Moving Towards Empathy: 
A Study of Three Sino-American Deterrence Episodes in the 20th Century

William Woei-Lim Choong
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I hereby certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously published, and that it is my own except where sources have been acknowledged. This work has not been previously been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

William Woei-Lim CHOONG

January 2009
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ABSTRACT

Deterrence theory has been held up by some scholars as one of the most important and profound intellectual innovations of 20th century international relations. Previously, the concept of rationality has been deemed necessary for deterrence success. Keith Payne and Colin Gray have argued that rationality is not the sole determinant of deterrence success. According to them, reasonableness is another necessary determinant of deterrence success. A potential deterrer deems his deterree to be ‘reasonable’ or deterrable when the former ‘understands that decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some shared or understood set of values and standards.’ As Payne has argued, knowing how a potential opponent behaves and determining whether he is reasonable is a ‘fundamental dynamic’ behind policy. It is critical because if expectations of an opponent’s behaviour are dramatically wrong, the policies based on such expectations are likely to be wrong as well.

Deterrence theory thus far has largely focused on finding out why deterrence fails in order to hypothesize how it can succeed. This thesis aims to study another outcome in addition to deterrence failure and success: when a deterrence strategy is abandoned or supplemented with other policy tools such as reassurance. It seeks to refine Payne and Gray’s conceptualisation of ‘reasonableness’ into three different types of reasonableness: ‘recognised reasonableness,’ ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ Each of these three types leads to different deterrence outcomes – deterrence success, deterrence abandonment or supplementation with other policy tools and deterrence failure. To illustrate this, this thesis focuses on examining and explaining three deterrence outcomes in the Sino-American relationship in 20th century. This is because the bilateral relationship provides different types of reasonableness and their resultant deterrence outcomes across time – ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ and deterrence failure (the 1950 Korean War), ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and deterrence abandonment or supplementation with other policy tools (the Vietnam War, 1965-1968), as well as ‘recognised reasonableness’ and deterrence success (the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis). By explaining a wider range of outcomes, this thesis draws lessons for deterrence theory pertaining to the applicability of deterrence strategies.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Deterrence theory has been held up by some scholars as one of the most important and profound intellectual innovations of 20th century international relations. As Achen and Snidal argue, 'rational deterrence is a highly influential social science theory ... [that] has dominated postwar academic thinking on strategic affairs ... [and] provided the intellectual framework of Western military policy.' Deterrence theory thus far, however, has largely focused on two inter-related outcomes: finding out why deterrence fails in order to hypothesize how it can succeed. This thesis aims to study another outcome in addition to deterrence failure and success: when a deterrence strategy is abandoned or supplemented with other policy tools such as reassurance. It will focus on examining and explaining three deterrence outcomes in the Sino-American relationship in the 20th century because it provides differing deterrence outcomes across time – deterrence failure (the 1950 Korean War), when deterrence is abandoned or supplemented with other policy tools (the Vietnam War, 1965-1968) and deterrence success (the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis). By explaining a wider range of outcomes, this thesis draws lessons for deterrence theory pertaining to the applicability of deterrence strategies.

This study is important in the so-called 'second nuclear age' that emerged in the early 1990s. It could be argued that deterrence between the superpowers in the first nuclear age was relatively stable – at the very least, deterrence did not fail. In the second nuclear age, the United States has to cope with a security environment involving lesser powers possessing nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. As James Woosley, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has noted: 'We have slain a large dragon. But we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of.' In its 2002 National Security Strategy published a year after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, U.S. President George W. Bush was more circumspect in the application of Cold War-era deterrence strategies:

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‘... deterrence based on the threat of retaliation is less likely to work against leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their people, and the wealth of their nations ... Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents.’

The changed security landscape in the early 21st century has placed a heavier burden on increasing the probability of deterrence success against such powers. With the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to so-called rogue states and the challenges posed by terrorist groups, it is imperative for the U.S. and other potential deterrers to examine critically the optimum conditions for the applicability of deterrence strategies.

The following chapters will examine these conditions in three broad directions. First, this thesis will employ the concept of rationality and in particular, the limited version of rationality as espoused by Simon and other scholars. It will argue that ‘bounded rationality’ best represents the Sino-American relationship in various deterrence encounters. Secondly, this thesis will refine Keith B. Payne’s conceptualization of ‘reasonableness.’ According to Payne, a potential deterrer deems his deterree to be ‘reasonable’ or deterrable when the former ‘understands that decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some shared or understood set of values and standards.’ An ‘unreasonable’ actor is by extension a potential deterree whose values and standards are not shared by his deterrer. Payne adds that most actors are also rational – at least in the limited sense. This thesis will refine Payne’s concept by proposing three types of ‘reasonableness’: unrecognised unreasonableness (a similar concept to Payne’s rational-but-unreasonable actor), where a deterrer fails to recognise that his deterree is not reasonable; recognised unreasonableness, where a deterrer recognises that his deterree is not reasonable, and recognized reasonableness, where the deterrer recognizes his deterree as reasonable. Thirdly, each type of reasonableness entails at least one of the following three components: a deterrer’s ‘knowledge’ or assessment of his opponent’s goals, an ‘appreciation’ or a critical evaluation of such

6 Simon argued that human actors in complex environment had to ‘cope’ rationally after hitting the limits of their cognitive and information-processing capabilities Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior: A Study Of Decision-Making Processes In Administrative Organization (2nd ed.), New York: Macmillan, 1957, pp 78-82. This will be discussed in Chapter 3
7 Keith B. Payne, ‘The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction,’ Comparative Strategy 22(5), 2003, p 412
knowledge, and ‘empathy.’ Empathy is defined as the deterrer’s ability to take the perspective of his deterree, convey such understanding to the deterree and the ability to coordinate expectations between the two parties. This enables the deterrer to design a deterrence strategy that is largely successful.

1.1 Scope of Argument

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘to deter’ is ‘to discourage and turn aside or restrain by fear; to frighten from anything; to restrain or keep back from acting or proceeding by any consideration of danger or trouble.’ According to some scholars, deterrence and coercion in general involves ‘the use of threats to induce an opponent to act in desirable ways.’ Freedman defines ‘strategic deterrence’ as a ‘strategic option’ available to A, which takes the form of an explicit disciplinary action against B, if B acts in a specified manner against A’s wishes. The success of various deterrence strategies has been causally linked to the presence of rationality in potential deterrees. By logical extension, a rational actor presented with a particular deterrence threat by his deterrer should assess that the costs of a given act exceeded the benefits, and as a result be deterred. To achieve successful deterrence, the so-called ‘three C’s’ are required: a capability to punish an aggressor with a retaliatory strike of sufficient destructiveness; making a credible commitment for such punishment; and the effective communication of such a threat.

While deterrence threats typically consist of the so-called ‘three C’s’, this thesis does not focus on these factors specifically. Instead, it is interested in examining how different ‘types’ of reasonableness lead to different choices regarding the use of deterrence strategies, and consequently, different types of deterrence outcomes. It will argue that across time in the Sino-American relationship, the ‘quality’ of decisions improved, enabling potential deterrers to avoid deterrence failure and to ultimately facilitate deterrence success.

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9 Cited in George W. Downs, ‘The Rational Deterrence Debate,’ *World Politics* 41(2), 1989, p 226. The definition is actually a more general definition pertaining to coercion and not deterrence per se.


12 Krause, ‘Rationality and Deterrence in Theory and Practice,’ pp 124-125
The concept of deterrence success is a controversial one. When deterrence succeeds, all that is known is that it has not failed. As Freedman states, deterrence may have 'succeeded' because B had never intended to do the proscribed action X in the first place, and was only suggesting so for bargaining purposes. If B had the intention to commit X and constrained itself, this could have been due to an entire milieu of factors, both internal and external.\(^\text{13}\) To determine deterrence success in this thesis, three broad instruments will be used. Firstly, deterrence success connotes a situation in which at the very least, a particular deterrence threat did not fail. Lebow and Stein treat a particular deterrence encounter as a success when a challenger has considered an attack or a proscribed action, but decides against proceeding because the defender persuaded the challenger that there would be serious and unacceptable consequences. When reliable evidence of a challenger's calculations is lacking, however, no decision can be made about the coding of a particular deterrence encounter.\(^\text{14}\) Secondly, in our third case study of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, which is categorised as an instance of deterrence success, the assessment of success is based on earlier studies made by other scholars. Thirdly, the concept of empathy will be used to explain how a deterrer fashioned a workable deterrence strategy based on his ability to take the perspective of his deterree and convey such understanding, and thus to design a deterrence strategy which is successful.

This thesis focuses largely on situations of immediate deterrence as compared to general deterrence, simply because the Sino-American relationship under examination presented instances of immediate deterrence across time.\(^\text{15}\) In general deterrence, an actor maintains a broad military capability and issues broad threats of a punitive response to an attack to keep anyone from seriously thinking about attacking. In immediate deterrence, the actor also has a military capability but issues threats to a specific opponent when the opponent is already contemplating and preparing an

\(^{13}\) Freedman, *Deterrence*, p 29

\(^{14}\) Lebow and Stein treat a particular deterrence encounter as a success when a challenger has considered an attack or a proscribed action, but decides against proceeding because the defender persuaded the challenger that there would be serious and unacceptable consequences. When reliable evidence of a challenger's calculations is lacking, however, no decision can be made about the coding of a particular deterrence encounter. See Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, 'Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable,' *World Politics* 42(3), April 1990, pp 344-345

\(^{15}\) Moreover, no longitudinal study on deterrence has focused on the impact of 'reasonableness' on the Sino-U.S. relationship.
attack.\textsuperscript{16} However, one instance of general deterrence is explored in the first case study on the 1950 Korean War.

This thesis largely focuses on non-nuclear deterrence, which is harder to accomplish than instances of nuclear deterrence, where the threat of punishment is overwhelming. Nuclear deterrence did figure in the various Sino-American confrontations to be studied, but it was not central to the bilateral relationship. The United States’ attempt to deter China in the 1950 Korean War was a general deterrence attempt with an implicit threat of retaliation using nuclear and air power.\textsuperscript{17} During the Vietnam War in the 1960s, China was already a nuclear power, but deterrence threats based on the threat of retaliation did not emerge. Similarly, while China brandished the threat of a nuclear first-strike at the U.S. during the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, this threat was coupled with other threats in an overall strategy of coercive diplomacy.

This thesis notes that the distinction between deterrence and compellence is often not clear. On the surface, the two policies appear to be distinct. Deterrence refers to a certain party A seeking to prevent B from committing a certain action X with the threat of unacceptable damage. On the other hand, compellence is defined as ‘an attempt by policy makers in state A to force, by threat and/or application of sanctions, the policy of state B to comply with the demands of state A, including but not limited to retracting actions already taken.’\textsuperscript{18} Schelling notes that when a state seeks to end the continuance of another state’s policy, there are elements of both deterrence and compellence (or coercion).\textsuperscript{19} Historical cases, argue Huth and Russett, can include both types of policies. They cite the confrontation between Egypt and Turkey in early 1906, when Turkish forces moved into positions along disputed territory in the Sinai along

\textsuperscript{16} Morgan, \textit{Deterrence Now}, p 9
\textsuperscript{17} The U.S. brandished nuclear threats to compel the Chinese towards to sign an armistic towards the end of the Korean War. The first case study on the Korean War in this thesis examines the deterrence relationship in the run-up to the war, not the period during and close to the end of the war
\textsuperscript{18} Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, ‘Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference,’ \textit{World Politics} 42(4), July 1990, pp 475-476
the Egyptian border. In that encounter, Great Britain used both policies of deterrence and compellence to support Egypt’s territorial claims.\(^2\)

This thesis notes the dangers associated with deterrence, with coercion more generally, and with the core assumption of a rational unitary actor whose incentives reflect the national interest. With regard to such a levels of analysis problem, this thesis concurs with George and Smoke, who argue that the rational unitary actor simplification ‘does great violence to reality,’ since nearly every decision taken by a modern state is the product of tugs-of-war among institutions within its society or bureaucracy, and of the self-interested manoeuvrings of many top decision-makers.\(^2\) They add that it is vital to keep in mind that one must deter not an opponent ‘nation’ or ‘player’ but ‘at least a majority of the relevant individuals, groups and/or institutions in decision-making circles within that nation.’\(^2\) It could be argued that at times, individual leaders of countries – particularly of totalitarian ones – can by themselves represent the ‘majority’ of decision-making circles within those countries.\(^2\) But this thesis assumes that most times, deterrence is aimed at a majority of individuals, groups and other parties involved in key decision-making processes of that state.

