired end-state within the available means and resources is difficult at the best of times when means are adequate and easily available. When there is a situation where the ends are ambiguous and/or changing dynamically and the available means are restricted, the process of alignment might become impossible unless either the desired end-state or available resources are altered appropriately. Matching ends, ways and means in uncertain circumstances that would normally prevail in the application of the strategy of coercion is a challenge. It could be ameliorated to a certain extent by methodically matching the ends, ways and means within the full spectrum of the strategy and to initiate corrective action as soon as a discrepancy is noticed. Deliberate resource planning that also caters for possible contingencies is as important as having the right concept of operations. It is only an optimum combination of the two that can assure success. Dynamic end-states that change through the conduct of operations, which are imposed on a force will always tend to stretch the capabilities of air power. To a limited extent this can be avoided by ensuring the adaptability and flexibility of the force. In this context adaptability

is centred on responsive and contingency planning that can be superimposed on deliberate plans that have already been made.

The use of air power, within a very broad definition of the strategy of coercion, has the capacity to create an outcome of great political significance for the long-term. However, the same capacity also brings out two issues regarding the employment of air power in a coercive role. First, the recent successes are likely to tempt governments to place increased reliance on air power as a coercive instrument. This is primarily because of the political inclination to avoid risking one's own forces as well as to manage international perception regarding foreign troops being stationed in another country. Second, again emanating from the successes, military intervention through the application of air power may become an established model into the future. However, recent cases do not provide a broadly applicable blueprint for the future employment of air power as a coercive instrument and therefore such a trend could be self-defeating. In fact, none of the previous air interventions, from Bosnia in 1995 to Iraq in 2003, can be considered even as adaptable models. The primary lesson to be drawn is that each and every employment of air power as an instrument of coercion will be unique. It cannot be done based on a preconceived template that may have been successful in a previous case.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of the strategy of coercion is dependent on far too many variables for it to be implemented with any assurance of success. Coercion can be successful only when it is implemented to achieve very clear political goals and functions with an inherent flexibility to move to a higher or lower point on the spectrum. The actions being initiated must be prompt, effective and, most importantly, be seen to be legitimate and credible. Air power should therefore be employed with the assurance that

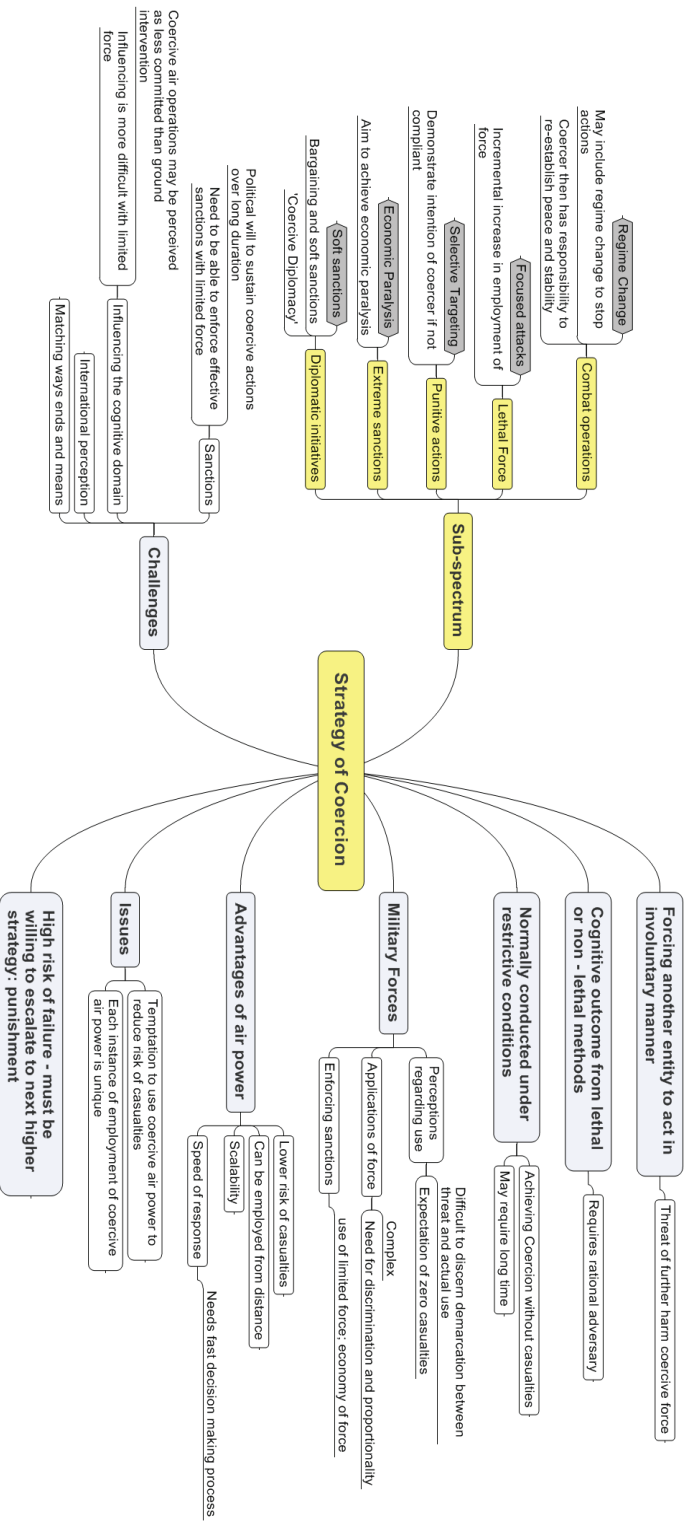
all capabilities are available to provide the rapid response that will be demanded of them.

Military intervention, as part of a strategy of coercion, to achieve political objectives needs very strong national strategic confidence based on tangible military capabilities to succeed. Historically the most successful interventions are seen to be those that unmistakably aligned the desired and articulated end-state with clear strategic logic and direct resource allocation. There is no substitute for deliberate planning that is capable of flexibly addressing emerging contexts at the operational level of the intervention. The political will and availability of resources must be assured, especially in the complex process of implementing a strategy of coercion.

There is a dichotomy in the employment of air power, by either a large or a small air force, or for that matter all elements of the military force, to implement a strategy of coercion. In the contemporary world pursuing an interventionist strategy of coercion for humanitarian reasons carries a very high risk of failure. This sort of failure is unaffordable for most nations and in most cases not a viable option in terms of national security. Conventional wisdom states that a nation must risk military failure only when a conflict of necessity has to be conducted. Otherwise commitment to a conflict must only be done with sufficient capability to achieve assured victory. Therefore, it is apparent that when implementing the strategy of coercion a nation must be willing to and capable of escalating the intervention to the next higher strategy.

The effect of coercion manifests in the cognitive domain, although the methods that are used encompasses both non-lethal and lethal means and at the highest end of the spectrum can lead to selective destruction of life and property.

