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Deterrence as a Nuclear Strategy: A Cold War-Era Study

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ABSTRACT

Deterrence can be considered a theory, a tactic, a national security strategy, or a broader defence plan. As a tactic, "deterrence" is a rational response to the inconsistencies in the international security environment. As a variable, "deterrence" is one of the numerous options available to a state for protecting its interests, and its applicability will vary as circumstances change. Thus, it would be an enormous intellectual and strategic mistake to assume that the function of deterrence is constant. This paper examines the concept of "deterrence," which has become a realistic addition to military discourse after the advent of nuclear weapons. This article discusses Cold War deterrence's nature, scope, application, and limits. Throughout the Cold War, this article discusses the nuclear tactics of the United States and the Soviet Union. During the cold war, the rapid growth of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals did not render retaliatory threats obsolete; instead, they were fueled by counterforce targeting of each other's economic, social, and military sectors. Thus, despite the 1987 INF Treaty, the US and USSR maintained a high level of nuclear readiness. In practise, military deterrence did not generate the same enthusiasm as in theory. The only time the nuclear strategy of military defence was deployed during

the Cold War strategic fabric was in the 1970s and 1980s through the language of arms control instead of the deterrent effect of deterrent threats.

Keywords: Deterrence, Cold War, military deterrence, US Nuclear Strategy, Soviet nuclear strategy.

INTRODUCTION

North Korea conducted ballistic missile tests from 2015 to 2017, threatening nuclear retaliation against Japan and the United States. In one instance, it seemed like the world was inching closer to nuclear Armageddon. Nonetheless, the crisis ended as others had: with a "whimper" rather than a "boom." Following the most lethal nuclear standoff since the end of the Cold War, the United States, North Korea, and South Korea began discussions on disarmament and promoting cooperative security on the Korean Peninsula. Since the first year of mutual deterrence (1950), nuclear nations have only seldom threatened retaliation, but they have favoured cooperation more frequently (Siracusa, 2020). As a consequence, the spectre has plagued the world endlessly without ever manifesting—in terms of how governments have strategized about the development and use of nuclear weapons.

Philosophy precedes strategy by thousands of years. Even so, a comprehensive review of *Sun Tzu's The Art of War*, Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian Wars*, and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* demonstrates that philosophy and strategy were probably indistinguishable in the ancient world. However, the concept of strategy has varied throughout time, making a clear conflation with philosophy very difficult. Historically, strategy has meant "the art of the general" (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2005). This word was modified by Carl von Clausewitz, who defined it as the "use of battles to promote the war's objective." The nineteenth century altered, among other things, this basic, war-focused understanding of strategy, which Basil Liddell Hart (1968) defined as the "art of distributing and using military means to accomplish policy objectives" (p. 334). Despite the aforementioned advancements, the previous century was split into two camps: one that attempted to expand the concept and the other that sought to restrict it. Ultimately, the atomic and subsequent thermonuclear revolutions widened the scope of strategy beyond repair. When they were designed, nuclear warheads were a revolutionary sort of weapon that was distinct from earlier forms of weapons employed in battle. In order to capitalise on their vast destructive potential, this meant that their use or threat of use had to be modified.

These questions need this investigation. How did actual interstate disputes, conflicts, and wars play out in the presence of nuclear weapons during the cold war? How have nuclear weapons contributed to the prolongation or resolution of current international disagreements, conflicts, and wars? Is deterrence the prevailing concept in nuclear strategy, or have regimes often prepared for unwinnable nuclear warfare as the final justification for possessing the "absolute weapon"? This study has been captivated by such processes, which often pertain to global security. This study examines deterrence as a nuclear strategy during the Cold War by performing theoretical research on the objectives and tactics.

DEFINING DETERRENCE

The inherent ubiquity of the term "deterrence" narrows its scope of meaning. Deterrence and deterrent are both nouns and adjectives, but deter is the verb form. This should communicate the same notion, logically. Therefore, it is evident that the category of things that may be defined as a deterrent should correspond to the category of things that can operate as a deterrent. There might be discussions in academic circles over whether or not to confine use to a restricted and restrictive meaning. During the Cold War, the easiest way to explain deterrence was to say that it was the threat of military retaliation to stop military attacks (Talbot, 2020).

This restrictive definition did make sense in the context of the Cold War, which will be expounded upon in the following paragraphs. It is sufficient to include several more Cold War-era definitions of deterrence. Glenn Snyder (1961) described deterrence as "discouraging the opponent from initiating military action by presenting him with the possibility of cost and risk outweighing his potential benefit" (p. 35). This definition is very restrictive and puts an excessive focus on the military variable. Alexander George and Richard Smoke (1974) defined deterrence as "the persuading of one's opponent that the costs and/or dangers of a specific behaviour exceed its rewards" (p. 11). This concept of deterrence seems to be broad, communicating a variety of individual and state-level deterrents. Nonetheless, strategic studies in the West during the Cold War seemed to glorify obscure terminology while disparaging conceptual rigour. Morgan, a former proponent of deterrence's conventional school, criticised one of the most comprehensive modern formulations of deterrence. For the sake of this study, Morgan's concept of deterrence will serve as an illustration. This is exacerbated by his development of a deterrence scenario in 1983. Consequently, the working definition of the notion may be expressed as follows: Deterrence is a preventative effect based on the use of military threats as disincentives to deter potential military strikes (Snyder 2015).