1.2 Deterrence, Rationality and Reasonableness

This thesis is about the concepts of deterrence, rationality and reasonableness. Rationality and deterrence success were linked causally in the stable deterrence relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the first nuclear age of the Cold War. This relationship, which was based on the prevalence of nuclear weapons,
was largely stable because the implications associated with deterrence failure were tremendously profound. The very picture of cataclysmic and apocalyptic destruction facilitated such a situation. According to Waltz, only idiots would have failed to comprehend the ‘destructive force’ of nuclear weapons – as such, deterrence held. Some scholars, however, have argued that this is not absolutely so. Jervis, for example, has argued that rationality is neither necessary nor sufficient for deterrence. Some observers have defined irrationality as the qualities of emotional impulsiveness or of taking actions that are terribly risky. Jervis argues, however, that irrationality could lead to a state of acquiescence, while a more rational grasp of the situation could lead to belligerence. He writes:

Although the claim that irrationality undermines deterrence is not valid for the basic arguments about the utility of a second-strike capability, it has greater force against the more detailed and sophisticated bargaining tactics which, according to the theory, should be common and effective. Once we deal not with a gross threat that could be triggered only by the most extreme and obvious of provocations, but with much more subtle actions that are susceptible to multiple interpretations, then the ‘noise’ in the international communications system, the inadequacies in the other’s machinery for processing information, and cognitive limits on rationality may be sufficient to defeat the policies. Morgan concurs with Jervis. He argues that one of the central problems in deterrence theory has been the assumption of rationality. While deterrence theory was built on such an assumption, analysts have also tried to respect the utility of irrationality and the complications posed by the limits on rationality. Morgan writes:

The theory does not say deterrence works only when the actors are rational. It tell us, in an initial way, how deterrence works when they are rational. It only implies that deterrence will not work, or will not work as well, when they are not rational, so we cannot conclude that a deterrence failure must be due to irrationality. In fact, theorists treat irrational behaviour as sometimes useful for deterrence.

In essence, their arguments break the causal link between rationality and deterrence success. A rational aggressor might or might not defeat a certain deterrence

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26 Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ p 301
27 Morgan, Deterrence Now, p 69
posture; likewise an actor with ‘limited’ rationality might – and also might not – precipitate deterrence failure.

These arguments are useful. While rationality is not always causally linked to deterrence success, its presence still facilitates the proper functioning of deterrence policies. During the first Gulf War, the U.S. suffered a deterrence failure. Despite American warnings not to do so, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein rained missiles down on Israeli and Saudi cities, directed a global terrorism effort (which mostly failed) and set oil wells ablaze in the last days of the war. This leads us to a pertinent question: was Saddam Hussein rational? A rational actor is defined as one who, when confronted with a problem that requires a solution, gathers information, ranks his alternatives and makes a choice that maximises his returns. In the event of the deterrence failures precipitated by Saddam, there can only be two possibilities:

(a) Saddam was rational, but his conception of his cost/gain calculus was different from that of the U.S. (i.e. while the U.S. assumed that the cost/gain calculi presented to him was negative, something or some value had tilted Saddam’s assessment of his calculus into positive territory);

(b) Saddam was irrational (he had miscalculated his cost/gain calculi, or failed to perceived the calculus properly due to cognitive limitations)

The second option is possible, but irrationality is rare – for example, irrational leaders are unlikely to stay in political office for long. This tends to suggest that Saddam was rational but driven by values not understood by the United States. In essence, another variable besides sheer rationality (or lack thereof) could have been responsible for deterrence failure. Keith Payne and Colin Gray propose ‘unreasonableness’ – that challengers to deterrence have values and standards not ‘shared or understood’ by their deterriers. Such parties are rational – at least in a limited

29 Alex Roberto Hybel, Power Over Rationality, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, pp 17-18
sense\(^\text{31}\) – but they behave strategically in ways that are unreasonable. Rational decision-making can underlie behaviour that is judged to be ‘unreasonable,’ shocking, and even criminal by an observer because that behaviour is so far removed from any shared norms and standards.\(^\text{32}\) According to Payne and Gray, the Arab attack on Israel in October 1973 came across as a surprise to Tel Aviv and Washington because the Arabs were rationally plotting a war to ‘restore self-respect’ – a value not understood or shared by the Israelis and Americans.\(^\text{33}\)

Payne and Gray’s thesis of ‘reasonableness’ is solidly positioned within the so-called third wave of deterrence theory, which underscores how easily ‘things could go wrong’ in the application of deterrence.\(^\text{34}\) Their proposed ‘deterrence reformation,’ however, does not call for the abandonment of deterrence, but rather its creative and innovative application amid the growing threats posed by rogue states and terrorist groups. Gray argues that the reformation seeks to enable deterrence theory to be ‘all that it can be … (the reformation) seeks to increase the prospects for policy success with deterrence, while also scaling back expectations of such success.’\(^\text{35}\)

This study aligns itself with the deterrence reformation proposed by Payne and Gray. It will examine and explain why different types of reasonableness in the Sino-American relationship led to different decisions regarding the use of deterrence as well as deterrence outcomes. Consequently, it will draw lessons for deterrence theory. During the Korean War, ‘unrecognised unreasonable’ was the main cause of the American failure to deter Chinese intervention. The Americans implemented a deterrence strategy but did not realise that the Chinese were unreasonable i.e. undeterrable. During the Vietnam War, both China and the U.S. recognised that the other was unreasonable (i.e. a state of ‘recognised unreasonable’). Both adopted

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\(^{31}\) In Chapter 3 we will define such a ‘limited’ version of rationality as bounded rationality – a blend of perfect, substantive rationality and procedural or rules-based rationality


\(^{34}\) Jervis coined the so-called three waves of deterrence theory. See Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ pp 305-310

\(^{35}\) Gray, ‘The Reformation of Deterrence,’ p 429
novel approaches to the application of deterrence and largely avoided deterrence failure. During the Taiwan Strait crisis, both China and the U.S. recognised that the other was ‘reasonable’ i.e. deterrable. Hence, the quality of decisions regarding the use of deterrence strategies improved over time in this relationship, enabling the deterrer to avoid deterrence failure and ultimately, to achieve deterrence success. This was due to a process of learning and adaptation that involved the formation of various shared norms and lessons learnt across time.

1.3 Outline of the Argument and Methodology

Part A, the first half of this thesis, provides the theoretical backbone for the project. The chapter examines the perceptions held by the United States with regard to its enemies in the late 20th century, in particular the so-called ‘rogue states’ such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea. It will focus on American perceptions, since deterrence theory is largely American-centric. In addition, recent scholarship on ‘rationality’ and ‘reasonableness’ as proposed by Keith Payne and Colin Gray have focused on American perceptions. It will also be argued that such perceptions of potential adversaries are important, as they support the convenient assumption that they are less likely to be deterred, or that they are even undeterrable.

Chapter 3 seeks to examine and extend on Payne and Gray’s concept of rational-but-unreasonable actors. It will develop a 2x2 matrix of deterrence outcomes based on the interaction of two variables – ‘rationality’ and ‘reasonableness.’ It will also be argued that the occurrence of irrationality, though possible, is rare in the international system. The chapter draws heavily on the literature on deterrence theory, rationality and Payne and Gray’s conceptualisation of ‘reasonableness.’

Chapter 4 seeks to develop the three different types of ‘reasonableness’ – ‘unrecognised unreasonable,’ ‘recognised unreasonable’ and ‘recognised reasonableness’ and their resultant impacts. These impacts refer to the decisions regarding the use of deterrence strategies and their associated deterrence outcomes. The chapter employs the literature on strategic surprise, intelligence and deterrence theory to draw parallels between surprise and deterrence failure. To flesh out an opponent’s so-called ‘conceptual framework’ – his goals, interests and values – literature in the international relations field will be tapped. To develop the concepts of knowledge,
appreciation and empathy, literature from fields such as literary appreciation, philosophy, psychology and medical science will be used.

Part B constitutes the second half of this study. It consists of three qualitative case studies that examine the Sino-American deterrence relationship across time. The three cases were selected to produce contrasting results i.e. different decisions regarding the use of deterrence strategies and their associated outcomes. Such a selection of cases facilitates theoretical replication. In this context, the contrasting results are: (a) deterrence strategy employed and subsequent failure; (b) deterrence strategy abandonment or supplementation with other policy tools (resulting in deterrence not challenged or succeeds, respectively); (c) deterrence strategy employed and subsequent success.

By using an iterative approach – using successive cases across time, and examining the different decisions with regard to the use of deterrence strategies and their associated outcomes – this study serves to enhance theoretical understanding of the application of deterrence strategies. This is achieved by the employment of the so-called ‘feedback loop.’ According to Yin, a feedback loops represents a situation in which an ‘important discovery occurs during the conduct of one of the individual cases’ that leads to a reconsideration of one or more of the study’s theoretical propositions. In this thesis, for example, the development of the term ‘appreciation’ occurred in the conduct of the case study on the Vietnam War, which examined why the U.S. refrained from employing a deterrence strategy against China. This led to a feedback loop, whereby the theoretical framework was refined to include the term.

A discussion of the specific case study method used in this thesis is useful at this point. This thesis’ approach mirrors the ‘structured, focused comparison method used extensively by Alexander George. This method is ‘structured’ because the

36 Theoretical replication involves the prediction of contrasting results, but for predictable reasons. Case studies are chosen carefully to achieve such replication. This discussion about the second half of the study draws heavily from Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd ed), London: Sage Publications, 2003
37 Yin, *Case Study Research*, pp 47-53
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researcher tables general questions that reflect the research objectives. These questions are asked of each case under study, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is ‘focused’ because it deals with only certain aspects of the historical cases being examined. The method was devised to study historical experience in ways that would yield useful generic knowledge of important foreign policy problems. In particular, George states that the challenge was to analyse phenomena such as deterrence in ways that explanations of each case could be built into a broader, more complex theory.\(^{39}\) The aim is to ‘discourage decision-makers from relying on a single historical analogy in dealing with a new case.’\(^{40}\)

The classic example of the structured, focused comparison method is best illustrated by George’s co-authored work with Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*. Like the statistical-correlational (i.e. ‘large-n’) method, the structured, focused comparison method examines multiple cases and establishes its results by making comparisons among them. Like the statistical-correlational approach, it also asks a limited number of questions or tests a limited number of hypotheses, all of which are closely related to one another. But the structured, focused comparison method also resembles the intensive case study approach in that it examines each case in depth. As George and Smoke note:

> By specifying the differing circumstances or causes that led to different results in the various cases, the investigator can illuminate in an explicit orderly fashion the complexity of deterrence phenomena and the variation in outcomes. Comparison of cases can thus lead to what might be termed ‘contingent generalizations’ – ‘if circumstances A then outcome O’ – which can be an important part of theory and have important implications for practice.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{39}\) George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, pp 67

\(^{40}\) George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, pp 67

\(^{41}\) George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, pp 98
Part B of this thesis adopts this case study approach. It asks whether the three earlier processes discussed – knowledge, appreciation and empathy – were present in a certain case study. It is argued that different combinations of such variables lead to different types of reasonableness. In turn, these different types of reasonableness (as intervening variables) lead to different deterrence outcomes: deterrence failure, deterrence not attempted or deterrence failure. Replicating George’s approach, this thesis in essence seeks to specify the different circumstances or causes that led to different deterrence outcomes in different cases. As George has noted about his own approach, this thesis’ examination of these three cases in Sino-American relations does not in any sense constitute a representative sample of all instances in which deterrence, or in general coercion, was applied in the Sino-American relationship across time. But like George’s work, the thesis does offer a basis for understanding the conditions that led to various deterrence outcomes, the obstacles encountered, and the uses and limitations of deterrence strategy applied.\[42\]

Chapter 5 is the first case study of this project. The 1950 Korean War has been selected as the first case study because it represents the strongest case for deterrence failure in the Sino-American relationship. There were other deterrence episodes in the 1950s (the two Taiwan Strait crises of 1954 and 1958 and the Indochina crisis of 1954). These episodes, however, represented a mix of deterrence failure and success. Chapter 5 examines how the American deterrence attempt during the Korean War was an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ – the Americans failed to recognize that Chinese goals during the war were ‘unreasonable.’ The Americans’ knowledge suggested that the Chinese would not intervene, but Washington’s failure to appreciate this knowledge led to deterrence failure. It will be argued that the China’s concurrent attempt to deter the Americans from crossing the 38th Parallel was a ‘poor fit’ to our model of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggested that the U.S. planned to attack China from three fronts – Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam. However, they failed to appreciate this knowledge. Despite the lack of appreciation, however, the Chinese correctly concluded that Washington could not be deterred (i.e. in this case, that the U.S. was unreasonable).

\[42\] George, *Forceful Persuasion*, p 16
Chapter 6 is the second case study of this project. The Vietnam War represents the clearest example of how the U.S. and China finessed their deterrence strategies based on a stronger appreciation of their knowledge about their opponent’s goals. It will be argued that the Sino-American confrontation in Vietnam represented an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ Between 1964 and 1968, Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggested that the U.S. would escalate its military operations in Vietnam, a move that could threaten North Vietnam and possibly China itself. However, Chinese leaders appreciated this knowledge. Beijing was not certain about the pace and extent of American escalation. As a result, the Chinese chose a strategy of deterrence coupled with reassurance. The United States’ knowledge suggested that Beijing might intervene in Vietnam. But U.S. leaders also appreciated such knowledge. While American leaders knew that the Chinese could intervene in Vietnam, they were not certain exactly how, when and where the Chinese might decide to do so. Subsequently, the Americans replaced deterrence with reassurance.

Chapter 7 represents the final case study of this project. The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis was selected because it best illustrates how coercive strategies were successful in the Sino-American relationship due to the processes of appreciation and empathy. The Taiwan Strait crisis is also the only case in the Sino-American relationship where both countries enjoyed unqualified deterrence successes (the Indochina crisis of 1954 constituted a case of a qualified deterrence success for both countries). It will be argued that both China and the U.S. possessed two components necessary for successful deterrence during the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis – ‘appreciation’ and ‘empathy.’ American leaders’ knowledge suggested that China did not plan any overt use of military force such as a direct invasion of Taiwan. However, Washington was not certain that the Chinese would use force against Taiwan; it had appreciated such knowledge. As a result, it decided to conduct deterrence diplomacy to prevent China from escalating its military activities against Taiwan. In addition, empathy on the part of the Americans enabled them to take the perspective of the Chinese and fashion a deterrence strategy that was largely successful. The same two components – appreciation and empathy – applied to the Chinese use of coercion during the crisis. Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggested that the U.S. upheld the essence of a series of bilateral communiqués on Taiwan signed in the 1970s. However, the Chinese appreciated their knowledge, such that they were not fully certain that the
Americans would actually hold to this approach. As a result, Beijing decided to implement coercive diplomacy to prevent the Americans from moving too far away from the spirit of the 1970s communiqués based on the principles of ‘One China’ and Taiwan’s peaceful reunification with the mainland. Empathy on the part of the Chinese helped them to design a coercive strategy that was successful.