Military intervention, as part of a strategy of coercion to achieve political objectives, needs very strong national strategic confidence based on tangible military capabilities to succeed. Historically, the most successful interventions are seen to be those that unmistakably aligned the desired and articulated end-state with clear strategic logic and direct resource allocation.



CHAPTER FOUR

PUNISHMENT

Using military power correctly does not ensure that a state will protect all of its interests, but using it incorrectly would put a great burden on these other instruments and could make it impossible for a state to achieve its goals. Decisions about whether and how to use military power may therefore be the most fateful a state makes.

Robert J. Art¹

Within the spread of military strategies, the strategy of punishment falls at the high end. Punishment is a strategy that is irrevocably connected to warfighting, which is the fundamental activity of applying military power to achieving laid down objectives.² It could be argued that the application of military power in a deterrent strategy is also aimed at achieving objectives. However, warfighting is a term that implies the application of lethal force in the pursuit of objectives and is therefore, associated more with the strategy of punishment than any other. In developing the fundamentals of warfighting two primary factors must be considered—the national ethos regarding offensive and defensive security postures; and flowing from the

1 Robert J. Art, 'The Fungibility of Force', in Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*, Fifth Edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., New York, 1999, p. 4.

2 *ibid.*, p. 85.

preferred security posture, the peacetime deployment patterns of the force. An offensive posture would be supported by forward deployment that in turn could be either physical presence through surface forces or virtual presence through air power deployed further away.³ In both cases the indication is that the nation is willing to adopt the strategy of punishment through its military force if required, rather than resort to lesser strategies to achieve national security.

Although most nations would have resorted to the strategy of punishment to ensure national security sometime during their history, there are also disadvantages to taking recourse to this strategy and even adopting it as a cornerstone for national security. Punishment is not always effective in influencing the behaviour of the adversary in the desired manner and it can also have unpleasant consequences that may be inimical to one's own requirements. The need to influence behaviour is fundamental to 'winning' a conflict from a military perspective, since only changing the behaviour pattern will stop an adversary from initiating and carrying out actions that are hostile to one's own interests. Punishment could create a temporary adaptation of behaviour pattern without in any way altering the belief system, which means that the adversary will revert to their original behaviour as soon as the effects created through punishment are eased. The ultimate end-state in any conflict would be achieved when the belief system of the adversary is altered to be in alignment with one's own. However, this is beyond the capacity of the military forces and rests in the realm of other government agency initiatives.

This chapter explores the concept of punishment from a military perspective and then describes the spectrum of the strategy of punishment. Further, the strategy for post-conflict restoration of

3 Glen W. Goodman Jr., 'Virtual Overseas Presence: Air Force Redefines the Strategic Security Landscape', *Armed Forces Journal*, April 1995, p. 12.

order to be employed after victory will also be briefly discussed. For the purposes of this chapter, the strategy of punishment is considered to have an overlap with the highest levels of the spectrum of the strategy of coercion and also encompass the concept of destruction at the highest end of the spectrum of punishment.

It is essential for students of national security and practitioners who develop security strategies to have a clear grasp of military strategies and further they should also have a minimum knowledge of the nuances of the application of air power within the broader security equation. This chapter provides a clear description of the role of air power in pursuing a strategy of punishment, as and when the application of this high-end strategy becomes necessary to ensure national security.

UNDERSTANDING PUNISHMENT— A MILITARY PERSPECTIVE

National power is used in international relationships and exchanges to protect a nation's interest by employing it within a spread of strategies that have punishment at the furthest end and involve the use of lethal force usually resident in the military forces. Since punishment rests at the higher end of the strategic spread and is implemented by military forces, military power is the most important instrument of national power available to a nation-state. Military force used as a threat or employed lethally underpins the political power of a nation.⁴ Punishment, in the military sense, is equated to defeating the adversary in the physical domain and altering the behaviour pattern as much as possible. Most military doctrines articulate this objective as the primary

4 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1973, pp. 28-29.

reason for the existence of a military force—to defend the nation and its interests through the defeat of the adversary. However, in the contemporary security environment the use of military force to enforce a strategy of punishment has become an initiative of last resort for most nations.

Punishment involves a series of actions that gradually escalate from the defensive to the offensive, and finally to destruction through the use of catastrophic force. Assuming a nation has sufficient military power at its disposal, punishment can range from disarming, disabling, repelling and defeating an adversary through the direct use of force resident in the military.⁵ All these actions involve military operations at different levels of intensity and tempo as well as levels of commitment of troops in a contextual manner. Like any other strategy, punishment also starts at a low level of intensity and increases to a higher level until the full weight of a military force's lethality is brought to bear on the adversary to defeat them and at the extreme end of the spectrum to elicit unconditional surrender. Each level and the subsequent graded escalation necessary to reach it requires the application of force by the military, at times to the exclusion of other elements of national power.

Punishment involves attacking the adversary's vital centres of gravity in order to stop them from continuing the actions that are opposed to one's interests. A state could resort to a military strike, even without having been attacked, if it believes that there is a strong possibility of such an attack. These attacks could either be pre-emptive or preventive. Understanding the difference between the two requires a nuanced understanding of the timing of the probable attack on one's own centres of gravity by the adversary. Pre-emptive attacks are carried out when an attack is imminent,

5 Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1966, pp. 1-2.

whereas preventive attacks are carried out when it is believed that an attack is inevitable.⁶ Inevitable attacks take more time to materialise since the adversary may be in the process of building up their capabilities to shift the balance of power in their favour, while imminent attacks could be initiated at any time.⁷ Inevitable attacks evolve into imminent attacks if not neutralised at the appropriate time.

There are international conventions and laws that govern the use of punishment as a security strategy and for the employment of military forces. For example, collective punishment to a group of people, an area, township or state, or reprisal killings of innocent civilians in retaliation for the actions of some people who may or may not be part of these groups is prohibited by international law. Therefore, the employment of military forces to punish must be undertaken only after a great deal of consideration is given to the legality and morality of doing so. In addition, recourse to the application of force has its own stringent operational and tactical standards of discrimination, proportionality and accuracy to meet. A nation that resorts to the strategy of punishment in pursuing its national security objectives will be required to meet exacting standards of conduct from the strategic to the tactical level. An inability to do so in every instance is one of the principal reasons that the application of force can become a contentious issue in international politics.

6 Robert J. Art, 'To What Ends Military Power', *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Spring 1980, pp. 6-29.

7 John F. Troxell, 'Military Power and the Use of Force', in Bartholomees, Jr. (ed.), *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, p. 219.