The contrast between deterrence and coercion is another intellectual contribution of Cold War strategic studies. Compellence is the use of threats to influence the behaviour of others such that they either cease doing something undesirable or begin doing something they were not previously doing (Ohnishi, 2020). Although the contrast between the two is at best vague, it is reasonable to say that deterrence is a notion that favours maintaining the status quo, and compellence is one that favours changing it. However, both may be seen as overlapping and interdependent elements of coercive diplomacy. Again, coercive diplomacy has been formed as a notion with overtly military implications—the use of force or the threat of force by a state to achieve its aims. Intertwined with the far less discussed concept of compellence, deterrence has played an important role in international politics, although mostly as a technique. Fear of another terrible war in the nineteenth century and the development of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) made it important as a strategic option within the anarchical international system of states and their desire for power and security (Soesanto & Smeets, 2020). Since the end of World War II, strategic experts have all agreed that deterrence became a full strategic option when both a strong military force and violent wars started happening in the shadow of thermonuclear weapons.

If not for nuclear weapons and the Cold War, deterrence would have remained an infrequent tactic, according to a prominent expert (Siracusa, 2020). These factors contributed to the concept's evolution into a unique approach to national security. Addition-

ally, to become an instrument for maintaining the security of one's friends. The possession of thermonuclear weapons necessitated a comprehensive deterrent strategy that integrated theory and practise. Deterrence has become fundamental not just to international politics but also to the system's own survival. The superpowers and their various blocs quickly established what has been referred to as a deterrent regime or cooperative security management, which restrained their activities in a variety of ways and compelled them to better manage a system that was always on high alert. In this armed system of perpetually projecting tensions, deterrence has become a pillar of international politics. It changed from a vague plan to a theory-based, all-encompassing plan for national security.

This exact idea of deterrence matched the objectives of the Cold War enemies. In the immediate aftermath of World Conflict II, the objective was to continue hostilities without engaging in another possibly disastrous war. Consequently, over the latter part of the nineteenth century, deterrence became synonymous with the endeavour to prevent nuclear attacks by threatening enormous nuclear retribution. Therefore, mutual assured destruction (MAD) has supplanted all previous meanings of the term "deterrence." This nevertheless restricted the concept of deterrence to only a strategy based on the superiority of military strength—or nuclear weapons. Despite the fact that the threat of military reprisal is just one option available to policymakers and might be compared to and selected over other possibilities, during the Cold War, very punishing retribution became a precondition for successful deterrence. This was an incomplete policy study, as it lacked not just additional deterrent possibilities but also a comparison between the predominant deterrent option — the threat of huge retribution, the weaponized threat — and any other non-deterrent option. During the Cold War, the study of military threats became not just a virtue but also a study of deterrence.

What characteristics must a credible deterrent policy and approach possess? Two independent experts, separated by more than three decades of the Cold War but speaking as if they were contemporaneous, offered the solution to this question. According to William Kaufmann, an adversary must be persuaded that a) one has an effective military capacity, b) one can inflict intolerable costs on the adversary, and c) one will use this force if attacked. Therefore, the three primary areas in which credibility must be demonstrated are capacity, expense, and purpose. reflecting the unwavering continuation of the same military factors, but this time with a more defined cost-capability association. According to Paul Huth (1988), the basic needs are as follows: a) military capabilities sufficient to impose severe costs on a potential aggressor; and b) the willingness or desire to employ such capabilities if necessary. In other words, the deterrent must persuade the opposing party that it is both competent and willing to carry out the threat if the opponent decides to do the prohibited activity. The political objective of the period, at least for the apparently status quo power, the United States, was to practise containment of the Soviet menace, and the broader objective of deterrence was to aid states in surviving the nuclear era. Deterrence became a policy for both the US and the USSR so that they could fight a hard war without killing a lot of people.

Indeed, the spread of nuclear weapons has assisted in the containment of this war. However, the development of deterrence theory along strictly military lines included a stimulant that can only be comprehended by expanding the scope of the current inquiry. Nuclear deterrence is best understood as a possible way to solve Europe's basic and ongoing military problems.

THE ORIGINS OF MILITARY DETERRENCE: AN HISTORICAL ENQUIRY

Prior to the onset of the Cold War, deterrence was seldom the dominant tactic for preventing large power conflicts (Lebow & Stein, 1995). Prior to the development of nuclear weapons and, as a result, mutual deterrence, the great nations were expansionist. Expansionism necessitated offensive forces and techniques, and when the need arose to repel assaults, defensive forces and plans were necessary, but deterrence was not the primary objective. Thus, there is no mention of deterrence in what is perhaps the finest treatise of strategy and combat from the 19th century. Long before the development of nuclear weapons, the expansion of military and other capabilities paired with increased bureaucratic and other resources reached a stage where great power war, including the majority of the system's most powerful nations, could be very damaging. Nationalism was the subjective reason why vast numbers of people and other resources could be gathered to fight absolute battles for any goal.In terms of army numbers, degrees of cruelty, and geographical and time length, large nations are now able to wage huge conflicts. This does not, however, render deterrence irrelevant.