All three case studies in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 draw largely upon secondary material. The use of secondary literature in Chapter 5 is supplemented by the use of the U.S. State Department’s *Foreign Relations of the United States*, as well as President Harry Truman’s memoirs. Chapter 6 also depends heavily on the secondary literature. But it also uses occasionally the *Pentagon Papers* as well as William Conrad Gibbon’s *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, as well the memoirs of several key American policymakers involved in decision-making during the Vietnam War. Chapter 7 also draws largely on the secondary literature. Again, this is supplemented by primary material on the various Sino-American communiqués of the 1970s. A 2007 Congressional Research Service paper, which detailed the various Chinese and American statements on the ‘One China’ policy since the 1970s, also proved to be useful.

The heavy dependence on secondary material, however, does not compromise the effectiveness of the research design. The design seeks to draw lessons for deterrence theory resulting from different deterrence outcomes across time, rather than merely seeking to provide fresh insights about each deterrence encounter by tapping into previously unreleased primary material. The same could be said about George and Smoke’s pivotal *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, which relied largely on secondary sources but was able to draw lessons and inferences from the use of deterrence strategies across different cases.
CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF THE PERIOD

PART A: THEORY

The chapter begins by introducing the concept of theory and providing an overview of the different theories that have emerged to explain international relations. It then goes on to discuss the evolution of these theories, highlighting the key developments and debates that have shaped their development. The chapter concludes by presenting a comprehensive overview of the current state of international relations theory, including the main theories and their respective strengths and weaknesses.
Chapter 2: Perceptions of Irrationality: A Historical Perspective

The concept of rationality is central to the theory and practice of deterrence. Deterrence theory was designed to proscribe certain actions; since a war resulting from deterrence failure in the nuclear age was seen to be dreadful, deterrence had to be practised effectively, or for purposes of the theory, rationally. Conversely, a shortage of rationality meant that the success of deterrence strategies could be put at risk. This chapter examines the perceptions held by the United States with regard to its enemies in the late 20th century, in particular the so-called ‘rogue states’ such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea. A focus on American perceptions is not unwarranted, given that deterrence theory is largely American-centric. Moreover, recent scholarship on ‘rationality’ and so-called ‘reasonableness’ as proposed by Keith Payne and Colin Gray have focused on American perceptions. Such perceptions have typically been driven along two directions. First, these states were typically perceived through the lens of the politics of ‘the other’ – they were perceived to be ‘bad’ and evil in that they flouted conventional norms. Second, they were perceived to be ‘irrational’ in that they were unable to make choices that maximised their returns from a milieu of different options. With regard to the implementation of deterrence strategies, such perceptions of potential adversaries are important, as they support the convenient assumption that they are less likely to be deterred, or that they are even undeterrable.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section explores how ‘rogue states’ through history (defined here generally as states seen to flout widely-accepted norms) were perceived to be ‘unreasonable’ as well as ‘irrational.’ The second section will argue that perceptions of ‘unreasonableness’ and ‘irrationality’ among late 20th century ‘rogues’ has a historical precedent. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was also perceived to be ‘irrational’ and ‘bad.’ Such perceptions, however, were of a different order. While American policymakers at times perceived the Soviet Union to be irrational, the general consensus in Washington was that Moscow was largely rational, and as a result their deterrence relationship could be kept largely stable. And while perceptions of rogue ‘irrationality’ and ‘badness’ led to a reorientation of

43 Morgan, Deterrence Now, p 11
Washington’s policy on ballistic missile defences and some circumspection concerning the effectiveness of deterrence strategies, occasional perceptions of the Soviet Union being ‘bad’ and ‘irrational’ did not lead to wide-sweeping changes in American strategic doctrine concerning deterrence. The conclusion will suggest that China – in terms of perceptions of ‘badness’ and ‘irrationality’ – was a hybrid between the Soviet Union and the modern rogues. During the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. perceived Beijing to be somewhat ‘irrational,’ as per the late 20th century rogues. Later into the Cold War, Beijing was also perceived to be largely ‘rational,’ as per the Soviet Union. It will also be argued that for deterrence to work, a modicum of rationality might be useful. This, however, is qualified with the argument that rationality per se does not determine deterrence success.

2.1 Conflation of ‘Unreasonableness’ and ‘Reason’

In the Middle English used between the 12th and the 15th centuries, the word ‘rational’ was equated to ‘reason.’ The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘rationality’ as ‘having the faculty of reasoning; endowed with reason,’[^45] with the earliest mention of the word ‘racionel’ used in the year 1398 A.D. Similarly, the word ‘reason,’ according to the Oxford, stems from the words ‘ratio’ and ‘ration’ which means to ‘think’ and ‘reckon.’[^46] In a widely-reported speech by Pope Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg in September 2006, the Catholic leader equated ‘rationality’ and ‘reason.’ Using a conversation between an ‘erudite’ Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus and an ‘educated Persian’ in the winter of 1391 as an illustration, the Pope’s thesis was that faith was incomplete without reason and that reason – even for the Emperor and the Persian, who had different beliefs – stemmed from a ‘single rationality’ capable of inquiring broadly into all fields of knowledge. Citing Manuel II, the Pope said the Prophet Muhammed had brought forth nothing new except ‘his


command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." But the Pope said that to act in such an unreasonable way was against God's nature:

Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. "God," he (the Emperor) says, "is not pleased by blood – and not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats ... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death."

To Pope Benedict, to be 'reasonable' is to be 'rational'; given that violence is not 'reasonable,' it is therefore not 'rational.' Such an equation of 'rationality' and 'reasonableness' permeated Western civilisation, where rationality was rooted in the ideas of Socrates, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans, who proposed that with perfect knowledge humans would do the right and moral thing that would improve their lives. Again, there was a parallel drawn between rational and reasonable individuals, given that the rational (i.e. 'correct') thing was the reasonable (i.e. 'moral') thing to do.

Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* thesis sought to put 'rationality' into a narrow context, without the moral components; he argued that society would be more efficient if its members acted dispassionately to advance their self-interest. Generally, however, philosophers in 19th century still conflated 'rationality' and 'reason.' Jeremy Bentham in the 19th century challenged observers who argued that the pursuit of such self-interest undermined society's well-being, given that rational individuals act with the intent of promoting the general good because it was in their self-interest to avert social recrimination during life and eternal punishment upon death.

### 2.2 Perceptions of 'Unreasonableness' and 'Irrationality'

If, as the previous section noted, 19th century philosophers had defined 'rationality' to be the ability to 'think' and 'reasonableness' to be 'morality,' the absence of the two qualities in a certain individual or state implied that they would not be able to make decisions that aimed to advance their self-interest. As applied to the

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48 His Holiness Benedict XVI, 'Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections'

49 Hybel, *Power Over Rationality*, pp 12-13

50 Hybel, *Power Over Rationality*, p 13
use of deterrence strategies, perceptions that states were ‘unreasonable’ and ‘irrational’ led to the conclusion that they were unable to make decisions that maximised their utilities – in other words, they were harder to deter. This section examines perceptions of ‘badness’ and ‘irrationality.’

2.2.1 Perceptions of Unreasonableness

Through history, major powers of the day perceived some states located at the fringes of the international system to be ‘unreasonable.’ They were perceived to be so because they were seen to be pursuing alien objectives that were ‘normative anathema’ to other states in the ‘civilised’ international system.\(^{51}\) Their actions were seen to fall beyond the pale of the global community; in addition, such countries were perceived to be motivated by malevolence and belligerence and their policies were ascribed to ‘evil intent.’\(^{52}\) According to studies by Henriksen, the early ‘rogues’, like their modern counterparts in the late 20\(^{th}\) century, were seen to have ‘stood outside the international community.’\(^{53}\) In other words, they were contrarians which challenged an existing status quo, harassed the hegemons of their time or allied themselves with great powers to challenge other great powers. The Gauls of ancient times, for example, assisted Hannibal in his drive across the Alps into the Italian peninsula to attack the Roman Empire. The Romans saw the Gauls’ actions as contemptuous of established norms.\(^{54}\)

In the late 20\(^{th}\) century, the U.S. started applying the term ‘rogue’ to states such as North Korea and Iran. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term ‘rogue’ as a ‘dishonest, unprincipled person; a rascal,’ or an entity that ‘lack(s) appropriate control … something which is irresponsible or undisciplined.’\(^{55}\) In 1993, the U.S. applied the term ‘rogue’ for the first time in its Report on the Bottom-Up Review (BUR) to potential regional challengers. Like his predecessor Richard Cheney before him, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin perceived the leaders of such countries to be ‘rogues’

\(^{51}\) Hazel Smith, ‘Bad, Mad or Rational Actor?’ *International Affairs* 76(1), January 2000, p 115

\(^{52}\) Smith, ‘Bad, Mad or Rational Actor?’ p 115


\(^{54}\) Henriksen, ‘The Rise and Decline of Rogue States’, p 350

adhering to values and goals that ran contrary to those of the United States. Wrote Aspin in October 1993:

In 1990, Iraq's brutal invasion of Kuwait signalled a new class of regional dangers facing America – dangers spurred not by a global, empire-building ideological power, but by rogue leaders set on regional domination through military aggression while simultaneously pursuing nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons capabilities. The world's response to Saddam's invasion also demonstrated the potential in this new era for broad-based, collective military action to thwart such tyrants [italics added].

There are two salient points from Aspin's statement. First, Aspin referred to 'rogue leaders' and not 'rogue states.' By doing so, he attached the character of a country or regime's to the character of its leaders. Second, the use of the terms 'rogue' and 'tyrant' were part of an emerging demonology in which the 'irrationality' label for such states was added soon after. Aspin's use of the word 'rogue leaders' was soon replicated by President Bill Clinton – though the latter used a different level of analysis. In January 1994, he warned a Brussels conference about the new security challenges for Europe, adding that NATO needed to do more by countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Growing ballistic missile capabilities was bringing more of Europe into the range of 'rogue states such as Iran and Libya.'

In September 1993, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, underscored the unreasonableness of the 'rogues' in even more colourful and graphic language. At a September 1 conference to announce the BUR, he said, the Soviet Union had been replaced by something quite different: an 'Iraq, a Korea, [and] other demons and dangers that come along of a regional nature. The debate over the challenges presented by two 'rogues' in the Middle East – Iran and Iraq – continued to develop. In 1993, the first enunciation of a 'dual containment' strategy against Iran and Iraq came from Martin Indyk, senior director for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. Speaking at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in 1993, he noted that the U.S. was fortunate to inherit a more favourable balance of power in the Middle East and a much-reduced level of military capability

56 Aspin, Report on the Bottom-up Review, October 1993
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hostile to American interests. A more important element of Indyk’s speech, however, were his comments about the strategic character of the ‘rogues,’ which provided a glimpse into the Clinton Administration’s appraisal of such regimes. Like Cheney and Aspin, such regimes were bad. Indyk said that Baghdad was a ‘criminal regime’ which was ‘beyond the pale of international society,’ and therefore ‘irredeemable’; Iranian leaders posed a ‘five-part’ challenge to the U.S. and the global community – including the domination of the Persian Gulf militarily and the quest for WMD capabilities. Such a milieu of intentions and capabilities was seen as a ‘dangerous combination for Western interests.’