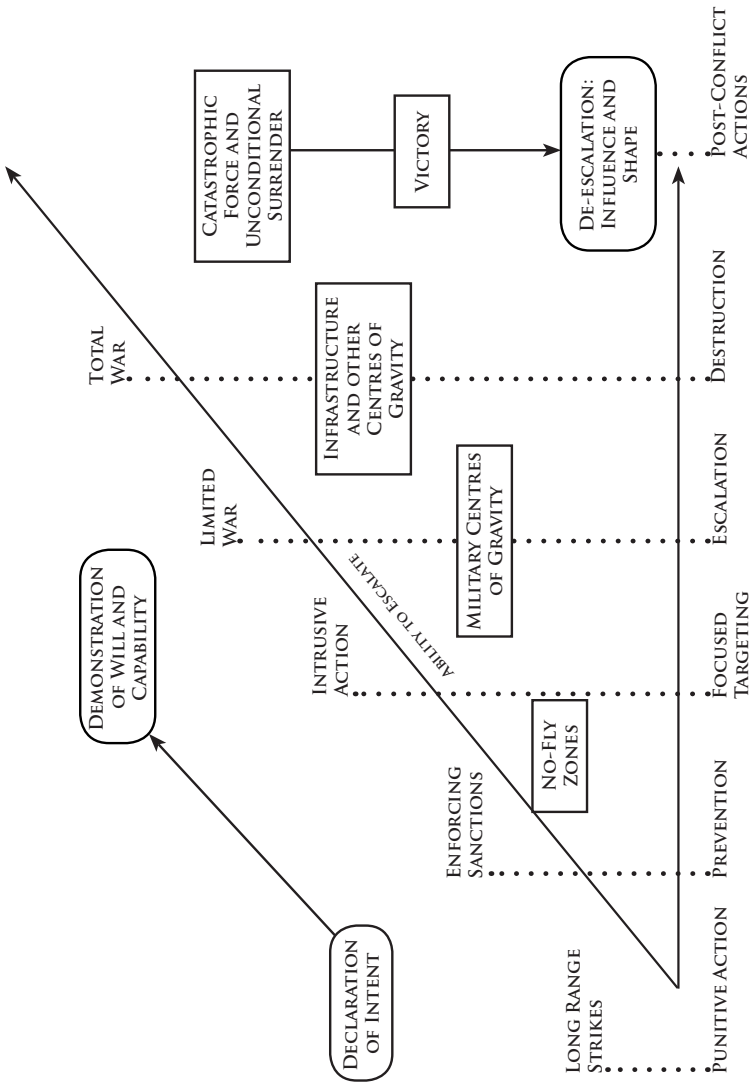


Figure 6: The Sub-Spectrum of the Strategy of Punishment

SPECTRUM OF THE STRATEGY OF PUNISHMENT

The strategy of punishment is primarily based on the employment of lethal force and overlaps at the lower end of the spectrum with that of coercion in delivering punitive actions to dissuade an adversary from initiating actions that are contrary to one's own objectives. The spectrum thereafter is underpinned by the ability of the force to escalate the application of lethal force to the other end of the spectrum that deals with the destruction of the adversary through the use of catastrophic force. If the ability to escalate the application of force at will is lacking, then the employment of this strategy is unlikely to achieve success. Unlike the other strategies, at the end of the spectrum, the strategy of punishment has to consider post-conflict actions to be undertaken by the military forces and through diplomacy in order to ensure de-escalation at the pace required. The spectrum of the strategy of punishment escalates through prevention of actions by the adversary and the enforcement of sanctions, focused targeting of military centres of gravity, lethal strikes to neutralise both dual-use as well as other critical infrastructure, and finally to proceeding to destroy the adversary's ability to function coherently. The spectrum is illustrated in Figure 6 (opposite).

Punitive action is initiated as the last resort in applying the strategy of coercion and also as the first action to be initiated in pursuing punishment. Although there is no difference in the actions initiated to conduct punitive actions, the intent and ability to escalate must be clearly conveyed to the adversary through the positioning of forces in a manner that cannot be misunderstood. This may not be the case when a strategy of coercion is being followed. Further, the punitive actions initiated as the first step in punishment could be more concentrated and longer lasting than otherwise. Military actions that prevent an adversary from carrying out any action

that disrupts, or in any manner is hostile, to the pursuit of one's objectives and the enforcement of sanctions is the next step that requires greater resources and the increased employment of forces. The escalation to this level could be termed prevention at the strategic level and a very clear declaration of intent.

The next level is the focused targeting of military centres of gravity with the objective of reducing the adversary's ability to employ military forces at their convenience. These are intrusive actions, and when necessary, involves the threat of ground invasion, even though such an action may be politically unsavoury. If the adversary continues to employ their military forces and also activities that they have been required to stop, then the next level—escalation—targets the infrastructure (with the aim of minimal collateral damage) that makes the adversary state function smoothly. Escalation brings the conflict into a Limited War status, with all the attendant legal, international and domestic repercussions. At this stage, strategic objectives are clearly defined and military forces are aligned to achieving them. This is not to suggest that actions at the lower levels are devoid of strategic objectives, but that military action is one of the methods through which they are pursued. As the quantum of military contribution increases with the escalation of the strategy, the role played by diplomacy gradually decreases, until it comes to a minimal level when the military force commences the last level of action—that of destruction. It is essential to ensure that the adversary understands that after the declaration of intent to employ military forces through punitive action, steps can be initiated to intensify the application of force.

Entering a Limited War is a clear demonstration of the will of a nation and its capability to apply lethal force to achieve national objectives. In 1999, India entered into a Limited War with Pakistan in the Himalayan heights of Kargil to recapture territory that Pakistan had illegally occupied. On achieving the stated objectives,

military operations were discontinued. This was a clear example of a nation employing its military forces in a Limited War to achieve strategic objectives.

Destruction is the ultimate use of the military forces where the objective is the complete surrender of the adversary. In some cases this may be achieved only through waging Total War. The term Total War indicates that the nation is now utilising all elements of its national power to achieve its objectives, and if necessary, will also resort to the use of catastrophic force. It could also indicate complete mobilisation of national resources, depending on the context and the adversary. Unconditional surrender of the adversary automatically translates to victory that could lead to a gradual de-escalation and return to the more benign strategy of influence and shape. Along with this, the role of diplomacy will once again become predominant and the employment of the military forces will reduce proportionately.

PUNISHING WITH AIR POWER

The efficacy of the strategy of punishment is almost completely underpinned by the capability and capacity of a nation's military forces to achieve the desired objectives and end-states through the optimised expenditure of national resources. In the contemporary global security environment there are three factors that inhibit the unfettered use of military forces to achieve national objectives. These same factors also act as a restraining influence in the use of land forces in an expeditionary manner wherein the army would have to be stationed and operate in a foreign country. First, the employment of one's military forces in another sovereign state has now become contentious in terms of international law, and more importantly, international opinion. This is exacerbated if prolonged physical presence of the external military forces is required to successfully complete the campaign. Second, domestic

opinion and support for expeditionary operations is becoming more difficult to obtain than even a few decades ago. There is increasing debate within democracies regarding the need to employ military forces, especially when the conflict in question is more one of choice than of necessity. Most nations now believe that involvement in a ground campaign should be the ultimate last resort, and that too only if the conflict is critical to ensuring national security. Third, collateral damage, even in a limited manner, has become unacceptable and goes against contemporary human sensitivities. This is further intensified by the globally interlinked communications network that spreads the news of collateral damage, however minor, in almost real time across the world.