The Great Wars, which were a 19th-century phenomenon, continued into the 20th century, and the traditional European balance of power system was seen as a deterrent. This was the case to the degree that commitment to alliances remained flexible, such that a prospective aggressor or expansionist state was ready to examine whether expansionism on its part would eventually lead to the formation of a superior counterbalancing coalition against it. However, European diplomats of the period did not dive as deeply into the underlying dynamics of conventional deterrence as they did into the balance of power system as a national security mechanism. The 20th century was not without tremendously catastrophic conflicts, yet the issue with total war lay elsewhere. It was not war itself that was bothersome, but rather the dissociation of sovereign government from it, which led to the widespread use of force for selfish ends, as the worst misuse of national power and probably the ultimate security issue of the international order of the early 20th century. As a way to avoid big power wars, deterrence started out as a way to keep people from giving up the strategy of "cheap victories," which was praised at first but later criticized.

As a pre-industrial period approximation of total war, the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) led to the Westphalian system of nations exerting some control over hostilities (Shaw, 2015). However, World War II once again overloaded the system, and the German-Soviet War functioned as the 20th century's approximation of the same master narrative, although for a shorter duration and with more lethality. Eventually, cheap-victory solutions and the widespread condemnation of war and aggression affected the evolution of classical deterrence in the following ways, where the military aspect is not only obvious but also formidable: The sole nonmilitary type of deterrence, collective actor deterrence via the League of Nations, was doomed from the start owing to diplomatic shortcomings. Since the 1920s, the following have shown that conventional deterrence is based on a strong military base:

1. Overcoming low-cost victory strategies: The first half of the twentieth century was the zenith of total war in Europe, with a meteoric growth in nationalist feelings, industrialization, and communication technologies (Harris, 2007). With the inclusion of ideological disputes and a continual influx of new members into the armed services via mandatory conscription, total war was on the verge of being accomplished. During this era, cheap-victory strategies were catastrophic failures, particularly during the world wars. Such techniques, based on the notion of early victory, proved to be very unstable.

To keep the element of surprise, cheap winning strategies need an early strike. Thus, if a fight is imminent, the other side may launch a preemptive attack, resulting in a full-scale war to the detriment of the initial aggressor. Neither reforming international politics nor renouncing interstate combat seemed to be a possibility for the great powers, demanding an alternate frame of reference to control and explain aggressive forms of interstate behaviour. Consequently, a revolutionary way of resolving the issues of major power warfare was evidently imminent.

2. The status quo shift: At the same time, several of the world's most powerful governments became status quo powers. This indirectly modified the argument for deterrence by boosting defensive forces. For analysts, offensive capabilities are perilous if they present low-cost win options. To prohibit the rapid mobilisation of massive armies as a cheap winning strategy, mandatory conscription was deemed unjustified. As offensive troops and postures were deemed overly provocative, the emphasis shifted progressively to the creation of defensive capabilities as a deterrence against major conflicts. That powerful and effective defences would naturally have a deterrent impact was a logical antecedent to Glenn Snyder's concept of deterrence by denial. However, the encouragement of defences resulted in deterrence as a secondary effect rather than a core goal. This started to change with the introduction of air power. The British finally used strategic bombing as a deterrent, with the original notion that significant targets may be either physical (industrial and/or military infrastructure) or psychological (the enemy's resolve to fight). This ultimately led to the conceptual difference between deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Concurrently, the United States began to consider deterrence via the threat of strategic bombing.

The advent of nuclear weapons: All of the aforementioned factors converged into a thesis with the introduction of atomic and subsequently thermonuclear weapons, the worldwide proliferation of such weapon classes, and their delivery vehicles, or ballistic missiles. In hindsight, the paradoxes generated by such weapons seem perfect for stimulating methodical studies on deterrence. The conflict between total war and a quick victory was made worse by nuclear weapons, but it was also resolved by them.

The fact that these weapons were essentially political but really military contributed to the creation of deterrence as a theory and a tactic. Theoretically, nuclear weapons combine the issues of total war and cheap victories. And on the practical front, the unfathomable might of the H-bomb made deterrence not only a theoretical possibility, but an absolute necessity. In scenarios where there were no adequate defences against ballistic missiles and there were grounds to doubt that either disarmament or comprehensive first-strike devastation would be effective, the vast majority of great countries concluded that deterrence was the only viable choice. With the advent of nuclear weapons, war threats with terrible repercussions to prevent conflict have become not only profitable but also practical. During the era of conflict with conventional weapons, these weapons spanned the gap between governments' legitimacy and their capabilities. The dangers of nuclear weapons were not so much feared. It was the inventive employment of the resultant militarised threat based on such weapons that grabbed centre stage in order to deconstruct any potential quick-win solutions. The odds were heavily stacked against the likelihood that major nations would launch war for the first time after 1945. There is no longer any way, in the context of nuclear weapons, to make the aggressor suffer less and gain more. Thus, conceiving of deterrence in terms of weaponry makes annihilation seem almost unavoidable under these conditions. Thus, the nuclear revolution began.

