

A New Look at the 21st Century Cross Domain Deterrence Initiative

May 19th and 20th, 2016

The George Washington University
Elliott School of International Affairs - State Room
1957 E St NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20052

Organized by the University of California San Diego “Deterring Complex Threats” project,
funded by the Department of Defense Minerva Initiative

Building upon prior work during the Bush administration, the Office of the Secretary of Defense convened the 21st Century Cross Domain Deterrence Initiative (CDDI) in March/April of 2010. The CDDI brought together a number of exceptional scholars and analysts from outside the government to reflect on how Cold War concepts of deterrence could or should be modified to address the 21st century threat environment. These discussions identified a number of challenges including the difficulty of issuing credible threats given uncertainties about attribution and collateral damage, asymmetric situations in which the U.S. has more to lose than adversaries, ambiguity about the law of war regarding new modes of attack, escalation risks associated with threats to retaliate in a different domain, and foreign decision making in a complex crisis.

This workshop reconvenes the CDDI with several of the original participants and welcomes new members to the conversation. In the intervening half decade the challenges of cyber and space warfare and the interaction between nuclear and conventional capabilities in the context of economic globalization have continued to grow in complexity and to demand policy-maker attention. While China remains a major motivating case for CDD, the recent increase in Russia-NATO tension in Eastern Europe is at once novel and eerily familiar. The first objective of this workshop is to invite participants to reflect on the continued relevance of CDD and the development of their views on these matters since the original CDDI. Have any new concerns emerged that were not adequately appreciated during the first CDDI? Should the concept of CDD be reformulated and, if so, how?

A second objective of the workshop is to share work in progress on CDD, including a project funded by the DoD Minerva Initiative. Erik Gartzke at UC San Diego, Jon Lindsay at the University of Toronto, and Michael Nacht at UC Berkeley, in partnership with scientists and analysts at the Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos National Laboratories and the University of Maryland, lead the “Deterring Complex Threats” research project. This five year project, in the middle of its third year, employs a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to explain (1) how increasing diversity in the portfolio of means used for deterrence affects the likelihood of conflict and (2) how the choice of means used for deterrence affects the quality of deterrence achieved. In short, what are the implications of mounting complexity for deterrence in theory and practice?

All sessions will be held at the George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs, in the State Room on the 7th floor. Discussions will be held under the Chatham House Rule but will be recorded to facilitate workshop minutes. Questions provided below are suggestions to get the conversation started, but moderators have discretion to guide the panel in new directions.

Thursday, May 19th

8:30-9:00 Coffee and light breakfast

9:00-9:15 Welcome

- Michael Nacht and Jon Lindsay

9:15-10:45 The Evolution and Future of Deterrence Theory

- Moderator: Michael Nacht
- Participants: Richard Betts, Morton Halperin, Robert Jervis, George Quester
- Questions: How has the complex 21st century security environment changed your thinking about the core elements of deterrence, if at all? Are the deterrence problems that appeared most challenging during the early Obama administration (i.e., the 2010 CDDI workshop) of greater or lesser importance today? Is “cross domain deterrence” a useful way to characterize 21st century deterrence? What is the most promising frontier for research on deterrence theory?

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:30 The Utility of Deterrence in Practice

- Moderator: Jon Lindsay
- Participants: Francis Gavin, Charles Glaser, Avery Goldstein, Barry Posen
- Questions: Is there a gap between deterrence theory and practice? If so, has theory missed important features of the policy process or threat landscape, or do policymakers not appreciate the nuances of theory? Have we learned the right lessons about how states used deterrence in the past, and what are the implications of these lessons for deterrence policy in the future? What are the boundaries or scope conditions for the use of deterrence to address the range of threats confronting policymakers today with the diversity of coercive instruments they have available?

12:30-13:30 Lunch (catered at conference site)

13:30-15:00 Update on Minerva Cross-Domain Deterrence Research

- Moderator: Erin Fitzgerald
- Participants: Erik Gartzke, Rex Douglass, Pat Schuster, Eva Uribe
- Question: What are some findings from recent research in cross domain deterrence?

15:00-15:15 Coffee Break

15:15-17:00 The Resurgence of Great Power Politics

- Moderator: Erik Gartzke
- Participants: Eric Heginbotham, David Helvey, Olga Oliker, Jason Reinhardt

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- Questions: How do Chinese and Russian leaders think about deterrence in the 21st century? Is cross domain deterrence (by whatever name) relevant to their policy formulations and, if so, how? How do they use or seek to develop asymmetric means to counter the comparative advantages of the United States, and to what asymmetric means are they vulnerable? How should we expect them to manage tradeoffs and linkages across different means of influence and policy objectives in a crisis? What are the implications for U.S. deterrence policy?

17:30-21:30 Evening session, by invitation only

- Location: Courtyard Washington, DC/Foggy Bottom, Lincoln Room
- Address: 515 20th Street NW Washington, DC 20006 (400 ft. from the Eliot School)

Friday, May 20th

8:30-9:00 Coffee and light breakfast

9:00-10:45 The Impact of Cyberspace, Space, and Biological Technologies

- Moderator: Jon Lindsay
- Participants: Benjamin Bahney, Daniel Gerstein, James Lewis, Martin Libicki
- Questions: Do advances in information, space, or bio technologies, including the military and commercial applications of those technologies, alter our conceptions of deterrence? If so, is the change due to new technologies (that pose unprecedented problems) or new concepts (that may apply to familiar problems in unappreciated ways)? How can threats posed by these technologies be deterred (either by the same means or others), and how can these technologies be used to deter threats (either by the same means or others)? How does deterrence compare to defense, institutional coordination, or some other strategy as a policy to mitigate these threats?

10:45-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 Cross Domain Deterrence and Nuclear Weapons

- Moderator: Paul Nielan
- Participants: Joseph Pilat, Robert Vince, James Walsh, Nick Wright
- Questions: Is the proliferation of multiple threat technologies to regional actors changing traditional deterrence considerations? How might regional actors use cross domain deterrence either in lieu of or in combination with nuclear threats? What is the strategic role of latency in cross domain deterrence? How should U.S. deterrence policy adapt to deal with the stability-instability paradox that appears to be operating in many regions?

12:30-13:00 Open Discussion: Implications for Deterrence Research

- Moderators: Erik Gartzke, Jon Lindsay, Michael Nacht