Even though there are major inhibiting factors to the employment of military forces, especially ground forces that give an impression of occupation, lethal military force continues to be sought as an element of national power and is applied routinely. It is in this sphere of the strategy of punishment, employed within very stringent rules and international laws, that air power becomes an element of national power in an independent manner outside the ambit of the broader military force. However, this does not mean that air power and air forces are independent war-winning institutions, but that under certain circumstances, the employment of air power is more conducive to creating the effects required to stop an adversary from commencing and continuing hostile activities. Other than in specific contexts, most conflicts have air power forming one part of the joint force, operating within the joint task force and contributing to the achievement of joint objectives.

PUNITIVE ACTIONS

The term punitive is derived from Medieval Latin *punitivus* meaning ‘concerning punishment’ and punitive action in contemporary

usage indicates actions relating to, involving, or with the intention of inflicting punishment. Punitive actions are undertaken when a potential adversary has initiated, or is contemplating some act of commission against one's interests and give a clear indication of the intent to apply further lethal force if the actions being opposed are continued. Punitive action is therefore a declaration of intent. Air power is ideally suited for this purpose with its ability to strike a preselected target precisely, and at will, while the platform conducting the strike, or the base from which it has originated, can be at a great distance from the target. Cruise missiles and other stand-off weaponry can be air-launched without the airborne platform being detected even by radar and other electro-optical devices. In case the first attack does not produce the desired effect, follow-up strikes can be carried out without endangering friendly forces, even though the element of surprise would have been lost. In the past few decades, punitive actions have almost always been initiated through the application of air power.

Punitive actions can also be initiated through Special Force (SF) missions, but this may also involve the employment of the airlift capability of air power for the insertion, sustainment and retrieval of the SF team(s). Such missions might also need additional firepower that can only be provided by air power without escalating the situation into a conflict. While such missions are theoretically possible, the political fallout of any sort of failure would be far too great for the incumbent government to deal with, therefore, these missions are normally only attempted as a last resort. Since punitive action is at the lowest level of the spectrum of the strategy of punishment and overlaps with the strategy of coercion, SF missions tend to lose their impact as a punitive measure. Long-range, stand-off, air-launched precision strikes are the best punitive actions available to a government.

TARGETING THE LEADERSHIP

The strategy of punishment in its normal form was developed to be used by one state against another, or against an entity that has an acceptable and recognisable structure, as opposed to amorphous non-state entities. It has also been seen that the traditional escalation inherent in the application of different strategies do not normally create the desired effects when applied against autocratic and dictatorial governments. In these cases, instead of resorting to punitive actions against the state, these actions could be aimed directly towards targeting the leadership in a manner akin to ‘chopping the head off’. While such actions may not be strictly within the accepted norms of international conduct, the chances of avoiding unnecessary hardship for the common people of the nation involved makes this an attractive option. In the case of democracies, targeting the leadership will not bear any salutary effect, since it is the will of the people that keeps the leaders in power. The targeting of leadership as a punitive action against autocratic regimes has merit when the alternatives are considered; however, such actions cannot be placed as an open option in the general articulation of a strategy and must be considered only in a contextual manner.

PREVENTION

If punitive actions have not created the desired effects—that of stopping the adversary from continuing hostile acts—or if the hostile acts have been of a magnitude that defies containment through punitive actions, moving to prevention has been historically seen as necessary. It is not necessary that the strategy of prevention must be employed in a graded manner starting at the lowest point in the spectrum; depending on the context, the first application can be at any point in the spectrum. Prevention essentially is aimed at creating two primary effects: one, to stop the adversary continuing antagonistic and aggressive actions; and two,

to isolate the adversary from their allies and friends as well as to bring economic and diplomatic pressure on the regime to curtail and stop the activities that are considered unfriendly. Prevention, therefore, involves a combination of more concentrated punitive actions for a longer period of time and the enforcement of blockades and sanctions. While physical enforcement of sanctions can be achieved by a capable, balanced military force, it requires the consensus of a majority of nations, which can only be achieved through the UN in the contemporary global security environment. In certain cases this may be difficult to achieve and the lead nation will be left with a stark option of having to take unilateral action.

Both the effects required for prevention to be effective can be achieved through the diligent application of air power in a calculated and concerted manner. Punitive actions can be extended with comparative ease and the implementation of sanctions, in the physical domain, would amount to enforcing 'no-fly zones' so that the state involved cannot receive aid from outside or continue normal trading and commercial activities to sustain their economy. Only air power can ensure the complete isolation of the rogue nation and its regime, since it is capable of monitoring physical movements both on the surface and the air and taking offensive remedial action to enforce the sanctions. Such actions could involve combat operations if the attempt to breach the blockade is supported by the adversary's own air power. In this situation, further escalation cannot be ruled out and is a distinct possibility. However, in all cases, air power remains the optimal option to apply the concept of prevention through strikes and enforcing 'no-fly zones'.

FOCUSED TARGETING

Further escalation in a strategy of punishment will involve intrusive actions to target the adversary's military centres of gravity, degrading their capacity to continue hostile activities. This is based

on the premise that the adversary would be employing military capabilities to initiate actions to disrupt peaceful co-existence either regionally or on a bilateral basis. Targeting military centres of gravity, not in terms of punitive actions on a one-time basis, will go beyond the declaration of intent and is the lowest level of the demonstration of a nation's capability to undertake necessary actions to secure its sovereignty and interests. Although these actions are inherently intrusive in nature—the military targets will be both the fielded forces as well as lines of communications and support bases that could be deep within adversary territory—the ability to rapidly draw down military activities is a fundamental advantage of this point of the spectrum. In other words, the opportunity to contain the conflagration is still well within the grasp of both the parties concerned.

One of the fundamental requirements in carrying out focused targeting is the need to be precise and discriminate in the application of lethal force, and to be seen as being proactive to diplomatic initiatives that may be continuing even as military actions are ongoing. Air power is perhaps the ideal way to deal with this rather hamstrung situation wherein military centres of gravity have to be neutralised, but within a range of stringent guidelines. It is also apparent that a ground offensive to achieve the same effects may be counter-productive since it could be prone to mission creep—that normally involves becoming embroiled in domestic issues—and could also imply higher risk of casualties to one's own forces. If the operations are of an expeditionary nature, the support elements required for the conduct of efficient ground operations—the tail of the force—will become an inhibiting factor, both in terms of political push-back from host nations and resource implications.