MILITARY DETERRENCE: THE GENEALOGY OF STRATEGY

It is not true that deterrence was the sole sacred nuclear strategy from the moment nuclear weapons were conceived. A nuclear strategy addresses the development and employment of nuclear weapons for national political ends, including the objectives pursued, tools utilised, and manner in which they are intended to be deployed. Nuclear strategy is a strategy primarily designed to further the self-interest of nations or their protectorates; in the case of expanding nuclear umbrellas, nuclear strategy is part of a state's larger foreign policy. In the context of historical continuity, the kind of strategy selected by a state, which eventually gets duplicated internationally, is contingent upon two factors: the political agency in power at the time a specific strategy is taken, and the state's wider foreign policy objective at that time. At the heart of every good plan, nuclear or not, there are always different ways of looking at it.

When deterrence was progressively becoming a viable strategic option for the United States, which was the only nuclear power at the time, various nuclear strategies were prominent among worried circles. Each of the competing variants was sophisticated. The United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese islands of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which was the sole instance of a state using nuclear weapons (Marsh, 2019). This has been open to a variety of interpretations, ranging from the virtues of the act in ending World War II sooner, thus ironically preventing more war casualties on both sides, to the role of a military coup in Japan, implying that the war would have ended soon and the use of the weapons was unnecessary, at least in retrospect. In addition to deterrence, nuclear strategy tries to accomplish additional political goals. One objective was to enhance US administration of the international system by coercing Soviet participation. Another objective was to preserve the American nuclear monopoly by implementing the Baruch Plan to prevent other nations from acquiring the bomb. In contrast, the early Soviet nuclear policy (from 1949) envisaged the acquisition of nuclear weapons in order to enhance national security and Soviet military power in the postwar world (Doyle, 2013). Here, the function of deterrence was simply implicit. There were further strategic ambiguities, which makes this genealogy investigation much more intriguing.

Nuclear scientists who contributed to the bomb's development saw it as the ultimate weapon for preemptive strikes and cheap victories. In addition, they believed that nuclear weapons might escalate less serious wars quickly. Whereas the majority of academic thinkers predicted that deterrence would eventually come to dominate nuclear-strategic thinking and that it would be prudent to conceal or protect retaliatory forces from an enemy's first strike—in case deterrence fails—the author argues that the opposite is true (Gerson, 2009). In addition, they believed that reciprocal nuclear retaliatory forces would be the most reliable deterrent system. Even after the Soviet Union had the bomb, these concepts were generally disregarded in the early post-war military strategy of the United States, which was preoccupied with nuclear warfighting scenarios. In a reenactment of the United States' involvement in World War II, it envisioned a scenario in which early Soviet military successes in Europe would lead to the mass mobilisation of US forces in those regions; the recapture of those regions and ultimate victory; and the use of nuclear weapons to destroy the expansionist state. Here, airpower became very important, especially after the end of the war when troops were sent home. This meant that the US had more security responsibilities in Europe but less conventional forces to use there.

The repercussions of World War II on nuclear strategy were to be far-reaching. Before deterrence became a legitimate strategic regime (or cooperative security management), it was conducted against forces who recognised no boundaries in war, desired global dominance, and were always willing to sacrifice lives for nationalist and dictatorial ends. Whereas, after 1945, General George S. Patton viewed the Soviet empire as evil and a future battle with the communists as inevitable—Soviet thought was much along the same lines—variations of nuclear strategy with extra political aims evolved with competing goals (Rosenberg, 1983). To demonstrate, American nuclear policy has generally centred on stopping other governments, especially its allies, from obtaining nuclear weapons. This objective was never accomplished, mainly owing to the effectiveness of Soviet spying. Strong pro-nuclear coalitions grew for a number of reasons, including changing security concerns; the desire to become a great power through nuclear weapons; the desire to continue having a say in decisions made by superpowers in Europe and Asia; and the desire to avoid nuclear blackmail by the Soviet Union.

1946 is omitted from the competing explanations of the genesis of the Cold War. It was the first direct American intervention in the heart of the Anglo-Soviet conflict in Europe and the Middle East (Leffler & Painter, 2005). The Islamic Republic of Iran was the location of the first open conflict between the Soviet Union and the West after World War II, when the United States claimed responsibility for stopping excessive Soviet expansionism in the area. It also marked the legendary Iron Curtain speech by Winston Churchill and the subsequent rejection of the Baruch Plan. Importantly, 1946 saw the publication of what would become the American policymakers' bible for the remainder of the 20th century (Mashat, 2019). The deputy of the American ambassador in Moscow issued an 8,000-word telegraph to the Truman administration in Washington, mandating a rethink of US foreign policy objectives and plans, including nuclear calculations. The containment strategy has started (Mashat, 2019).