In the following year, another top Clinton official continued to cast a negative light on the strategic character of ‘rogues’ by stressing their chronic inability to adhere to widely-accepted norms and values. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake called such countries ‘backlash’ states which threatened the democratic order being created in their respective regions. Lake also proposed – like Indyk – a policy of dual containment towards Iraq and Iran, but his articulation of the Clinton’s Administration’s rogue strategy was more elaborate, and the philosophy behind it served as a model for analysing other rogue states outside the Gulf. Since Lake provided a helpful overview of what actions unreasonable states might attempt, his comments deserve to be quoted at some length:

Our policy must face the reality of recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only choose to remain outside the family but also assault its basic values. There are few ‘backlash’ states: Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya. For now they lack the resources of a superpower, which would enable them to seriously threaten the democratic order being created around them. Nevertheless, their behavior is often aggressive and defiant... These backlash states have some common characteristics. Ruled by cliques that control power through coercion, they suppress basic human rights and promote radical ideologies. While their political systems vary, their leaders share a common antipathy toward popular participation that might undermine the existing regimes. These nations exhibit a chronic inability to engage constructively with the outside world, and they do not function effectively in alliances, even with those like-minded. They are often on the defensive, increasingly criticised and targeted with sanctions in international forums... They share a siege

60 Indyk, ‘Challenges to US Interests in the Middle East: Obstacles and Opportunities,’ p 4
mentality. Accordingly, they are embarked on ambitious and costly military programs, especially in weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile delivery systems, in a misguided quest for a great equaliser to protect their regimes or advance their purposes abroad. [italics added]

2.2.2 Perceptions of Irrationality

'Rogue' states were seen to be harder to deter, not only because of perceptions of unreasonableness, but also perceptions of irrationality. As per the Oxford Dictionary definition of 'rationality,' states perceived as irrational are assessed to be deficient in reasoning.\(^\text{62}\) Morgan provides a more formal definition of rationality:

Gaining as much information as possible about the situation and one's options for dealing with it, calculating the relative costs and benefits of those options as well as their relative chances of success and risks of disaster, then selecting – in light of what the rational opponent would do – the course of action that promised the greatest gain, or, if there was no gain, the smallest loss.\(^\text{63}\)

Conversely, the absence of rationality implied irrationality, where one is not able to select the option that secures the greatest gain. Put together, the discussions about perceptions of 'badness' coupled to perceptions of 'irrationality' suggests that such actors are perceived to be 'mad.' Writes Smith:

The difference between the 'bad' and 'mad' theses is that the former presumes a rational, instrumental actor, the latter an irrational actor, unknowable, unpredictable and dangerous because of the underlying presumed bad intent of its leadership. Another difference is that, while the 'mad' thesis implies something primeval and atavistic, with policy arising from a sort of primitive, chaotic and fundamentally unknowable polity and society, the 'bad' thesis assumes strategic intentionality ... [italics the author's]

Smith’s definition of the term ‘mad’ is consistent with the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of the term as ‘insane; mentally unbalanced or deranged; subject

\(^\text{61}\) Anthony Lake, 'Confronting Backlash States,' *Foreign Affairs* 73(2), March/April 1994, p 46
\(^\text{63}\) Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p 12
\(^\text{64}\) Hazel Smith, "Bad, Mad, Sad or Rational Actor? Why the ‘Securitization’ Paradigm Makes For Poor Policy Analysis of North Korea,”, *International Affairs* 76(1), January 2000, p 119
to delusions or hallucinations ... psychotic. According to her formulation, a ‘bad’ actor is rational and possesses evil intent. A ‘mad’ state, however, is irrational and ‘bad’ (or unreasonable, as per this thesis’ usage of the term). But Smith’s definition of ‘mad’ being irrational and ‘bad’ appears to imply rationality and irrationality at the same time, given that she has defined a ‘bad’ actor to be rational. This thesis’ formulation of ‘bad’ and ‘mad’ is more clear-cut. A ‘bad’ actor is rational and unreasonable; a ‘mad’ actor is irrational and unreasonable.

In foreign policy analyses, perceptions of ‘madness’ in the 20th century took on a wider meaning than merely ‘badness’ – ‘mad’ also implied ‘irrational’ – as in a particular party not being able to choose from a list of options the one that maximised his gains or minimised his losses. The 20th century is replete with actors perceived to be ‘mad’. In the 1930s, for example, the British government was concerned that the leaders of states like emerging Nazi Germany would commit some ‘mad dog act’. The U.S. State Department described Egypt’s Nasser as a ‘Hitlerian’ dictator who sought to ‘merge the resources and emotions of the entire Middle East into a single assault against Western civilization,’ while Central Intelligence Agency analysts perceived Cuba’s Castro to be ‘messianic,’ ‘erratic,’ and in a ‘high state of elation amounting to mental illness.’ During NATO’s bombing campaign against Serbia, then–Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic expressed the same desire as Libya’s Gaddafi: ‘You are not willing to sacrifice lives to achieve our surrender. But we are willing to die to defend our rights as an independent sovereign nation ... missiles and other sophisticated weapons will not always be the monopoly of high-tech societies ... America can be reached from this part of the world.’

American perceptions of irrationality in the ‘rogue’ states emerged in the early 1990s. The central thesis was that the newly-emerging rogues could not be counted on to be ‘deterrollable’ as the former Soviet Union had been. One of the first references to

67 Nolan and Strauss, ‘Rogue’s Gallery’, p 26
68 Slobodan Milosevic [text of interview in], ‘We Are Willing to Die to Defend our Rights,’ Washington Times, 1 May 1999, p A8
rogue irrationality presaged even the use of the term ‘rogue’ by Les Aspin in his Bottom-Up Review of 1993. Following a visit to the Russian Federation in early 1992, the then-Head of the House Armed Services Committee argued that the former Soviet Union did not have control over its fissile materials and that this could fall into the hands of ‘irrational’ Third World governments. He said that the CIA was also developing a list of 2,000 top nuclear scientists to entice them to the U.S. so that they would avoid working for ‘irrational leaders.’

Months later in May 1992, the *Washington Post* carried a concise summary of the irrational-undeterrable nexus:

> The old strategy of deterrence may not work with these wild men of the East, the strategists fear. They're lunatics. They like violence. They are so irrational, so bent on confrontation, that they may fail to make any prudent calculation of the retaliatory destruction they will face if they launch an attack. They may be, in the language of nuclear strategists, 'undeterrable threats.' So it follows, to the strategists at least, that we will need a new strategic doctrine to deal with the undeterrables. For if future adversaries cannot be deterred by the threat of offensive retaliation, we will have no choice but to rely on defense – specifically, on some version of the Strategic Defence Initiative. [italics added]

In that same year, Aspin argued that despite liberal qualms about missile defence, it might be needed as a protection against nuclear terrorism, accidental launch of missiles, or ‘a national leader who is not rational.’ He concluded that ‘when we deal with potentially undeterrable threats, we will have to abandon Cold War notions of left and right.’ The following year, Aspin enunciated an innovation in the Clinton Administration’s thinking towards rogues – while nuclear interactions with the former Soviet Union were predicated on a fairly comprehensive understanding of its inherent character, the emerging rogues were ‘unknowable’ based on their unique strategic character, and hence undeterrable:

> In the past, we dealt with the nuclear threat from the Soviet Union through a combination of deterrence and arms control. The new possessors of nuclear weapons may not be deterrable. They may have doctrines, histories, intentions and mindsets which are totally different from those of the former Soviet Union. The traditional doctrine of nuclear deterrence *presumes the other side is rational* and that we can

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71 Ignatius, ‘Madman’s Bluff: Why Deterrence Still Works,’ p C01
identify the responsible parties. In the future, we may face rogue states or terrorist groups with nuclear weapons so we can’t count on either of those assumptions.\textsuperscript{72} [italics added]

Aspin’s ‘undeterrable rogues’ logic soon caught on among top military officials. In October 1993, Strategic Command (Stratcom) argued for a role in countering the use of WMD by rogue regimes, adding that its next targets should be ‘more undeterrable’ leaders such as Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein.\textsuperscript{73} In 1995, Defense Secretary William Perry – the successor to Aspin – underscored the ‘mad’ thesis by stating that rogue regimes might not adhere to the Cold War principle of mutually assured destruction. He said that rogue states ‘may not buy into our deterrence theory. Indeed, they may be madder than MAD.’\textsuperscript{74} In 1996, Perry warned of a growing ICBM threat from ‘undeterrable’ rogues. While Perry sketched out the possibility of an emerging rogue-ICBM threat, he did not elaborate on why he thought the rogues were undeterrable.\textsuperscript{75}

Supported by a growing consensus in Washington, scholars and media commentators expounded on the axiom of rogues being irrational and hence undeterrable. For example, in painting a pessimistic scenario for nonproliferation, John Nuckolls – the director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory – argued that some of the world’s new nuclear forces could be commanded by ‘power-hungry, irrational, or even truly ‘mad’ leaders – unpredictable and undeterrable.’\textsuperscript{76} (His rendering lends weight to this chapter’s interpretation that perceptions of ‘bad’ and ‘irrational’ states combine to form perceptions of ‘madness’). Similarly, Barry Schneider noted that pre-emptive counter proliferation actions might need to be taken against potential enemies that were ‘considered erratic, unpredictable, and quite

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\textsuperscript{76} Nuckolls, John, ‘Post-Cold War Nuclear Dangers: Proliferation and Terrorism,’ \textit{Science} 267(5201), 24 February 1995, p 1113
possibly non-deterrable by the threat of retaliation.\textsuperscript{77} The popular media captured the essence of the irrational-undeterrable axiom. An oft-cited paragraph written by \textit{New York Times} columnist William Safire is illustrative:

Say a future Iraq moves on Kuwait again. The U.S. prepares to liberate the victim, but then the aggressor claims to have a missile aimed at Chicago. When the U.S. President warns Iraq of total annihilation, the dictator shrugs it off as his way to Heaven. The C.I.A. estimates chances at 70 percent he is faking – but if he is not, there would go Chicago. A prudent President, with our cities defenceless against incoming missiles, would be forced to let the aggression stand.\textsuperscript{78}

Like most commentators and scholars in the mid-1990s, Safire was suggesting that future dictators confronting the U.S. could well be undeterrable. Noting Aspin’s argument that the West could be ‘paralysed’ in the face of a few nuclear weapons in the hands of ‘irrational’ and ‘undeterrable’ enemies like Iraq, Nolan argued that the axiom seemed to suggest that the entire architecture of nuclear-based deterrence had little utility.\textsuperscript{79}

\subsection{2.2.2.1 North Korea}

In the growing debate about ‘undeterrable’ challenger to the United States, North Korea and Iraq constituted two good examples of ‘rogues’ which have been perceived as ‘bad’ and ‘irrational.’ In the case of North Korea, such perceptions took hold during the Cold War. After North Korea agents detonated a bomb that killed a dozen top South Korean officials in Rangoon Burma in October 1983, Pyongyang’s image as a savage nation which exported terrorism and engaged in inhumane acts and political brutality was reaffirmed in the eyes of the international community. In a sense, the perceived ‘irrationality’ of the North Korean regime stemmed from the logic of ‘otherness’ – unfamiliar parties or people outside of one’s usual frames of reference are typically regarded in a negative light.\textsuperscript{80} For much of the 1990s, most commentaries on North Korea also perceived it to be conforming to the unreasonable template discussed thus far – the Pyongyang regime was seen to be ‘manically offensive’ and ‘like a wild

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Barry Schneider, ‘Radical Responses To Radical Regimes: Evaluating Preemptive Counter-Proliferation,’ \textit{Menair Paper No. 41, Washington D.C.: National Defence University, May 1995}, p 23
\item \textsuperscript{80} Robert N. Bellah, ‘Civil Religion in America,’ \textit{Daedalus} 96(1), Winter 1967, p 7, cited in Litwak, \textit{Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy}, p 63
\end{itemize}
animal ... brutal.\textsuperscript{81} In his 2002 State of the Union address, U.S. President George W. Bush formally inducted North Korea as a charter member of the so-called ‘axis of evil.’ Mr Bush said that North Korea provided weapons to terrorists, attacked America’s allies and attempted to blackmail the United States.\textsuperscript{82} Victor Cha, a Georgetown University professor who became Director of Asian Affairs on the National Security Council in 2004, said the North Korean regime under Kim Jong Il was ‘despicable’ as it starved its people, maintained ‘gulags nightmarish even by Stalinist standards’ and ‘generally violates almost every value the United States and the free world claim to uphold.’\textsuperscript{83}

Perceptions that the regime in Pyongyang was irrational had intensified in the early 1990s, Pyongyang’s terrorist attacks on South Korean officials in the 1980s, its geopolitical isolation and its fiery rhetoric directed at the West fuelled the largely image of ‘irrationality.’ This image has remained fairly constant through the years. The public rhetoric about the perceived irrationality of the Pyongyang regime created a self-reinforcing loop between journalists, academics and policymakers – with each parroting the conventional wisdom for much of the 1990s as the impasse on the country’s clandestine nuclear programme intensified. Selig Harrison, a North Korean expert, argues that for much of the 1990s, the Western media – parroting the ‘disinformation’ disseminated by South Korean and U.S. intelligence agencies – depicted North Korea leader Kim Jong Il as a ‘flaky, dissolute dimwit, dangerously irrational and unpredictable.’\textsuperscript{84} The image of ‘irrational’ North Korean leaders was bolstered further in the first half of 1994, as North Korean leaders played a game of nuclear brinkmanship amid threats of United Nations sanctions and military action by Washington. On March 19, a South Korean delegate, Song Young Dae, threatened North Korea with economic sanctions if Pyongyang did not accept full international nuclear inspections on its nuclear programme. In response, Mr Song’s North Korean counterpart Park Young Su replied:

\textsuperscript{81} Asiaweek, ‘Keep Alert,’ 13 January 1993, p 20
\textsuperscript{83} Victor Cha, ‘Korea’s Place in the Axis,’ Foreign Affairs, 3(3), May/June 2002, p 92
It does not matter whether sanctions are applied against us. We are ready to respond with an eye. If war breaks out, South Korea will turn into a sea of fire. Mr Song, it will probably be difficult for you to survive.85

As the debate on American ballistic missile defence intensified in the late 1990s, advocates of BMD depicted North Korean leaders as ‘irrational xenophobes with a mindless anti-American hatred’ that underlined their objective of using nuclear weapons to attack the U.S.86 Major media outlets tried to outdo each other’s fetish for using derogatory adjectives concerning North Korea strategic psyche. One article described North Korea as a country with a ‘mad dog’ reputation that the U.S. might not want to provoke, given its massed artillery so near Seoul;87 another counted North Korean leaders among ‘irrational leaders, madmen, [and] terrorists who’d not count the costs’ of using nuclear weapons.88 Korean historian Bruce Cumings noted that depictions in the American press concerning the irrationality of Kim Jong Il were the same in the early 1990s, when the first nuclear crisis erupted, and 2002-2003, the period when the second crisis escalated:

‘Kim Jong Il was the same Mad Dog he is said to be today: a drunk, womanizer, a playboy, Stalinist fanatic, state terrorist, unstable, psychotic, another David Koresh, Jim Jones, or Charles Manson … according to one ‘U.S. diplomat, the son was irrational, far more dangerous than his father … no one wants to see Kim Jong Il in charge of a nuclear-armed North Korea.’89

2.2.2.1 Iraq

Like North Korea, American perceptions of Iraq became negative in the early 1990s, after Saddam Hussein’s use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people in 1987-88 and his invasion of Kuwait in 1990. According to the American assessment of Iraq, Baghdad was ‘bad to the bone,’ dysfunctional, unpredictable and incapable of moderation.90 In a February 1992 report, Aspin described Saddam Hussein as the ‘very model of a modern, post-Soviet despot,’ noting that he had ‘made an unprovoked attack

86 Harrison, Korean Endgame, p 197
90 Nolan and Strauss, ‘Rogue’s Gallery,’ pp 23
on his neighbor, he was in hot pursuit of nuclear weapons, he used terrorism to achieve his ends, and he kept his own people in check by totalitarian means.'