Technological innovations have refined the ability of air power to strike a designated target with minimum risk of collateral damage. This capability makes it a politically acceptable tool, from within

the array of military capabilities, to be employed when focused targeting is required to pursue the strategy of punishment. From the end of World War II, political tolerance for collateral damage has continually reduced to an extent where in a contemporary conflict it has become almost completely unacceptable. Collateral damage from a single mission—which at best would be a tactical mistake—can have such strategic repercussions that in most nations, the political leadership does not grant any leeway to the military leaders and operators to continue operations in the face of collateral damage. When this situation is combined with the political unacceptability of having ‘boots-on-the-ground’, even if resources are available to undertake a ground operation, it becomes clear that the only recourse available to carry out focused targeting is air power.

Through air power, the enemy centres of gravity can be identified, fixed and neutralised by air power both from a stand-off distance as well as through intrusive action. Intrusive action will require obtaining and maintaining the desired level and duration of control of the air for other operations to be successful. Continued attacks on the adversary’s military centres of gravity is likely to produce the desired effects at least partially, which can then be leveraged to culminate in the possible escalation of combat operations. However, this is a function of the efficacy of the strikes and the perception created in the mind of the adversary regarding the advisability of continuing hostilities to the next level of escalation.

ESCALATION

From focused targeting of military centres of gravity, the next step is to escalate the conflict into a Limited War—a war whose objective is of a lesser scope than total surrender of the enemy. In Limited War the adversaries do not expend all the resources available to them to obtain victory in the conflict. Therefore, a Limited War is one in which both the objectives and resource

expenditure is 'limited,' and as a corollary, one that is normally conducted over a restricted period of time. The relatively short duration of Limited Wars is one of its distinguishing features from counter-insurgencies campaigns, otherwise called small wars, which by their character are typically long-drawn conflicts.

There are two factors that limit the conduct of a war: political objectives and military imperatives. Since the employment of military forces must always serve a political purpose, this is a critical and over-riding factor and is affected by territorial objectives, economic factors and international reaction to the military initiatives.⁸ Military imperatives are also defined by a number of factors such as comparative levels of military capabilities, resource availability, technological factors within the nation and the military and in some cases the availability or otherwise of nuclear weapons to either of the contestants. Essentially, Limited War does not culminate in the political or material annihilation of the opponent. It ideally seeks a change in political behaviour.

Until a few decades back, Limited Wars could only be brought to a successful culmination with the employment of ground forces in conjunction with maritime and air power. In other words, it was a mandatory requirement to 'occupy' territory, which only ground forces can achieve, in order to achieve even limited objectives. In the contemporary security environment, occupation of territory or even the use of expeditionary ground forces for limited periods in another state's sovereign territory has become politically unacceptable. However, improvements in technology have enhanced the ability of air power to prosecute a Limited War successfully. Combining the two developments almost naturally point towards the employment of air power to escalate a conflict

8 Jasjit Singh, *Dynamics of Limited War*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, New Delhi, <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-oct-00-1.html>, accessed on 10 December 2012.

from one of focused targeting of military centres of gravity to a Limited War; where the fundamental objectives to be achieved are changes in political behaviour. The 2011 NATO intervention in Libya is a classic example of air power achieving the desired political objectives in Limited War.

Limited War involves the widening of targeting from purely military targets to other infrastructure—dual-use facilities, defence industries and even the seat of power. The selection of the centres of gravity to be targeted will be contextual to ensure that optimum effects are created to achieve the desired objectives. In this regard, the selection would have to take into account the culture of the people, the type of government, the relationship between the people and the ruling elite and also the historical precedence of the peoples' ethos to external actions. The need to rebuild the same facilities when the relationship is normalised must also be considered as part of the cost-benefit analysis when selecting the targets.

The employment of air power in Limited Wars will include the entire spectrum of air power capabilities from benign ISR, to lethal precision strikes on selected targets. It will also involve obtaining and maintaining the desired level of control of the air for the duration necessary. Limited Wars could also involve restricted SF operations, which would usually be heavily dependent on air power for efficacy. Airlift capabilities will be critical to the successful ingress, sustainment and egress of these missions. In bringing a Limited War to a successful completion, all core roles of air power—control of the air, strike, airlift, and ISR—will be employed in varying intensity and combinations that create the desired effects at the desired time and place for the duration

necessary.⁹ This requirement, to be able to bring to bear the entire spectrum of air power capabilities, will in turn require the air force to be balanced with inherent flexibility and the ability to carry out operations across the entire spectrum of conflict. It is in applying the strategy of punishment that the high-end capabilities of an air force actually gets to be demonstrated, although they are necessary as a foundation for enforcing the strategies of deterrence and coercion.

Progressing to Limited War from the targeting of military centres of gravity obviously has political, diplomatic and economic consequences. However, the biggest impact will be on the armed forces, and in the prevailing circumstances, on the air force. Although Limited Wars are by definition of short duration, sufficient assurance can never be given that it will always be so. The air force needs to have adequate 'staying power' to ensure the successful completion of the war with the achievement of the desired objectives. The requirement is not only to have a balanced air force but also to guarantee that the air force is capable of delivering the necessary quantum of air power for the required duration, while retaining the ability to scale the tempo of operations up or down at will. Without meeting these three preconditions, there can be no assurance of success in prosecuting a Limited War.

DESTRUCTION

Further escalation of operations from Limited War can only be achieved by going into a state of Total War, in which the belligerent states engage in the complete mobilisation of all available resources and personnel. Total or Unlimited War has the destruction of the

9 The full spectrum of air power capabilities and the details of all air roles are not being elaborated in this paper, since it is primarily concerned with the strategy of punishment.

adversary as a political entity as its single and focused objective. Such destruction, however, need not always be accompanied by total devastation of material resources, but can also be achieved by the overthrow of the incumbent regime with an assured change in the political behaviour of the state.¹⁰ The final outcome will have to be 'surrender' of the adversary and their acceptance to adhere to the changes—political, societal and military—demanded by the winning state. Total War could also involve the use of catastrophic force if necessary. The use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end World War II is a classic example of the use of catastrophic force to obtain the surrender on an adversary.

From an air power perspective, the application of catastrophic force and achievement of surrender through such an action can be accomplished by the employment of its lethal strike capability. In pursuing destruction, air power has distinctive characteristics that can be employed—its ability to strike precisely at great range, thereby being able to destroy targets that could not otherwise be neutralised and the ability to repeat such strikes from safe bases makes it relatively invulnerable.¹¹ The precision, discrimination and proportionality of air strikes offers the prospect of extremely high destructive performance and reduced human risk, making it an attractive option. However, the capacity to carry out lethal strikes will need to be enhanced beyond the requirements to fight and win a Limited War. It is also necessary to calculate the capacity necessary in a contextual manner so that the application of force does not suffer from being diluted at some critical point, thereby increasing the timeframe necessary to achieve the

10 Adam Elkus, 'The Strategic and Operational Dynamics of Limited War', *Small Wars Journal*, April 2012, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/print/12517>, accessed on 10 December 2012.