Containment was about equidistant between both isolationism and preventative war. In 1947, it became the official policy of the Truman administration. It may thus be said that 1946 not only marked the beginning of the Cold War in Europe, with the theoretical genesis of containment, but also ushered in an era in which the conflicting variants in nuclear strategy were eventually replaced by deterrence. Following this, the US national security policy and grand strategy evolved to emphasise containment as the major method for dealing with the communist bloc, in addition to warfighting. As a paradigm for nuclear strategy, containment envisioned prolonged coexistence as opposed to previously envisaged strategies to aggressively seek victory. It ushered in an age when it was politically and intellectually acceptable to emphasise nuclear deterrence — sometimes above nuclear war-fighting methods — as a means of stopping the Cold War from escalating uncontrollably and recklessly. Since the 1940s, this has become particularly popular amid the many military conflicts between the superpowers and their respective satellites.

MILITARY DETERRENCE IN PRACTICE

As has been suggested, military deterrence has an effect on weapon development and deployment. Ironically, military deterrence (MD) led to the proliferation of additional warfighting methods in the United States and NATO as a result of the proliferation of weapons and strategic thinking. Focusing instead on how to fight and win nuclear conflicts, they frequently deviate dramatically from reliable deterrence doctrines. As will be demon-

strated in the future, the Soviet Union was not particularly concerned with Western conceptions of deterrence and had independently developed nuclear warfare methods based on a distinct logic. Suffice it to say that military institutions in NATO nations depended on war-fighting views because of a natural worry about potential failures of preventative impact, ultimately resulting in circumstances when fighting was unavoidable. The realist principle of survival, the argument that deterrence in practise involved not only the retaliatory threat but credibly threatening to defeat the opponent, and the responsibility of the armed forces to create and practise a nuclear strategy based on weapons capability—often ignoring inputs from civilian theorists—brought MD perilously close to war-fighting strategies (Ball & Toth, 1990). It resulted in an arms race that became the defining characteristic of the Cold War, with its overt dependence on weapons development and readiness to adopt war-fighting techniques at a moment's notice. It also led to inaccurate depictions of numerous deterrence theories. It made it difficult to see that the threat of retaliation was intended to prevent war, because it meant that only a strong and aggressive state could deter: one that is always ready to attack and can defeat the other side convincingly; otherwise, its threat of retaliation could be viewed as a bluff.

Military deterrence as a strategic concept has always been ethnocentric, with Western concepts of logic and reasonableness dominating from the start. As will be seen, it quickly degraded into a weapons development machination, eventually leading to the predominance of war-fighting techniques. These tactics are neither accessible to all nuclear nations nor mutually exclusive. By choosing and combining available tactics, a nation's nuclear-strategic posture is constructed. In their own ways, the superpowers' efforts to acquire and maintain first-strike capabilities mirrored their hatred towards the practise of medicine. The United States and NATO, while being the originators of military deterrence, want the security of attaining a unilateral deterrence and defence position in which they may react devastatingly to an assault while simultaneously limiting escalation to tolerable levels. This necessitated a preemptive strike capability and missile and bomber defence; recall cheap-victory techniques. Not to mention rejecting MAD and adopting NUTS in preparation for fighting, surviving, and even winning nuclear war. Because assaulting was an option, the deterrent effect of retaliatory threats vanished; retaliatory threats were no longer just threats. If a state attacked an opponent after threatening retaliation, the assault would cease to be a deterrent and become an offence.

However, the attractiveness of this was simple. In practise, this nuclear approach resolved its credibility issue and became considerably more ethically acceptable than military deterrence's mass hostage-taking. Defense systems might address portions of the stability issue by nullifying any unauthorised launch of nuclear weapons by an adversary. Therefore, the United States and its nuclear-armed allies were able to benefit from measures such as demonstration attacks and limited nuclear battles. These techniques were uncovered through analysing the strategic thinking patterns of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The study of MD in practise would include analysing its influence on weapons development and war-fighting techniques in the United States, as well as the insignificance of strategic deterrence to the Soviet Union's nuclear war-planning infrastructure. It would also need an examination of its use by smaller nuclear powers (SNPs)—Britain, France, and China—that participated in the Cold War, as well as the status of military deterrence in each of their distinct nuclear partnerships.

US Cold War Nuclear Strategy: Military Deterrence Irrelevant

In the United States, theorists were essential in developing the notion of nuclear deterrence. Despite this, MD had a negative effect on US Cold War strategic practises, which were primarily based on weapons development and the formation of the nuclear triad: long-range bombers, long-range missiles, and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). They were classified as either strategic or tactical. Bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) are examples of strategic weaponry used to target the enemy's country from intercontinental distances. Tactical weapons included bombs for fighter planes, nuclear mines and warheads for cruise missiles and shorter-range ballistic missiles, artillery rounds, and depth charges, and were meant to strike opponents during military operations. The overwhelming number of US nuclear weapons, designed to deny the Soviet Union a first-strike capability, resulted in the "bomber gap" in the 1950s and the "missile gap" with the Soviet Union, as well as suspicions that the US was dangerously careless in missile defense. This was the case despite its very redundant retaliation capabilities, particularly with SSBNs, or nuclear submarines protecting land-based missiles from vulnerability.