Perceptions of Saddam and the Iraqi regime as ‘bad’ accompanied perceptions of their irrationality. During the first Gulf War in 1990-91, there were questions raised about the rationality of Saddam. Following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saddam was characterized as the ‘madman of the Middle East.’ In January 1991 as the U.S.-led coalition commenced massive air operations against Iraqi targets – U.S. President George H. W. Bush portrayed Saddam as a desperate man whose ‘irrational’ actions led to prisoners of war being paraded as human shields and oil being spilled into the Persian Gulf. Saddam continued to ‘amaze the world,’ said Mr Bush, arguing that he could not ‘figure out’ his motives, which ‘don’t measure up to any military doctrine of any kind.’ Taking the same line, Bush’s deputy Dan Quayle said a month later that based on American mores, Saddam was ‘totally irrational’ and that he had a different background and culture. Such public statements by Bush and Quayle could have been used as a political instrument to mobilise action against Saddam.

However, internal discussions within the Administration hedged as to whether Saddam was rational or irrational. A deterrence strategy was crafted in the expectation that Saddam was actually rational. Such a strategy prepared for the eventuality that if Saddam was at the cusp of launching CW, the Administration would plant enough ‘seeds of doubt’ in the Iraqi leader concerning an American response, for the ‘sake of deterrence.’ Although they had decided not to retaliate if Saddam had used CW, Bush and his National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft decided to keep the threat of American retaliation ‘ambiguous’ since there was ‘no point in undermining the deterrence it (the ambiguous threat) might be offering.’ This was deterrence on the cheap – reaping the benefits of deterring someone, which, if successful, cost next to

92 Post, ‘The Defining Moment of Saddam’s Life,’ p 49
96 Sagan, ‘The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks,’ p 92
nothing. Such a deterrence strategy was based on the expectation – or at least the hope – that Saddam was rational.

Following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, perceptions differed about Saddam’s rationality. In one camp, some scholars subscribed to the conventional wisdom that Saddam Hussein was deterred from using chemical weapons during the first Gulf War – and hence rational (in other words, Saddam was rational, but unreasonable). They argue that no concrete evidence was found that Iraq resorted to using WMD during the war; hence the conclusion is that American deterrence threats to prevent Saddam from using WMD proved effective. Byman, Pollack and Waxman note that the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq did not coerce Saddam to leave Kuwait without a war, but it convinced Iraq leaders not to use chemical or biological weapons against coalition forces during the conflict. Leading defence policy analysts, biological weapons specialists and scholars of the Gulf War have also accepted this assessment. In the other camp, scholars have argued Saddam was rational, but that rationality per se does not preclude deterrence failure. They offer two major explanations. Firstly, Saddam had undermined Washington’s deterrence threats by burning oil wells and a failed attempt at launching terrorist operations against the U.S. – what they term a ‘most unambiguous failure of a specific deterrence threat.’ One analyst suggests that Saddam figured that Washington was ‘bluffing’ on the threat of nuclear retaliation on the oil wells – hence he was confident that his burning the wells would not elicit a

97 This point is important, and will be given a fuller treatment in the following chapter
100 Scott D. Sagan, ‘The Commitment Trap: Why the United States should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks,’ pp 91, 96
nuclear response from the U.S. More than that, Saddam had predelegated launch authority to Iraqi commanders to launch chemical and weapons against coalition forces if command and control broke down – if not a clear breach of American deterrence threats, at least making extensive preparations to do so. One analyst cites a ‘growing consensus’ that Saddam had authorised local commanders to launch chemical weapons in the event of his death or the destruction of command and control links. The evidence presented supports the case the Saddam was rational, but unreasonable in that he adhered to values that were antithetical to Washington’s.

2.3 Changes in American Strategy

By the end of the 20th century, perceptions of rogue unreasonableness and irrationality led Washington to use perceptions of rogue ‘badness’ and ‘irrationality’ to justify its move towards ballistic missile defence. Washington thought it expedient to reassess the effectiveness of its deterrence strategy as used against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. By then, the perceptions of rogue states being irrational, and as a consequence, undeterrable had become axiomatic and ingrained in Washington’s so-called rogue state doctrine. In 1999, the Clinton Administration cited the long-range missile threat from Iran and North Korea as the basis for accelerated research on ballistic missile defense. In the early days of his presidency, George W. Bush made clear his intentions to deploy both a National Missile Defense (NMD) version of Ballistic Missile Defenses (BMD) to protect the U.S. homeland against limited nuclear strikes, and Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) systems to protect U.S. forces deployed in Europe and Asia and regional allies against similar attacks. On 1 May 2001, Mr Bush delivered a major address on BMD at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. Bush moderated the previous distinction between NMD and TMD and strongly supported an integrated BMD system employing technologies applicable to both homeland and theatre defence. He observed that the changing international setting

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102 Tod Lindberg notes that the American threat of nuclear retaliation seems to have deterred Saddam from using CW on coalition forces, but that the same threat did not seem to deter him from burning the oil wells. See Lindberg, ‘Nuclear And Other Retaliation After Deterrence Fails,’ in Sokolski (ed.), Getting Mad, pp 321-322

103 Smith, ‘Deterrence And Counterproliferation In an Age of Weapons of Mass Destruction,’ p 182

requires ‘new concepts of deterrence that rely on both offensive and defensive forces.’\textsuperscript{105}

The irrational-undeterrable logic gathered a lot more momentum after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Months after the attacks, President Bush offered his version of this chapter’s ‘mad’ thesis – he told West Point graduates that the U.S. would have to deal with ‘unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction who can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies’ and that such dictators were ‘tyrants’ who systematically broke non-proliferation treaties.\textsuperscript{106} Similarly, the language of the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) highlighted Washington’s concern about not being able to deter potential attackers armed with WMD. While Washington had faced a ‘generally status quo, risk-adverse adversary’ during the Cold War, deterrence was less likely to work against rogue leaders who were perceived to be ‘more willing to take risks, gambling with their lives of their people and the wealth of their nations.’\textsuperscript{107} According to Payne, the Bush Administration adopted a policy position that was wholly compatible with the new threat environment. It took steps to increase the effectiveness of deterrence across a spectrum of threats, and to prepare for its possible failure.\textsuperscript{108} These have included President Bush’s decision to deploy a layered BMD architecture, a Defense Department and Energy Department-requested feasibility study of earth-penetrating warheads, movement toward strategic non-nuclear weapons, greater freedom to examine very low-yield nuclear weapons, and the inclusion of nuclear and non-nuclear strike capabilities in the ‘New Triad.’\textsuperscript{109}

\subsection*{2.3.1 Historical Precedents}

As Washington’s new strategy towards the rogues took root at the turn of 21\textsuperscript{st} century, American perceptions of ‘rogue states’ as irrational and unreasonable had taken hold. To a degree, however, such perceptions were hardly novel developments.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{105} William T Tow and William Choong, ‘Asian Perceptions of BMD: Defence or Disequilibrium?’ \textit{Contemporary Southeast Asia} 23(3), December 2001, pp 380-381
\textsuperscript{107} National Security Strategy 2002, p 15
\textsuperscript{109} Payne, ‘Nuclear Deterrence for a New Century’
\end{flushright}
During the Cold War, there were also occasions when American policymakers perceived Soviet leaders to be 'unreasonable' and 'irrational.' Such perceptions, however, proved to be the exception and not the rule. In general, American leaders thought that their Soviet counterparts were rational and able enough to keep their mutual deterrence relationship stable.

During the Cold War, there were times when the American people and their policymakers viewed the Soviet Union to be the antithesis to American values – Moscow was seen to be unreasonable in American eyes. Generally, American policymakers divided the globe into a Communist 'Evil Empire' controlled by Moscow and a Free World led by Washington (a move which ironically led to Washington policymakers' support for various anti-democratic regimes in the Free World). Such perceptions were augmented by the perception that the U.S.SR and its system of government were morally and spiritually bankrupt – an evil opponent that must be opposed by a righteous defender of virtue and morality. The American people were told that they were engaged in a vital struggle with a wily and implacable enemy who was bent on conquering the world and whose basic values are the antithesis of everything that democratic countries believed in.

Such negative perceptions of the Soviet Union have been interpreted to stem from the 'system maintainer' perspective, which regards the Soviet Union as an enemy and an irreconcilable antagonist that should be dominated or controlled by the United States. Since the perceived goal of Soviet actions was to gain advantages over the United States and the West, this perspective regarded long-term peaceful coexistence between the East and West as unlikely. This perspective is summed up by late U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who early in his term denounced the Soviet Union as the epitome of evil in modern civilization:

Let us be aware that while they (the former Soviet Union) preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.\textsuperscript{114}

Compared to American perceptions of unreasonableness in the 'rogues,' which were held consistently throughout, American perceptions of Soviet 'badness' waxed and waned throughout the Cold War. Negative images waned in the mid- to late-1980s, due to new policies under Mikhail Gorbachev, a series of summits between Washington and Moscow and the dismantling of the 'Iron Curtain' in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{115}

During the 1950s and 1960s, there were times when American policymakers perceived the Soviets to be irrational. In June 1959, Soviet president Nikita Khrushchev met U.S. Ambassador-at-Large Averell Harriman to discuss the impasse over Moscow's ultimatum that the West sign a peace treaty with East Germany. Khrushchev went on the offensive by stating the number of nuclear weapons that would be 'sufficient' to cover Bonn, France, Britain, Spain and Italy. Obviously taken back by Khrushchev's posturing, Harriman replied that his threats were 'appallingly dangerous.' Khrushchev declared that one bomb could take care of 'Bonn and the Ruhr and that is all of Germany. Paris is all of France; London is all of England. You have surrounded us with bases but our rockets will destroy them. If you start a war, we may die but the rockets will fly automatically.'\textsuperscript{116} American – and in general, Western – perceptions about the Soviet's irrationality were only reinforced after President Kennedy ordered preparations for a non-nuclear defence of Berlin in June 1961. This was more than Khrushchev had expected, and led the leader to summon British Ambassador Sir Frank Roberts to his box during a Bolshoi Ballet performance. Khrushchev warned Sir Frank that the Western allies' resistance to signing a peace treaty with East Germany was futile, and that if the Western powers sent a new division to Germany, the Soviet Union would respond a hundred-fold. He added that that if a


\textsuperscript{116} Quoted in Taubmann, \textit{Khrushchev: The Man and His Era}, p 414
nuclear war came, six hydrogen bombs would be ‘quite enough’ for Britain and that nine would do for France.\textsuperscript{117}

Many American officials also perceived Khrushchev to be irrational during the Berlin Crisis – perceptions which intensified during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The placement of Soviet nuclear-tipped missiles on Cuba was the boldest and riskiest of the Soviet leader’s foreign policy adventures. Writes Gonzalez:

By what bypaths of political logic led him to undertake this staggering gamble, or what made him think it could succeed will probably never be known. To this day, most Western analysts have still offered no explanation for Khrushchev’s ‘irrational’ behaviour.\textsuperscript{118}

Admittedly, such perceptions were not unanimous among the Americans. During the crisis, there were two different views surrounding Russian actions in Cuba. In one camp, the so-called ‘owlish’ group put much weight to what they perceived to be the risks of ‘desperate, irrational’ actions by the Soviets. This group, which comprised Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy and George Ball, advocated the quarantine option that was finally adopted.\textsuperscript{119} In another camp, hawks such as General Taylor, Dean Acheson, Douglas Dillon, John McConhe and Paul Nitze believed that military action against the Soviet bases in Cuba carried little risk of retaliation. General Taylor said that Khrushchev was ‘rational’ and that there was little risk of a nuclear war. But even the hawks agreed that if Khrushchev was irrational, he would be restrained by ‘rational’ members of the Politburo and the military.\textsuperscript{120}

Despite some American perceptions of Soviet irrationality, however, American analyses during the Cold War simply posited that the Soviet Union would be rational and pragmatic. American policymakers modelled the outcome of large-scale nuclear wars. They predicted that if some form of mutual destruction was the outcome, then deterrence would be deemed ‘stable’ and provide safety against nuclear attack.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{118} Servando Gonzalez, The Nuclear Deception: Nikita Khrushchev and the Cuban Missile Crisis, Oakland: InteliBooks, 2002, p 232
\textsuperscript{120} Blight, Nye and Welch, ‘The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited’ pp 174-175
\textsuperscript{121} Payne, Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, pp 20
Secretary of Defense Harold Brown expressed confidence in such mutual assured destruction by rejecting the idea of a first-strike:

... in the interests of stability, we avoid the capability of eliminating the other side's deterrent, insofar as we might be able to do so. In short, we must be quite willing – as we have been for some time – to accept the principle of mutual deterrence, and design our defense posture in light of that principle.\textsuperscript{122}

According to Gray, the Cold War was punctuated by the ‘coronation’ of deterrence and strategic stability based upon the mutuality of such conferred by secure second-strike capabilities.\textsuperscript{123} This in itself presumed a rational Soviet Union.