11 Professor Michael Clarke, 'Air Power, Force and Coercion', in Group Captain Andrew Lambert and Arthur C. Williamson (eds.), *The Dynamics of Air Power*, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, UK, 1996, pp. 75-76.

objective of surrender. The conduct of Total War, as the name implies, is not merely the precinct of air power, but is a whole-of-nation enterprise, with the air force playing a contributory albeit important role in achieving the desired end-state. In these circumstances air power will have to bring to bear all its core competencies fully and in a concerted manner, at the time and place of choice in alignment with the other elements of national power.

POST-CONFLICT ACTIONS

The primary aim of escalating a conflict to the level of destruction is to achieve the surrender of the adversary and declaring ultimate victory, leading to 'normalised' diplomatic relations. There is, however, a critical requirement to have a strategy for the de-escalation of the conflict after achieving victory and to begin subsequent stabilisation operations. This aspect is often not thought through completely in the planning stages, or is ill-conceived based on erroneous calculations. An ill-judged stabilisation strategy has the potential to create a situation that rapidly deteriorates into insurgency, like in Iraq in 2003, which has the potential to neutralise all the gains brought about through the achievement of a military victory at very high cost. The ideal situation would be for the winning side to de-escalate at the earliest possible timeframe and immediately set in place a strategy to influence and shape the environment so that the stabilisation efforts can gain sufficient traction to gradually take hold and improve incrementally. In other words, destruction being at the furthest end of the spectrum from a military perspective will be the place immediately before the beginning of the spread of strategies that support national security.

CONCLUSION

The strategy of punishment is almost completely dependent on the ability of the nation concerned to escalate the application of force as required. The ability to escalate has two aspects to it—first, the military force must have the capability and the capacity to physically escalate the application of force, and second, the nation must possess the political will to permit such escalations as are required to achieve the desired end-state. Here the appropriate relationship between the political aspects of a conflict and the employment of armed forces becomes critical to national success. A nation must not enter into conflict situations unless it is willing to employ all elements of its national power in the pursuit of victory, which when achieved in turn should bring about a stabilised situation.

Air power is one of the key elements in implementing a strategy of punishment to achieve the desired end-state. The need to escalate the threshold of punishment as required to create the effects makes air power a sought after capability, especially in the contemporary geo-political environment when ground invasion is neither an optimum option nor a politically correct initiative. The use of air power however, has to adhere to the principles of proportionality and discrimination even when used in the fully destructive mode to achieve the political surrender of the adversary. Massive and indiscriminate use of force through any mode—air, maritime or land—will have far reaching political implications and can diminish the impact of the victory so achieved.¹² The often used analogy is apt in this circumstances—air power must be used as a rapier in the implementation of the strategy of punishment,

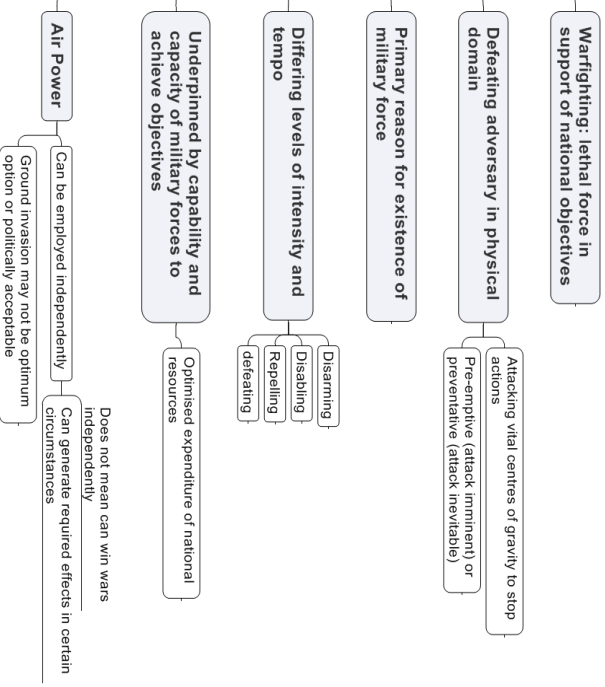
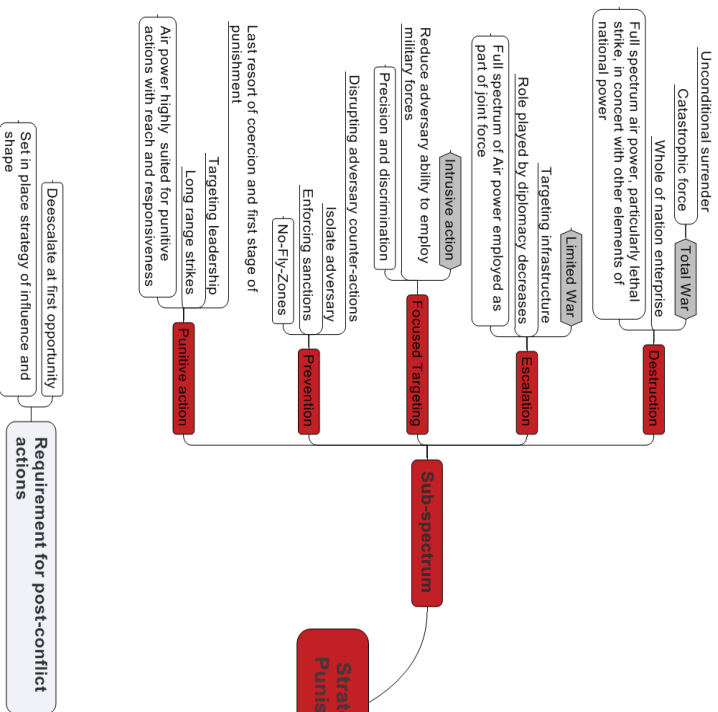
12 Pavel K. Baev, 'Russia's Air Power in the Chechen War: Denial, Punishment and Defeat', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, June 1997, Frank Cass, London, pp. 1-18.

The Bolt From The Blue

because if it is used as a sledgehammer its ability to escalate at will becomes diminished and the potential for failure will increase proportionately.

Punishment, in the military sense, is equated to defeating the adversary in the physical domain and altering the behaviour pattern as much as possible. Most military doctrines articulate this objective as the primary reason for the existence of a military force—to defend the nation and its interests through the defeat of the adversary.

The spectrum of the strategy of punishment escalates through prevention of actions by the adversary and the enforcement of sanctions; focused targeting of military centres of gravity; lethal strikes to neutralise both dual-use as well as other critical infrastructure; and finally to proceeding to destroy the adversary's ability to function coherently.