From 1950 through 1960, the United States amassed about 18,000 bombs for its baseline nuclear arsenal. In 1967, when the United States possessed the most weapons and used them the most, there were 31,225 weapons aboard bombers, missiles, and SSBNs in Europe and the United States (Mian, 2004). In the 1960s, the United States had stashed 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons in Europe for deployment by NATO troops in the event of conflict with the Soviet Union. The United States controlled technical advancements to nuclear warheads, decreasing their destructiveness while enhancing their precision so that more bombs could be carried on a delivery system with fast reprogrammable target instructions (Mian, 2004). However, the creation of weapons requires a plan for their application. The American nuclear arsenal has had an effect on military preparations for limited nuclear battles. It did not, however, prompt the military establishment to deliberate measures to increase MD's preventative impact. With the expansion of the Soviet Union's strategic forces and the dissemination of its communications infrastructure, the target population for strategic weapons expanded as well.

After acquiring first-strike capability and survivability, American military plans were a long way from MD. Given the resources required to wage a nuclear war, the United States' strategic alternatives were preventative or preemptive assaults, which were judged to be antagonistic to MD. During the 1950s, American generals repeatedly advocated launching a major first assault or responding to an opponent's initial assault (Sokolski, 2004). The most profitable fallback option to counter an enemy assault was to launch on warning or under attack. The United States military desired and prepared for a first-strike capability, which would be followed by more strategic nuclear bombs to disable the enemy's retaliation capabilities. The United States possessed the power to launch a first strike on the Soviet Union. Until the late 1960s, it also had a covert preemptive assault policy against the Soviet Union, relying on its greater quantity of ICBMs and SLBMs. This persisted until the Nuclear Freeze movement's public pressure pushed the Reagan administration to declare that a nuclear war could not be won. If this can be said of US nuclear war-fighting strategies during the Cold War, despite the theoretical contributions of its best minds to deterrence theory—which helped this work isolate the foundational principles of MD—then Soviet weapons development and war-fighting plans were similarly stark, unaided by any theoretical pretence of deterrence.

Perfunctory Military Deterrence: Soviet Nuclear Strategy

Language analysis and historical research on Soviet vulnerability are required to comprehend the evolution of deterrence in Soviet strategic doctrine. Khrushchev used deterrence for the first time in 1959, just before the United States adopted flexible response as its nuclear strategy (Payne, 1996). He criticised it as a Western term and applied it to the Soviet Union's ability to penetrate deeply into the United States. He assumed his Russian background was responsible for this. *Scherzhivaniye* is the Russian word for containment, which corresponds most closely to the English word deterrence; *ustrasheniye* connotes fear, or what foreigners used to terrify the Soviet Union. It was difficult for the Soviet political-strategic elite to accept mutual deterrence. Historiography and geopolitics explain this phenomenon.

While American strategic beliefs stemmed from its separation from Western Europe by the Atlantic Ocean and its neutrality toward European matters, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States possessed a notion of invulnerability and, therefore, global domination. Since the time of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, Russia has experienced great vulnerability and insecurity (Hosking, 1997). It had to take part in European and Asian affairs because of its size. It coped with its geopolitical inferiority via territory expansion, but that changed when the Soviet Union began exporting revolution. Stalin felt that geographical and ideological cohesion would ensure the survival of the Soviet Union after World War II. In October 1944, Stalin completed a secret Balkan sphere-of-action agreement with Winston Churchill, codenamed TOLSTOY, to govern Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, much to Roosevelt's chagrin (Kuromiya & Peposki, 2013). This instance of personal diplomacy among the allies permitted Soviet expansionism but did not reduce their sense of vulnerability. Stalin's geopolitical worries could only be eased by containment, which oddly had to be done by a country strong enough to stand alone.

This impression of weakness spurred expansionist ambitions and influenced Soviet strategic thought. This was coupled with the Soviet belief that a conflict between the communist and capitalist worlds was inevitable, which Stalin enlarged to encompass war. Stalin's strategy for winning this inevitable confrontation changed little from his non-nuclear Permanent Operating Factors, which reduced the need for nuclear weapons after World War II. Imagine how this influenced Soviet techniques of deterrence. Due to its rejection of the deterrent potential of nuclear weapons, devotion to Stalin's Permanent Operating Factors, and belief in the infallibility of the Generalissimo, the Soviet Union entered the nuclear age without a coherent strategic view. This made the Soviet Union react to US nuclear strategic breakthroughs and technical advances, putting deterrence on the back burner until the early 1970s, when the Soviet leadership started talking about arms limitation in the same way that the US did.

Stalin's legacy, economic restrictions, and American improvements in weapons technology all had an impact on the Soviet Union's weapons development and military strategies (Snyder, 1977). First, weapons technology and development. Decades passed as the Soviet Union trailed behind the West in weapon technology and other fields. The economy overcame politics. Nothing was imported, and there were no foreign investments. Unreliable outputs meant fewer inputs for other industries, and the ruble was not convertible. As the Soviet Union mass-produced inferior nuclear and non-nuclear weapons, technological development was hampered by centralised planning. The Soviet leadership saw the technological superiority of American armament as a threat in and of itself,