American perceptions that the Soviet Union was rational were held consistently even despite the emergence of evidence showing that the Soviet Union had implemented a doctrine of nuclear ‘war-fighting.’ Such a doctrine, American policymakers assessed, was perceived to be irrational because ‘no one can win a nuclear war.’ Paul Warnke, a senior official in the Carter Administration, called such aspects of Soviet nuclear doctrine ‘primitive’ and said the Soviet should be educated in the ‘real world’ concepts of nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{124} Similarly, a leading U.S. Sovietologist argued in the 1970s that the Soviet Union’s strategic doctrine on nuclear weapons appeared to have lagged behind those of the U.S. by about five to seven years. But modern defence technology determined ‘to a large extent’ the kind of strategic doctrines and policies that will be adopted by both superpowers.\textsuperscript{125} Moscow’s ‘unthinkable’ position on nuclear views was dismissed by Americans as unreal and correctable with sufficient enlightenment.\textsuperscript{126}

According to Pry, the Soviet’s nuclear war-fighting doctrine – which stemmed largely from Russia’s chronic fears of NATO encroachment into its traditional sphere of influence – called for Russian initiation of nuclear war, based on only the ‘mere

\textsuperscript{122} Cited in Keith Payne, ‘ A Matter of Record,’ \textit{Foreign Affairs} 85(5), September/ October 2006, p 151
\textsuperscript{123} Gray, \textit{Maintaining Effective Deterrence}, pp 1-2
\textsuperscript{124} Quoted in Richard Pipes, ‘Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War,’ \textit{Commentary} 64(1), July 1977, p 21
\textsuperscript{125} Roman Kolkowicz, ‘Strategic Parity and Beyond: Soviet Perspective,’ \textit{World Politics} 23(3), April 1971, pp 439-441, 451 and Kolkowicz, ‘Strategic Elites and the Politics of Superpower,’ \textit{Journal of International Affairs} 26(1), 1972, p 53
\textsuperscript{126} Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, p 25
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suspicion of hostile intentions'. Pry’s analysis of Soviet behaviour indicates that Moscow was perceived to be irrational, but by his own admission Pry acknowledges that fact that it would not be expedient to judge Russian doctrine according to Western norms and values:

Moscow’s new military doctrine, relying more heavily on nuclear weapons and striking first, may seem to many in the West like madness. Judged by Western values and historical experience, Moscow’s military policy appears not merely irrational but malevolent. Yet it is hardly fair to judge Russia by Western standards, since that nation has long existed in brutality that is alien to the West [italics added].

Pry concedes that such perceptions are due to largely ‘Western standards.’ Indeed, it became increasingly apparent after the dissolution of the Cold War in the 1990s that Soviet decision-making was shaped more by Marxist-Leninist ideological dogma rather than pragmatic realpolitik. Gaddis argues that newly-released archival sources seemed to suggest that ‘ideology often determined the behaviour of Marxist-Leninist regimes.’ For other scholars, ideology explained many big puzzles of the Cold War – such as why a Soviet Union took actions to foster cooperation among adversaries and why the relatively weak Soviet Union sought to compete with the West. Odom sums it up by arguing that the Soviet concept of nuclear warfighting was both “ideologically and psychologically rooted in the views of the ‘political-military leadership’,” and that “[Western] deterrence and concepts of stability were never part of

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128 Pry, *War Scare*, p 202


130 Cited in Wohlforth, ‘A Certain Idea of Science: How International Relations Theory Avoids Cold War History,’ p 51
Soviet thinking in such circles." While Soviet ideology surrounding nuclear weapons was perceived to be irrational according to Western standards, this, however, did not mean the Soviet nuclear doctrine was intrinsically irrational. ‘Rational’ Soviet actions could have stemmed from an entirely different set of values than that of the West.

It could be argued that despite American perceptions of irrationality in the Soviet Union, there is at least a measure of rationality in Soviet decision-making. According to an insightful biography by William Taubman, Khrushchev said that his predecessor Stalin had ‘trembled with fear’ at the prospect of an American attack. Khrushchev was determined not only to seem fearless but also to strike fear into his Western opponents. The best way to restrain the Americans, he thought, was to scare the daylights out of them. Such an intrinsically rational plan was interpreted as the ravings of an irrational person, but according to Taubman’s account at least, Khrushchev did have a rational plan: to strike fear into the Americans by appearing fearless. This did not mean that he would extend such logic into war with the Americans, particularly one involving nuclear weapons. Khrushchev worried about war, and he knew the Americans had an unparalleled superiority in air power and nuclear weapons. Khrushchev adhered to this operative principle of appearing fearless to restrain the Americans.

The Cuban Missile Crisis underscores Khrushchev’s rationality. Fursenko and Naftali argue that Khrushchev deployed the missiles to achieve two goals – he needed a bold move to remind the Americans of Soviet power; he also needed to demonstrate to Fidel Castro that the Soviet Union would defend his revolution. In other words, Khrushchev ranked the two goals as being superior to other options (ranking of options being a requirement of rationality) and chose these goals to maximise his expected

131 Odom, The Collapse of the Soviet Military, pp 71 and 436
132 Pry's analysis parallels Keith Payne and Colin Gray’s assessment that rationally actors can base their actions on ‘unreasonable’ goals and values. The concept of ‘unreasonableness’ will be discussed in Chapter 3
utility (another requirement for rationality). In his book *Naval Power in Soviet Policy*, Sergei Gorshkov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, wrote:

To achieve superiority of forces over the enemy in the main sector and pin him down in the secondary sectors at the time operations ... i.e., to create such a situation that the enemy would be paralysed or constrained in his operations, or weakened or thereby hampered from interfering with our operations.\(^\text{136}\)

Writing in 1981, Rood argues that this was what the Soviets hoped to accomplish by putting missiles in Cuba in 1962. And this was exactly what was accomplished when the U.S. permitted the Soviets to erect a fortified base on the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Historians, he argues, have shrouded what was America’s appeasement of the Soviets and called it a victory. While Khrushchev had promised to withdraw his offensive missiles, he was permitted to keep defensive material (with no formal distinction made between ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive’ assets) in Cuba: air strips, submarine bases and personnel. In short, the Soviets’ risky venture gained the acceptance by the U.S. of a Soviet military, naval and air presence in the Western Hemisphere.\(^\text{137}\) Rood’s argument is unique and not widely shared in the literature,\(^\text{138}\) but it could be argued that his actions in the Caribbean were not irrational and possessed some level of rationality in terms of sourcing for information, ranking alternatives and choosing the solution that maximises utility.\(^\text{139}\) Like the ‘rogues,’ Soviet behaviour could arguably be rational, but hew to unreasonable values and standards.

2.4 Conclusion

It is noteworthy that China is a hybrid between the modern ‘rogues’ and the Soviet Union. On one hand, China was – like the modern ‘rogues’ – perceived to be ‘bad’ and ‘irrational.’ In early 1963, President John F. Kennedy argued that U.S. security guarantees in Asia would be compromised if China acquired nuclear weapons.


\(^{137}\) Rood, ‘Cuba: Payment Deferred,’ p 1404

\(^{138}\) Lebow and Stein, for example, argue that Khrushchev miscalculated the missile deployment because he was motivated by ‘anger and need.’ This rendered him insensitive to warning by friends and threats of adversaries. See Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*, pp 70-91

\(^{139}\) As per our definition of rationality in fn. 28
He added that China ‘looms as our major antagonist of the late 60s and beyond.’\textsuperscript{140} To the Americans, Mao Zedong was far more terrifying than anything Saddam Hussein or current ‘rogue’ rulers could muster.\textsuperscript{141} The People's Republic was perceived to be ‘bad’; it was seen to be pursuing an expansionist foreign policy; it had attacked India in 1962; it was continuing to threaten Taiwan; and it was seeking to influence events in Indonesia. Worse still, its support for North Vietnam and the Vietcong insurgency against the U.S.-sponsored government in South Vietnam made military conflict with a nuclear-armed PRC a distinct possibility.\textsuperscript{142} Like their assessment of modern ‘rogues,’ American policymakers also perceived China to be irrational. As China confronted the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait in January 1955, Mao Zedong shrugged off the potential effect of nuclear weapons. He argued that the U.S. could not annihilate the Chinese people, given that China had a population of 600 million spread over a territory of 9.6 million square kilometres. He conceded, however, that American atomic weapons might end up ‘busting a hole in the Earth … (which) might be a matter of significance for the solar system.’\textsuperscript{143} When China tested its atomic device on October 16, 1964, American policymakers perceived China to be ‘not only irrational but perhaps undeterrable.’\textsuperscript{144}

On the other hand, China was – like the Soviet Union – also perceived to be rational and pragmatic in its dealings with the United States and other countries. It exhibited a measure of caution in various Taiwan Straits crisis in the 1950s and 1960s, and demonstrated much restraint as it confronted the United States during the Vietnam War. Writing in 2004, David Shambaugh notes that both bilaterally and multilaterally, Beijing’s diplomacy was ‘remarkably adept and nuanced, earning praise around the region.’ He writes:

\textsuperscript{140} Cited in Lyle Goldstein, ‘When China was A ‘Rogue State’: The Impact of China’s Nuclear Weapons Program on US-China Relations during the 1960s’, \textit{Journal of Contemporary China}, 12(37), 2003, p 742
\textsuperscript{144} Gavin, ‘Blasts from the Past: Proliferation Lessons from the 1960s,’ p 101
Most nations in the region now see China as a ‘good neighbor, a constructive partner, a careful listener, and a nonthreatening regional power. This regional perspective is striking, given that just a few years ago, many of China’s neighbors voiced growing concerns about the possibility of China becoming a domineering regional hegemon and powerful military threat.\textsuperscript{145}

Such differing perceptions about China – that it was irrational at some time, rational at other times – suggest there could be at least a modicum of rationality existing in Washington’s enemies (and constitute a strong rationale for choosing case studies, later in this thesis, involving Sino-American relations). Saddam’s history of decision-making is also full of miscalculated manoeuvres.\textsuperscript{146} He misjudged the costs and/or gains of specific campaigns such as the war on Iran in 1980 and the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. However, Saddam’s strategy during the first Gulf War was also the same one practised by Khrushchev – feigning irrationality to deter a potential opponent. Saddam raised the prospect of mass casualties, promising: ‘whoever attacks Iraq will find in front of him columns of dead bodies which may have a beginning but may not have an end.’\textsuperscript{147} This in itself was a rational application of strategy – albeit one hewing to different goals and values. North Korean decision-making, particularly during the first nuclear crisis in 1993-1994, also exhibited some level of rationality, based on the cardinal rule of collecting information, ranking priorities and choosing among these priorities the one that maximised its utility. In 1989, for example, Pyongyang unveiled a huge nuclear waste storage site adjacent to a plutonium processing plant in 1989, and then camouflaged it in 1992. The moves showed that it knew that American satellites had sighted the facility; but Pyongyang wanted to show Washington that it had some actual nuclear capability so as to entice Washington into further talks – which would come with the offer of more aid.\textsuperscript{148}

If the argument that states generally exhibit some level of rationality is correct, this suggests that another variable could be involved in Washington’s differing approaches to the Soviet Union and the modern ‘rogues.’ While Washington had at times perceived the Soviet Union to be irrational, its approach towards Moscow was

\textsuperscript{145}David Shambaugh, ‘China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order,’ \textit{International Security} 29(3), Winter 2004/05, pp 64-99
\textsuperscript{147}Haselkorn, \textit{The Continuing Storm}, p 35
\textsuperscript{148}Cumings, \textit{North Korea}, pp 64-67
remarkably consistent: the U.S. found the Soviet Union to be rational enough to keep their mutual deterrence relationship reasonably stable. By contrast, perceptions of rogue irrationality led Washington to refashion its strategic doctrine, centered on much circumspection about the effectiveness of deterrence strategies against such rogues. Again, the strength of such perceptions does not necessarily mean that the rogues are intrinsically irrational. It could be argued that such rogues, like the Soviet Union, do possess some level of rationality. It can also be argued, however, that rationality per se does not guarantee deterrence success. This, in essence, fuelled American circumspection about the success of deterrence strategies vis-à-vis such rogues. In other words, rational actors could precipitate deterrence failures when their actions stem from values that are different from (or not understood by) the United States. This is the focus of the following chapter.
If the argument that strikingly similar some level of rationality is exacted, then suggests that neutralisation would be involved in Washington's differing approaches to the Soviet Union and the modern regime. While Washington had at times demanded the liberalisation to be maintained, its approach towards Moscow was

79 Ibid, see also Brown, "China Scares China: Reassessing the Key Role of China's Perceptions" in Security Policy, p. 44-49.
CHAPTER 3: A TYPOLOGY OF DETERRENCE SITUATIONS

The previous chapter assessed the validity of American perceptions of ‘irrationality’ and ‘badness’ among its list of enemies, and introduced the idea of how the variables of ‘rationality’ and ‘badness’ could lead to two pathways of deterrence failure: through actors being either ‘irrational,’ or actors being ‘rational’ and ‘bad.’ This chapter seeks to review the current literature on ‘rationality’ and ‘badness.’ The first part will define three major types of ‘rationality’: ‘substantive rationality,’ ‘bounded rationality’ and ‘irrationality.’ All three types emerged as deterrence theory went through what Jervis terms the ‘three waves’ of development. The second part will refine the concept of ‘badness’ highlighted in Chapter 2 by introducing ‘reasonableness’ as proposed by Keith Payne and Colin Gray. According to them, ‘reasonableness’ is relative and dependent on the relationship between a deterrer and his deterree. A ‘reasonable’ actor or deterree is one whose goals and values a potential deterrer can understand and share. For example, a deterree could be acting based on ‘bad’ values, but if his deterrer understands and shares such values, the deterree is considered to be ‘reasonable.’ The third part of this chapter will define how frictional forces such as misperception and organisational dysfunction can disrupt the proper implementation of deterrence strategies. The fourth and last part of the chapter will show how the interaction of the two variables of ‘rationality’ and ‘reasonableness’ in deterrees can lead to different deterrence situations. The different situations in turn depend on the level of friction present. This interaction is mapped out in a 2x2 matrix, which presents a typology of deterrence situations. Finally, an argument will be made that ‘real world’ deterrence situations are essentially dominated by boundedly rational actors.