EPILOGUE

CONCLUSION

When you are about to march on your enemies, do the diplomatic means of persuasion, bribery, alienation and punishment come first and are they well applied? Do you fortify your base before you march out, lord of the people, do you attack to win and having won do you spare them? Is your army with four kinds of troops and eight factors well led by your officers to rout the enemy? Do you attack enemies in battle without disrupting the harvesting and sowing in their country, great king?

The Mahabharata¹

Military strategy has evolved over the years from being almost completely independent of other national strategies to one that is intertwined in the strategies that direct the application of all other elements of national power. This has been necessitated by the growing envelope of issues that most nations perceive as affecting their national security interests. Even as late as the Napoleonic wars in Europe, the security of the nation was defined as the ability to keep the geographical borders of the nation inviolate. This is a straightforward and relatively simple concept. From a military perspective, protection

¹ R. K. Narayan, *The Mahabharata*, Vol. 2, Book 2, Heinemann, London, 1978, p. 42.

of the physical boundaries of the nation is comparatively easy to achieve if the necessary strength of forces are made available. From this situation, over a period of just two centuries, the concept of national security has undergone a radical change. In the contemporary security environment, national security encompasses not only the physical protection of the nation, but also the protection of its interests irrespective of physical location, the projection of power when necessary to ensure the safety and security of the nation, the stabilisation of the trade routes that are vital for the well-being of the nation's economy and a myriad of other aspects that may not have necessarily been the responsibility of the military forces in a more traditional context. Today, national security can only be achieved by being able to combine the power resident in all elements of national power proportionately and contextually tailored to influence emerging security trends and if necessary defeat challenges that arise.

In this rather complex process of assuring national security, military forces have had to realign their fundamental strategies to the national security strategy in order to make sure that they support the Grand Strategy of the nation. This realignment commences with the acceptance that the military forces need not always be the lead element in securing the nation, and also that the military forces may not always be employed in the conventional manner to oppose and defeat the military forces of the adversary. Accordingly, military strategies must now span a much broader spread of strategies than ever before, starting at a very benign level of employment of military forces—the provision of disaster relief or humanitarian assistance—and moving to more focused application of military force in the implementation of strategies that are dependent on the more lethal capabilities resident in them. Therefore, at the highest levels, military strategies cannot be formulated in isolation, but must take into account a number of factors that contribute, directly and indirectly, to the security of

the nation. In the contemporary world it is no longer possible for a single element of national power to be constantly in the lead nor is it possible for an element to carry the lion's share of the effort at all times. Coordinated cohesiveness of effort within all elements of national power is the only way forward.

Ensuring a nation's security is accomplished through calculating the relationship between ends, ways and means. This process is applicable to all elements of national power. From a military perspective, the fundamental aspect of this process that must always be clearly understood, is that irrespective of the type of force being applied, the desired end-state—the objective of employing the force—is always determined at the highest level of government and is political in nature. This maxim holds true for all practising democracies. When analysed further, what this means is that the military functions within the overall control of the elected civilian government—the parliament of the people. After the end-state has been clearly defined by the highest civilian authority, it is necessary to calculate the means necessary to achieve the desired objectives.

Ideally, the necessary means must be provided for the element of national power that is to lead the effort to achieve the desired end-state; however, the situation may not be so conducive at all times, and the means available may not be sufficient to achieve all the objectives. Such a situation would necessitate two further processes: first to carry out another analysis of the laid down end-state and reconfirm that they are indeed necessary to be achieved in order to ensure national security; and second, to recalculate the means—personnel, systems and materiel—necessary to achieve the objectives. If both are confirmed as correct, then the alternatives available to the government would be to either change the end-state to one that is achievable by the means available, or to provide the necessary means to achieve all the objectives. One or the other have to be readjusted, and

the choice of whether it is the ends or the means depend on a number of disparate factors, some of which are the prevailing security environment; national economic situation; available size, capability and capacity of the military forces; and international status of the nation and the influence that it can bring to bear. Each of these factors, not exclusive in themselves, are further influenced by other challenges and issues. The situation is complex and the process to determine the adjustment, either to the end-state or the means, needs to be sophisticated to get it right. To make a wrong choice and subsequently correct it is not an available option in this case.

Once the end-state and the means necessary to achieve it are balanced, it is the responsibility of the military to devise the strategy that would be able to optimally utilise the means available to achieve the ends—the ways or strategy at the highest level of planning. In keeping with the increased envelope of the employment of military forces, the strategies also span a very broad spread—from the strategy to influence and shape on the one end to the strategy of punishment at the other. In between these extremes, the strategies of deterrence and coercion span the increasing use of the military force. In a linear fashion, the progression of these strategies involve escalating use of military force, until at the furthest level of the strategy of punishment, catastrophic force is used to ‘destroy’ the centres of gravity of the adversary. In fact, the strategy of punishment, itself situated at the high end of the spread, is generally only employed when armed conflict becomes necessary. Although the strategies are a continuum of escalation, it is not always necessary to start at the lowest point and gradually progress higher. Dependent on circumstances and context, the military forces can be employed at any point in the continuum and adopt any of the four basic strategies in the spread. However, the strategies form a cycle wherein the strategy on influence and shape has to be utilised at the culmination of the use of any other

strategy after the desired end-state has been achieved. Irrespective of where in the cycle of strategies the initial employment is started, the cycle will continue to be maintained.

In implementing the strategy of influence and shape, the relationship between influence and power must be carefully analysed and understood. There can be no influence of significance unless it is clearly underpinned by power—both soft and hard. For a nation to possess demonstrated power it needs to have an optimum mix of soft and hard power that creates sufficient strategic influence. Strategic influence is a judicious combination of political advocacy, diplomacy that covers all levels of interaction, information operations, military overtures, economic initiatives, and perception management. This is an eclectic mix, and a nation needs to consider the optimum manner in which they can be combined to achieve the best outcome. The strategy of influence and shape can be adopted by all elements of national power to suit their own unique characteristics. However, one of the fundamental requirements for these elements to operate is the requirement to have a secure environment within which they can function. Often a secure environment is created by the employment of the military forces within some other strategy like deterrence or coercion. It is possible for one element of national power to be pursuing a strategy, while another could be implementing another completely different strategy. Optimising the combined effects thus produced requires the government to have total visibility of all actions that are being initiated, and coordinating them at the highest level possible. In order to focus the effects required, it is also necessary to have one element in the lead, supported by other elements. There should also be sufficient flexibility built into the process to ensure that the lead element can be changed during the campaign dependent on evolving circumstances.