demonstrating the vulnerability of their nation. A Western analysis from the 1970s said that the technical gap between the West and the Soviet Union had widened during the last 15 to 20 years. Due to its technological backwardness, the Soviet Union required more time to create an arsenal. A less powerful bomber and inaccurate missiles make it difficult to attain triadic capabilities comparable to the United States. It started without delivery systems capable of reaching the United States, so its principal deterrent threat was to NATO countries in Europe and American allies in the Far East. In the 1950s, the number of Soviet intercontinental bombers was insufficient to pose a danger to the United States. To achieve this goal, the Soviet Union mass-produced bombers and deployed over 1,600 ICBMs by the 1960s. The "missile gap" between the U.S. and Russia was considerable. The Soviet Union possesses the most submarine-launched ballistic missiles and ballistic missile submarines (SLBMs). Using Western sonar technology, they could locate Soviet nuclear submarines until the 1980s (Lillbacka, 2010). It had the world's most powerful, largest, and heaviest nuclear weapons. It possessed 45,000 nuclear warheads and 12,000 tactical nuclear weapons by 1986. (Itreski, 2018).

Such exponential expansion is costly. After the Soviet Union made improvements in military technology after the launch of Sputnik, additional resources were allocated to the defence sector. The defence sector grew into its own economy, preventing investment in other areas of Soviet society. As in the United States and Western nations, there were no private innovation spin-offs in the Soviet Union's defence sector, and the state was overburdened with research and development. This made it easier for Reagan to intensify the arms race after the failure of détente to bankrupt the Soviet Union. During détente, the Soviet Union cheated by producing more weapons and spending a significant portion of its gross domestic product on espionage, notably John Walker's spy ring, which gave it access to US SSBN communications systems and other intelligence to reduce the detectability of its own nuclear submarines. Centralized planning devoid of strategic depth increases the weapons race.

Wherefore? If the Soviet Union had used even rudimentary military deterrence, it might have slowed the frenetic pace of weapons development, allowing it to circumvent central planning limits. A modest trio and a few strategically placed weapons would have been sufficient to deter an adversary. This demonstrates how much the United States and the Soviet Union want a nuclear war. It demonstrates how dormant their nuclear-dyadic partnership was. How did the growth of weaponry and technological advancements impact Soviet military strategies? The analysis may be based on Stalinist and post-Stalinist patterns of strategic thought.

Stalin's declaration that war was inevitable indicated that the Soviet Union was not devoted to deterrence but instead prepared for victory. After Stalin's death, Soviet strategic doctrine splintered into two distinct factions, each stressing deterrence differently. Talensky supported Malenkov, the first successor to Stalin. After March 1953, Khrushchev ridiculed Stalin's "permanent operation components" and propensity for sneak attacks. Malenkov claimed that nuclear weapons had revolutionised warfare and that it was the duty of communist societies to avoid their use. Khrushchev and his followers, such as Marshal Zhukov's successor in the Red Army, Marshal Malinovsky, believed that nuclear weapons were not essential in war. Khrushchev immediately adopted Malenkov's ideals when he marginalised him in their power struggle, stating that nuclear weapons necessitated cohabitation with peace (Malinovsky, 1962). The term "deterrence" was not used by Khrushchev until 1959, much to the dismay of Western translators. Ideological divisions

immediately resulted in immediate variation in the interpretation of the strategy's practical components.

Under Stalinist philosophy, Soviet military strategists saw deterrence as a lethal bluff and argued that war and a capitalist-socialist clash were inevitable. Many of them contend that the ability to win wars is a more effective deterrent than reliance on retaliatory threats. Only a 1960 compromise based on the rationality mirror-image of Western deterrence theory got it close to MD. This was demolished by the Soviet perspective on the Cuban missile crisis and its outcome. Inexplicably, it said that the United States had won the Cuban crisis and attributed its own failure to strategic deterrence, which is akin to military deterrence. This encouraged the Soviet Union to build up its nuclear arsenal in order to achieve strategic parity with the US, obtain the capability for a second strike, and maintain the element of surprise in future military battles.This resulted in a massive expansion of missile forces at the sacrifice of quality, and the preservation of surprise necessitated the use of additional preventive war measures. Even while the Soviet Union's development of nuclear power increased the likelihood of MD, it was difficult for the US and the Soviet Union to agree on the severity of the danger, how to communicate, and the stability of the situation. This linked the two countries' plans for fighting a nuclear war to the cost of deterrence.

First, Soviet military theory and pronouncements often used deterrence. The Soviet authorities saw deterrence as a threat to win a war against MD or military retaliation when an adversary engages in prohibited behaviour. During the Cold War, Western countries were unable to distinguish between Soviet war rhetoric and nuclear deterrent acceptance. In light of the massive force buildup from the 1960s to the 1980s, it was uncertain if the West would launch preemptive attacks or see it as a military threat. Geopolitics hindered the US and Soviet Union's understanding of deterrence. The Soviets were unable to understand the MAD motto, "In my weakness lies my security." MAD weakened military deterrence based on predominance. By alluding to the existential deterrence of nuclear weapons, it helped to stabilise deterrence concepts by encouraging war-avoidance strategies. Because each adversary realised that if it attacked, it would likely be annihilated by the other, neither was inclined to initiate hostilities. Military deterrence was maintained via synthetic belief in the enemy's goals. From the standpoint of the Soviet Union's debilitating security complex, vulnerability could never be deemed safe. The Soviet Union rejected the concept of "mutual actor vulnerability" in relation to retaliatory threats. It advocated preemptive nuclear strikes against the West and complicated strategic defence initiatives.