3.1 Types of Rationality

A keen grasp of rationality, particularly on the part of deterrees, seems to portend deterrence success. As Morgan puts it, deterrence theory took threat and reaction, a complex ‘psychological phenomenon’ with obvious roots in the emotional

149 Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ pp 305-310
150 Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, p 7

47
equipment of man, and reduced it to the interaction of a set of rational decision makers.\textsuperscript{151}

Deterrence was not considered a phenomenon in its own right to which one could apply the notions of rationality to see how helpful they might be; deterrence was conceived in terms of actor rationality.\textsuperscript{152}

From the literature, rationality can be categorised into three major types – substantive rationality, bounded rationality and counter-instrumental rationality (or irrationality).

\textbf{3.1.1 Substantive Rationality}

Substantive rationality refers to rational decision-making under uncertainty. A substantively rational actor knows all the outcomes before him, but not the probabilities attached to each outcome (conversely a perfectly rational actor knows all the outcomes before him, \textit{and} their probabilities).\textsuperscript{153} Substantive rationality is implicit in the first and second waves of deterrence theory. Snyder, with elaborate analyses of deterrer’s and aggressor’s risk calculi and hypothetical mathematical equations, expounds on an ‘important and manageable core of logic’ bearing on deterrence and defence.\textsuperscript{154} Morgan argues that much of the literature has attempted to move actual decision-making as far as possible toward perfect decision-making by working within the models of the latter; the heart of such analyses assumes ‘cold, hard, pure rationality.’\textsuperscript{155} Such an idealised form of rationality is useful for the production of theory. But in essence it cannot be detected in the real world; its key contribution would be providing an idealised ‘type’ of rationality. No actor acts with perfect or substantive rationality – it has been argued that no state acts with perfect rationality, stemming from such

\textsuperscript{152} Morgan, \textit{Deterrence Now}, p 44
\textsuperscript{153} Frank C. Zagare, ‘Rationality and Deterrence,’ World Politics, 42(2), January 1990, pp 239, 243. In the literature, many different ‘types’ of rationality have been used. This thesis employs the distinction between ‘substantive rationality’ and ‘procedural rationality’ as used by Stirling, Jackman and Riker. Others like Zagare make a slightly different distinction between ‘procedural’ and ‘instrumental’ rationality, where the former refers to utility maximisation with full information and complete certainty and the latter involves procedural rationality in Riker’s terms. See William H. Riker, ‘Political Science and Rational Choice,’ in James E. Alt and Kenneth A. Shepsle (eds.), \textit{Perspectives on Positive Political Theory}, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p 172, cited in Robert W. Jackman, “Response to Aldrich’s ‘Rational Choice and Turnout’: Rationality and Political Participation,” \textit{American Journal of Political Science} 37(1), February 1993, pp 280, 281f
\textsuperscript{154} Snyder, \textit{Deterrence And Defense}, p 57
\textsuperscript{155} Morgan, \textit{Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis}, p 80
A Typology of Deterrence Situations

factors as incomplete information, limited time to make decisions, bureaucratic politics and organisational processes and leaders’ personalities.\textsuperscript{156}

It is useful here to give a summary of the first and second waves of deterrence theory. The first wave of deterrence theorists, iconised by the writings of Bernard Brodie, Arnold Wolfers and Jacob Viner, were ‘amazingly quick’ in assessing the implications of nuclear weapons after World War II. Together, they reinforced the view that nuclear wars could only be threatened and not fought.\textsuperscript{157} Jervis argues that the first wave had little impact because the ‘general and long-run considerations being examined were too far removed from the pressing international problems of the day.’\textsuperscript{158} In the first wave literature, the concept of substantive rationality was assumed and not explicitly stated. Writing in 1946, Wolfers wrote that the Soviet Union’s eventual access to nuclear weapons would move the U.S. from a position of ‘unusual safety’ to a ‘kind of an earthquake zone’ which would be rendered liveable for the American population only by the ‘hope and confidence that the outbreak of another war will be prevented.’\textsuperscript{159} Brodie argued that the first step in any American security programme in the age of atomic bomb was to prepare for retaliation in case of an attack. He wrote:

The writer in making this statement is not for the moment concerned about who will win the next war in which atomic bombs are used. Thus far, the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose.\textsuperscript{160}

The second wave, which crested in the late 1950s, addressed the puzzle left unanswered by their predecessors: if nuclear war could not be used, how could nuclear war be threatened?\textsuperscript{161} The second wave was ‘geared to operating within a reasonably stable deterrence relationship ... within which deterrence seemed to be a natural

\textsuperscript{157} Freedman, \textit{Deterrence}, p 22, Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ p 289
\textsuperscript{158} Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ p 291
\textsuperscript{160} Bernard Brodie, ‘War in the Atomic Age,’ in Brodie (ed.) \textit{The Absolute Weapon}, p 76
\textsuperscript{161} Freedman, \textit{Deterrence}, p 21
approach.\textsuperscript{162} Much of this work used the game of Chicken as an analogy in situations in which the first choice of both sides was to stand firm, but in which both preferred retreating and letting the other side win to a confrontation that was disastrous for both sides. Each side therefore sought to prevail by making the other think it was going to stand firm. The implication of this model enabled scholars to understand many of the bargaining tactics actors adopted – severing communication links, feigning anger, irrationality or the loss of control.\textsuperscript{163}

The first major contribution to the concept of substantive rationality was written by von Neumann and Morgenstern. Their \textit{Theory of Games} became the dominant source for analyses of decision-making under uncertainty (where all outcomes are known, but not their probabilities). Such decision-making was defined as making a choice in order to maximise the expected utility of outcomes, weighted by their probabilities.\textsuperscript{164} Their conception of substantive rationality is clear and comprehensive:

We wish to find mathematically complete principles which define 'rational behavior' for the participants in a social economy, and to derive from them the general characteristics of that … The immediate concept of a solution is plausibly a set of rules for each participant which tells him how to behave in every situation which may conceivably arise. [italics added]\textsuperscript{165}

Substantive (or perfect) rationality is synonymous with being all-knowing – having a 'superhuman calculating ability, omniscience or an Olympian view of the world.'\textsuperscript{166} According to Verba, a rational actor is one who makes a 'cool and clear-headed ends-means calculation' after considering all possible courses of action and carefully weighing the pros and cons of all of them.\textsuperscript{167} A substantively rational decision, then, requires that an actor knows all conceivable alternatives and their implications. As such, substantively rational decision-makers exclude from their decision calculi other factors stemming from misperceptions, psychological

\textsuperscript{162} Freedman, \textit{Deterrence}, p 22
\textsuperscript{163} Robert Jervis, 'Deterrence Theory Revisited,' pp 301-302
\textsuperscript{164} Augier and Kristian Kreiner, 'Rationality, Imagination and Intelligence,' p 660
\textsuperscript{166} Frank C. Zagare, 'Rationality and Deterrence,' \textit{World Politics}, 42(2), January 1990, pp 239, 243
predispositions, or emotional deficiencies. Rational actors would be receptive to new information and could be expected to make more complex and sophisticated judgments about the implications of the policy options they have considered.168

3.1.2 Bounded Rationality

Herbert A. Simon has issued the biggest challenge to conceptualisations of substantive rationality. He argued that people do not behave in a substantively rational manner to optimise their choices. Instead, they use judgments or mental short-cuts (heuristics) to make choices. His conceptualisation of ‘procedural rationality’ (i.e. decision-making using rules or procedures) and its derivative – bounded rationality – was an attack on neoclassical economics and its conceptualisation of substantive rationality:

More than a century ago, Cournot identified a problem that has become the permanent and ineradictable scandal of economic theory. He observed that where a market is supplied by only a few producers, the notion of profit maximisation is ill-defined. The choice that would be substantively rational depends on the choices made by other others; none can choose without making assumptions about how others will choose ... There remains, however, a lingering reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of discovering at last ‘The Rule’ of substantively rational for the oligopolist. Only when the hope for that discovery has finally extinguished will it be admitted that understanding imperfect competition means understanding procedural rationality.169

Simon’s famous work on bounded rationality emerged as the so-called third wave of deterrence theory sought to challenge the dominance of second wave of theorists. While ‘second wave’ theorising was largely deductive in nature, ‘third wave’ theorists brought a higher degree of intellectual rigour to deterrence theory.170 According to Jervis, the ‘most startling’ fact about the development of deterrence theory was the lack of a search for supporting evidence; there were ‘few attempts’ to systematise and extend the theory by teasing new propositions from it.171 Third wave theorists shunned the ‘theorising to a high level of abstraction’ as attempted by their...

170 George and Smoke, _Deterrence in American Foreign Policy_, pp 61-71, Robert Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ pp 301-302
171 Robert Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ pp 301
second wave predecessors, and sought to test propositions to refine the theory. In the first major study of this sort, George and Smoke argued that deterrence had been viewed as a ‘self-contained’ strategy that could be applied prescriptively even when it was not policy-relevant – that is, when other means could have been employed, either singly or in some combination, to reduce the conflictual potential in inter-state relations. Writing around the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, Lebow and Stein argued that the superpowers had ‘overdosed’ on deterrence. The strategy had poisoned their relationship but both powers were blind to its consequences: deterrence had fuelled the kind of behaviour it was designed to prevent; too much deterrence had led to harmful arms races and aggravated the degree of antagonism in the U.S.-Soviet Union relationship. In all, third-wave theorists came up with three critiques of deterrence theory. Firstly, the theory pointed to a ‘tension’ between the desire to increase risks in order to make the other side retreat and the desire to lower them to make the situation less tense. Second, third-wave theorists highlighted that deterrence might have to offer some form of concessions to ensure the proper functioning of deterrence. Lastly, the most important critique was a general appreciation of how easy it was for things to go wrong, and for ‘innumerable points’ at which error could occur.

One of the third wave’s most familiar criticisms of the second wave is that it had overestimated the rationality of decision-makers, particularly under situations of high stress. For example, Snyder – a second wave theorist – expressed the concepts of deterrence by denial and punishment in mathematical illustrations. The illustrations were based on several assumptions: that each side is able to translate all their relevant values into a single numerical utility, and that each player can and does estimate probabilities for the other moves, and that each ‘acts rationally’ according to the principle of ‘mathematical expectation.’ Likewise, Schelling, another second wave theorist, argued that an explicit theory of ‘rational’ decision made it perfectly clear that

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172 Freedman, Deterrence, pp 22
173 Lebow and Stein, We All Lost the Cold War, pp 325, Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, ‘Deterrence And The Cold War,’ Political Science Quarterly 110(2), Summer 1995, pp 180-181
174 Robert Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ p 299
175 The principle states that the ‘expected value’ of any decision or act is the sum of expected values of all possible outcomes, the expected value of each outcome being determined by multiplying its value to the decision-making unit times the probability that it will occur. To act rationally, according to this principle, means choosing from the available courses of action the one which promises to maximise expected value in the long run. See Glenn H. Snyder, Deterrence And Defense, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, pp 16-17
it is not a 'universal advantage' in conflict situations to be 'inalienably and manifestedly rational in decision and motivation.' To that end, however, Schelling's study of oligopolistic situations and the need for 'satisficing' (choosing a course that is 'satisfactory' or 'good enough') instead of 'maximising' was an innovation in itself. His exploration of imperfect information in oligopolistic situations (i.e. that actors did not have full information about their rivals' choices) subsequently formed the basis for the third wave's use of limited or 'bounded' rationality in their work.

According to a comprehensive study tracking the historiography of the term, one of the earliest mentions of 'bounded rationality' appeared in Simon's 1957 work, *Models of Man*. In his later work, Simon used the concept to 'designate rational choice that takes into account the cognitive limitations of the decision-maker – limitations of both knowledge and computational capacity.' In essence, bounded rationality is the blend of two extreme views of rational decision-making – substantive rationality and procedural rationality. Substantive rationality is the formalisation of the common sense idea that one should do the best thing possible. This results in the strongest possible notion of what should constitute a good decision – the only admissible option is the one that is superior to all alternatives. At the other end of the spectrum, procedural rationality is the formalisation of the common sense idea that, if something has worked in the past, it will likely work in the future. This results in the weakest possible notion of what should constitute a good decision – an option is admissible if it is the result of following a procedure that is considered to be reliable. Bounded rationality is a blend of these two extreme views of rational decision making that modifies the premises of substantive rationality because of a lack of sufficient information to justify strict adherence to them.