When implementing the strategy of influence and shape, military forces normally tend to avoid the use of lethal force. There will

always be instances when physical intervention is required to mitigate the impact of natural disasters or man-made calamities, in a benign manner, through the speedy provision of humanitarian assistance. In these circumstances it may also become necessary to secure the area of operations through the proactive use of minimal force. At the high end of the spectrum of influence and shape, military forces may be required to stabilise a particularly volatile area, which might involve the selective use of force to ensure that there is no breakdown of law and order, and that the region/state does not descend into civil war. Stabilisation of an area increases the influence that a nation can bring to bear at a later stage, and also stabilises the region in a more coherent manner than otherwise. The subsidiary activities that make up the entire spectrum of of influence and shape—monitor, assist, intervene, police and stabilise—are indicative of a gradual escalation in the employment of military forces. In each of these subsidiary activities, air power contributes distinctively, and at times critically, in a contextual manner.

The next strategy is the strategy of deterrence. This strategy can be adapted to be implemented by any element of national power, especially in the low end of the spectrum. However, it is difficult to adopt deterrence as the primary national strategy in the pursuit of ensuring and furthering security because it presumes the rationality in behaviour by the adversary, and the final outcome of this strategy is to preserve the status quo. In contemporary conflict, there is a distinct and discernible trend for the adversary to adopt irrational behaviour patterns; therefore, deterrence may not create the necessary environment to ensure security. However, if it is possible to implement with sufficient assurance of success, it is perhaps one of the better methods of ensuring stability, since the implementation of the strategy of deterrence requires the least expenditure of resources. Deterrence is built on four cardinal

principles: intelligence, credibility, perception and applicability, that are all directly influenced by air power.

Deterrence is aimed at influencing the cognitive domain of a potential adversary to alter his/her behaviour pattern, and subsequently their belief system. While the tools available are primarily based on the physical domain, the effects that deterrent activities attempt to create are meant to influence the cognitive domain. In the spectrum of the strategy of deterrence, the low end is represented by denial, which has a certain amount of overlap with the stabilisation activity at the high end of the strategy of influence and shape. While the tactical level actions to implement denial or stabilise a deteriorating situation may vary in a nuanced manner, the fundamental activities are very similar, and will overlap as the strategy of deterrence is implemented. Similarly, at the high end of deterrence is punitive action that is indicative of further action that would be forthcoming if the adversary continues to be recalcitrant in their behaviour. Deterrence as a strategy is as old as warfare itself, and it is when deterrence has failed that conflicts erupt. Since deterrence is almost completely dependent on the adversary's perception of one's capabilities, it is not an easy strategy to measure in terms of it being successful or otherwise.

The strategy of coercion has a large spread, starting with coercion through the employment of soft power only, primarily through diplomatic initiatives. More importantly, coercion has a great deal of overlap with the employment of denial as a sub-set when used within the strategy of deterrence. In the strategy of deterrence, denial is predicated on a show of force; when the same sub-set is employed as part of the spectrum of the strategy of coercion, it can also take the form of punitive action through selective targeting to neutralise centres of gravity. The other important factor regarding the use of coercion is that it must retain the ability to incrementally increase the pressure on the adversary in order

to succeed. Therefore, if the strategy is implemented at the high end of the spectrum to start with, there is a likelihood of it being ineffective. The only option under these circumstances would be to enter into combat operations, with the aim of effecting a regime change in the opposing nation to ensure that behavioural changes can then be implemented. This situation is not conducive to a stabilised settlement.

There are other challenges to ensuring that coercion is effective. At the application level, the difficulty in identifying the appropriate centres of gravity that would compel the adversary to stop initiating actions that are inimical to one's interests will require not only accurate and timely intelligence, but also the ability to factor in the cultural ethos of the adversary. This in turn needs a detailed knowledge of the adversary characteristics. Since the success or otherwise of the strategy is dependent mainly on the ability to coerce the cognitive domain of the adversary, there can never be absolute certainty of its success. The probability of success is highest when coercion is used against a sovereign state with a clearly developed government, and the least when dealing with diffused, non-state entities. The strategy of coercion needs to be carefully tailored for every context in which it is applied to ensure that it is given the maximum latitude to succeed.

The normal posture of the military force—whether defensive or offensive—has a salutary effect on how rapidly it will be able to move on to the high end strategy of punishment. The strategy of punishment itself has a spectrum of activities that culminate in the destruction of adversary centres of gravity, if necessary through the use of catastrophic force. There is a school of thought that the fundamental reason for the existence of military forces is to achieve this end-state. However, it is clear from the exploration of the various strategies that this is indeed not the case, and military forces are essentially meant to secure the nation against attacks and to further national interests through the appropriate

employment of the force across the broad spectrum of conflict and contentious issues. There is a distinct possibility of creating unintended consequences when military forces are employed to implement a strategy of punishment. It is necessary to mitigate this probability by ensuring that the lethal application of force is always done with precision, proportionality and discrimination. It is also necessary to understand that the probability of unintended consequences increases with the increasing use of force.

The strategy of punishment overlaps with the highest end of the strategy of coercion. The demarcation between combat operations as part of coercion, and intrusive action as part of punishment is very difficult to fathom, especially at the operational and tactical levels. The nuanced difference in the application of force in support of prevention is only in terms of the objectives that are to be achieved. The strategy of punishment must always be followed by the implementation of the strategy of influence and shape to ensure post-combat stabilisation and nation-building activities. This is the point at which the strategies become a 'cycle of strategies,' and move away from the popular perception of a linear progression. Successful implementation of any of the strategies can only be achieved through stabilisation operations after the desired end-state has been achieved. While it may be possible to achieve the desired end-state through the implementation of one strategy, even partially, rebuilding and stabilising the area must always be the final activity.

The strategies explored in this book can be renamed, as the terms are not rigid, but it is felt that the spectrum of these strategies can be used as a broad template to investigate the contribution of all elements of national power, and within the military forces, the manner in which the other environmental forces contribute to further the employment of a selected strategy. If this can be achieved, it should then form the broad basis for having a holistic view of military strategy at the highest level. Strategies are but the

ways in which a nation secures its sovereignty and advances its interests to ensure that it remains prosperous and stable.

Air power plays a distinct role in the implementation of all the strategies—the quantum and type of its contribution being determined by the context. Therefore, it is not possible to draw up a template for the employment of air power for a particular strategy and then superimpose an evolving scenario on to it. Flexibility and scalability is fundamental to the effective use of air power in alignment with other elements of national power, each with its own contribution to make. Further, irrespective of the lethality that air power can bring to bear, it must never be surmised that air power alone will be able to achieve the desired end-state—far from it. This being said, air power has the ability to be an adhesive force for the concerted application of national power at all levels—from the strategic to the tactical—, which is a capability that, depending on circumstances, may not be resident in any other element. A nation without adequate air power cannot be confident that its security, and by extension prosperity, is well protected. The full potential of cutting edge technology air power can only be optimised when its employment is guided by, and aligned to a range of well-constructed strategies.

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