Until the 1970s, the Soviets prioritised surprise strikes. It advocated preventive measures against nuclear warfare. Preemption was tied to the warning that in the event of a limited nuclear war in Europe, Soviet escalation would be unavoidable due to the fact that so many NATO missiles were already aimed towards the Soviet Union, making escalation by enormous arsenals likely. Despite war-fighting or control plan implications, this is a simple MD threat backed by a single piece of evidence. Even during the Cuban crisis, the Soviet Union did not have any nuclear forces on alert due to its inferior bombers and first ICBMS. This lends credence to the Soviet Union's indirect use of MD, as it lacked the necessary strategic requirements for war-fighting preparations until the late 1970s. In the 1970s, sufficient capabilities emerged, belying the superficial application of MD in Soviet nuclear strategy. A decade was required for technology to alter Soviet strategy. By the time of Leonid Brezhnev, MIRV-equipped missiles had been deployed, 25% of Soviet missile

forces were on high alert, and missile defence systems had been installed around Moscow (Green & Long, 2017). Instead of rapidly developing nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union prepared for a possible conventional conflict with the West. Prior to Mikhail Gorbachev's ascension to the position of General Secretary, the Union conducted few defensive exercises and prepared to preempt NATO soldiers with conventional weapons if the alliance were to deploy them.

The concept of Military Defense (MD) in the superpowers evolved dramatically from its fundamental notions, mostly as a consequence of real-world situations or results that differed substantially from what had been theorised since the 1940s. The fragility of its civilization and its ideological belief that it could survive a nuclear disaster while the capitalist world would be annihilated made delivering retaliatory threats to gain preventive influence at best tiresome. fear of being outrun by superior Soviet conventional forces, the Soviet Union's maintenance of the threat perception to promote the credibility of its own overkill capabilities, the obsession with achieving first-strike capability and survivability, and the growing divergence between military strategists and civilian deterrence theorists regarding the role of nuclear weapons all contributed to the demise of MD and the promotion of nuclear deterrence. Without MD, war-fighting concerns dominated nuclear strategy in practise and were ostensibly the driving force in the US and NATO. It focused on the planning, deployment, and scenario development for both American and Soviet military troops. Simultaneously, the SNPs developed several nuclear postures according to their economic and military strength.

The rapid expansion of the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers did not make retaliation inevitable; rather, it was driven by countervalue and counterforce targeting of each other's economic, social, and military areas. Without giving any thought to retaliatory threats, both superpowers continued to plan for preemption, damage mitigation, and control. The retaliatory threat portion of MD did not become a fait accompli until the 1980s due to the rapid building of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals. Instead, it was driven by countervalue and counterforce targeting of economic, social, and military sites. Without giving any thought to retaliatory threats, both superpowers continued to plan for preemption, damage mitigation, and control. Priority was given to MIRV and other missile and bomber capabilities for retaliation. Despite the 1987 INF Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union maintained more than 22,000 nuclear weapons on high alert status. Military deterrence was not as popular in practise as it was in principle. Until the Cuban crisis, the political side of nuclear weapons was minimised in actuality, as it was in saner theoretical portrayals of MD, despite the unresolvable difficulties of its components. Only via arms control in the 1970s and 1980s was the nuclear strategy of MD incorporated into the Cold War's strategic framework. This was not due to the preventative impact of deterrent threats, since nuclear weapons were either believed to offer existential deterrence or seen as any other kind of weapon of war.

CONCLUSION

In this work, the drawbacks of the Cold War-era conceptualization of nuclear deterrence have been identified. Due to the preponderance of military or hard-power variables, the Cold War-era nuclear-deterrence model has been termed "Military Deterrence," whereby the psychological moorings of coercive strategy were found to have been seriously jeopardised by the exclusive reliance upon strategic overkill and the formation of nuclear warfighting strategies as the means of fostering its preventive influence. This work also states

that military deterrence did not stop crises from getting worse during the Cold War. This shows that the strategy that was meant to keep wars from happening during the 20th century was flawed.

Also, although nuclear weapons have indeed intermittently augmented the risks of nuclear war, it was found that whenever states have stood at the brink of annihilation, the political value of such weapons has intervened to promote the incentivization of coercion over control mechanisms. In all cases of nuclear brinkmanship, this has led to the use of strategic reassurance measures and the prioritisation of non-military or diplomatic ways to manage and solve conflicts, without giving up the weapons that have been the objective basis of these dynamic interactions between nuclear-dyadic rivals.

Furthermore, during the cold war, the rapid expansion of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals did not render retaliatory threats obsolete; rather, they were motivated by counterforce targeting of each other's economic, social, and military regions. As a result, despite the 1987 INF Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union retained nuclear weapons on high alert. In practice, military deterrence did not elicit the enthusiastic response that it had in principle. During the Cold War, the nuclear strategy of military defence was only used in the 1970s and 1980s through the language of arms control, not through the preventive effect of deterrent threats.

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