178 Schelling’s work was informed by those of Herbert Simon, who dealt with the complexity and instability of an actor’s environment. See Ayson, *Thomas Schelling and The Nuclear Age*, p 126.
181 Stirling, *Satisficing Games and Decision Making*, p 10
182 Stirling, *Satisficing Games and Decision Making*, p 10
In 1957, Simon made a strong argument against substantive rationality, suggesting that limits to human actors' cognitive and information-processing capabilities would make them *cope* rationally rather than *act* rationally:

> It is impossible for the behavior of a single, isolated individual to reach any high degree of rationality. The number of alternatives he must explore is so great, the information he would need to evaluate them so vast that even an approximation to objective rationality is hard to conceive. Individual choice takes place in an environment of 'givens' – premises that are accepted by the subject as bases for his choice; and is adaptive only within the limits set by the 'givens.'

The concept of 'bounded rationality' captures the idea that human beings 'satisfice' due to their limited cognitive and information processing capabilities. Established procedures would facilitate the search for 'good enough' or 'satisfactory' choices:

> It started from the proposition that all intently rational behaviour is within constraints. Simon added the idea that the list of technical constraints on choice should include some properties of human beings as processors of information and as problem solvers. The limitations were limitations of computational capability, the organization and the utilization of memory, and the like. He suggested that human beings develop decision procedures that are sensible, given the constraints, even thought they might not be sensible if the constraints were removed. As a short-hand label for such procedures, he coined the term 'satisficing.'

Other limitations to rationality, Simon commented later in 1999, were the 'bounds' on knowledge, bounds on calculation, multiple objectives or 'competing objectives if you have a group of people competing to make a decision.' Simon's conceptualization of bounded rationality is recognised in third wave deterrence theory, with its so-called 'short cuts' to rationality in the form of motivated (i.e. affect-driven) and unmotivated (i.e. cognitive) biases. According to Jervis, people adopt these short cuts to make sense of complex environments. For example, cognitive biases or misperceptions – an actor's incorrect perceptions of how the world works and what

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183 Herbert Simon, *Administrative*, p 79
patterns it is likely be presented with – arise when people are confronted by complex and ambiguous information.\(^{186}\)

### 3.1.3 Irrationality

If rationality is defined as the ability to gather information about a situation, ranking options based on their relative benefits and costs and selecting the option that maximises utility, irrationality is the exact opposite. An irrational actor is unable to gather information intelligently, rank his options competently or choose the option that maximises utility. There are three ‘routes’ to irrationality – inconsistent evaluation, unreasoned choice and non-intelligent calculation (or miscalculation). The first route – inconsistent evaluation – involves the failure to evaluate expected utility in a consistent fashion. For example, a supposedly unitary actor might lack a single and consistent value system. Such actors – be they states or individuals – are unable to reconcile competing objectives across issue areas or time. The second route to irrationality – unreasoned choice – involves an actor failing to act in accordance with his evaluations of expected utility – for example, deciding to choose apples when eating oranges would have maximised utility.\(^{187}\) Different types of factors – psychopathy, drugs, alcohol and stress – can lead to unreasoned choice. In situations of high stress, for example, actors might evaluate their preferences in a non-intelligent manner. In cases of psychopathy, actors suffer from unreasoned choice i.e. they act on preferences that do not maximise utility.

Non-intelligent calculation, or miscalculations, constitutes a third route to irrationality. Intelligent calculation of costs and benefits involves the application of

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\(^{186}\) Jervis, ‘Perceiving and Coping with Threat,’ in Lebow and Stein (eds.), *Psychology of Deterrence*, pp 19-33. Instrumental rationality is an even more restricted form of procedural rationality, which involves the use of heuristics whose origins are not always clear and defensible. Stirling, for example, argues that procedural rationality is ‘amorphous, plastic and somewhat arbitrary.’ Proponents of instrumental rationality argue that at the very least, actors would be instrumentally rational fulfil the requirements of two procedures – connectivity and transitivity. Connectivity means that an actor would be able ‘to make comparisons among the outcomes in a feasible set and evaluate them in a coherent way.’ For example, given a choice between two alternatives, a and b, a instrumentally rational player would prefer a to b, or b to a, or be indifferent to both, depending on their payoffs. Transitivity, means that if an actor prefers a to b and b to c, then he would prefer a to c. Morgan, who argues that ‘sensible’ decision-makers (who are similar to instrumentally rational actors) have ‘limitations on rational decision making’ due to factors such as the physical limitations of human beings, psychological pressures, competing rationalities stemming from different units of analysis, incomplete information, and eventualities arising from chance and accidents. See Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis*, pp 102-103, Stirling, *Satisficing Games and Decision Making*, p 9, Zagare, ‘Rationality and Deterrence,’ pp 240-241, Zagare and Kilgour, *Perfect Deterrence*, p 40-43

\(^{187}\) Rhodes, *Power and MADness*, pp 60-61
one’s existing knowledge in applying in obtaining and evaluating new information in order to solve new problems effectively.\textsuperscript{188} By extension, non-intelligent processing, or miscalculation, means that a particular actor has not applied his ‘existing knowledge’ in processing new information. As Snyder suggests, such a failure of intelligence processing could stem from:

\begin{quote}
"... commitment to a dogma or theory which is applicable to the situation or which shuts out relevant data; education, training, and experience which prevents attainment of the ‘whole view’; or limited or distorted perspectives resulting from bureaucratic parochialism."
\end{quote}

\subsection*{3.1.3.1 Stress, Mistakes and Accidents}

Stress can lead to two of these routes to irrationality – inconsistent evaluation and non-intelligent calculation. Different types of stress can worsen crises and seriously impair the quality of decision-making. Stress can arise from insufficient time to perform tasks, insufficient rest from demands of the task or from the threat of loss that provokes internal conflict.\textsuperscript{189} In his analysis of the impact of stress on decision-making, George states that no aspect of decision-making is immune from the effects of stress, which can impair attention and perception. Important aspects of the crisis can escape scrutiny, conflicting values and interests at stake can be ignored, the range of perceived alternatives is likely to narrow but not necessarily down to the best option, and the search for relevant options tends to be dominated by past experience.\textsuperscript{190} According to Janis and Mann, stress leads to two pathologies in decision-making – defensive avoidance and hyper-vigilance. The first occurs when the decision-maker has lost hope of finding an attractive situation and is likely to avoid recognising threat cues; the second, where the decision-maker sees threat cues as salient and options being rapidly foreclosed, leading to cognitive constriction and disruption of his thought processes.\textsuperscript{191}

When high levels of stress are present, typically instrumentally rational actors can become irrational ones. As psychiatry professor Lester Grinspoon puts it:

\begin{quote}
Picture the situation of a national leader faced with what appears to be a massive nuclear attack which has come after a period of rising
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{188} Rhodes, \textit{Power and MADness}, p 63
\textsuperscript{189} Snyder, \textit{Deterrence and Defense}, p 25
\textsuperscript{190} Lebow and Stein, \textit{We All Lost the Cold War}, pp 332, 337
international tension. The chief decision-maker is overloaded with responsibility, probably tired and deprived of sleep, losing alertness, possibly aging and ill. He has about half an hour to make a decision on which the fate of humanity might depend ... at the same time, fear brings feeling down to a primitive level and distorts perception ... his instinct would be to strike back in revenge, especially against an enemy who has been presented as the embodiment of evil. The desire to destroy the enemy may become greater than the desire to stay alive, and it will be hard to stay calm and wait. There will be a strong desire for action to relive the tension and punish the foe.\(^{193}\)

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, stress played a key role in impeding cognitive processes. American leaders worried about their ability to analyse events unfolding properly, stemming from long-drawn exhaustion. Said Secretary of State Dean Rusk:

> I averaged about four hours of sleep per night during the crisis, and John Kennedy could not have slept much either. In his memoirs, even Nikita Khrushchev admitted that he slept on his office couch during the crisis. Sleeplessness, suspicion, ignorance about what the other fellow is going to do is going to take its toll. In a future crisis how long can human beings hold up? Would there be a point at which exhaustion might affect judgment and some leaders might say, ‘the hell with it,’ and push the button?\(^{194}\)

3.1.3.2 Drugs, Alcohol and Psychopathy

The consumption of drugs, alcohol or psychopathological tendencies can suspend the cognitive capabilities of decision-makers. This can lead to some or all of the three routes to irrationality – unreasoned choice, inconsistent evaluation or non-intelligent calculation. Hitler, for instance, was reported to have consumed large, daily doses of sedatives and stimulants. In 1944, he also started receiving frequent cocaine treatments. Such a cocktail of treatments might have contributed to Hitler’s temper tantrums, hallucinations and paranoia.\(^{195}\) Post notes that while the mental effects of such a cocktail are difficult to gauge, Hitler was – in the ‘jargon of the street’ – simultaneously taking coke and speed. Methamphetamine alone would have had ‘major deleterious effects on Hitler’s decision-making.’\(^{196}\) Similarly, South Korean president

\(^{193}\) Lester Grinspoon, ‘Crisis,’ *Bulletin Of The Atomic Scientists* 40(4), April 1984, pp 27-28

\(^{194}\) Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (as told to Richard Rusk), Daniel S. Papp (ed.), New York: W.W. Norton, 1990, pp 535-536


Park Chung Hee became ‘almost irrationally obsessed’ with a military attack against the North after surviving a terrorist attack plotted by Pyongyang in February 1968, when North Korean raiders got within 300 yards of the Blue House in a bid to kill him. According to President Johnson’s special envoy Cyrus Vance, the South Korean President was ‘highly emotional, volatile, frustrated and introspective.’ He wanted the U.S. to join him in ‘instant, punitive, and retaliatory’ strikes against North Korea. His heavy use of alcohol, according to declassified U.S. State Department documents, led to him issuing ‘all sorts of orders’ to his generals.

A more serious form of irrationality stems from what has been defined to be ‘idiosyncratic psychopathologies that may prevent value optimisation.’ In such cases, peculiar characteristics of certain individuals prevent them from rationally maximising their utility. For dictatorial or totalitarian regimes, where power and authority is centred around a particular leader with such characteristics, this can amount to what Dror calls ‘crazy states.’ Intuitively, such a cognitive make-up of leaders might sound rare; but through history there are a few examples of psychopathological decision-makers. Frank claims that at least seventy-five chiefs of state in the last four centuries led their countries, actually or symbolically, for a total of several centuries while ‘suffering from severe mental disturbances.’ Woodrow Wilson, James Forrestal and Joseph Stalin are cited as examples of the ‘aberrant personality’, while Hitler’s career of violence is partly regarded as an extension of a ‘manic personality.’ Both foreign policy and medical experts have examined Stalin’s alleged mental illness and believe that there is a link between his ‘abnormal personality’ – schizophrenia and paranoia – and his foreign policy. George Kennan was convinced that ‘Stalin was not really a normal man ... he was a captive of a personal devil within his own soul’; Tucker adds that ‘few


199 Jack L. Snyder, ‘Rationality at the Brink,’ World Politics 30(3), April 1978, p 347

200 Dror, Crazy States, pp 23-30

201 Roberts, Decision-Making During International Crises, p 186

202 Roberts, Decision-Making During International Crises, p 186

situations could illustrate more convincingly the potential importance of personality, and specifically the pathological personality, in foreign policy.\textsuperscript{204}

While drugs, alcohol and psychopathy may affect certain leaders and individuals, there is no evidence in the literature of a direct deterrence failure stemming from such factors. Khrushchev shared Kennedy's caution about the effects of escalatory moves during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In his memoirs, Khrushchev notes that Kennedy understood the Cuban crisis 'perfectly' and 'genuinely did not want war.'\textsuperscript{205} Individuals suffering from psychopathological disorders are affected by rationality-limiting factors of a longer duration and hence have a more deleterious impact with respect to the success of deterrence strategies, but again, there is no evident deterrence failure stemming from psychopathy in the literature. But rationality-impeding factors such as drugs, alcohol and psychopathy illustrate potential – albeit theoretical pathways – to irrationality that would be useful to observers studying potential deterrence failures.

### 3.2 Reasonableness

Factors such as stress, drugs and psychopathy can affect rationality, which in turn can affect deterrence outcomes. An important variable that also affects deterrence outcomes is reasonableness. Lebow uses the Dickensian character Podsnap to illustrate how another actor's actions could only be understood in terms of their culture and belief system. In attempting to explain why the French appeared to act 'so irrationally,' Podnsap concluded that 'they do, I am afraid to say, as they do.' Many students of foreign policy will concur with such an observation. This is also the central thesis of Payne and Gray's rationality-reasonableness formulation. According to them, states that are perceived to be irrational are actually rational\textsuperscript{206} and yet unreasonable (having values contrary to an observer's norms and values). According to Payne, for an observer to deem the observed party to be 'reasonable,' this would suggest that:


\textsuperscript{205} Khrushchev, \textit{Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament}, p 513

\textsuperscript{206} Payne’s definition of rationality is similar to the definition of bounded rationality given earlier. According to Payne, a rational decision-making chooses the course of action, because, due to available information, that course is the most suitable for achieving his preferred goal. Payne’s ‘preferred goal’ is equivalent to the option that maximises expected utility. Similarly, ‘available information’ is equivalent to the information available to a boundedly rational actor. See Payne, \textit{Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence}, p 7
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‘... the observer understands that decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some shared or understood set of values and standards.’

Payne has been arguing since the mid-1990s that irrationality in the eyes of an observer never meant that the observer and the observed party shared the same value structures. Opponents could be rational ‘on their own terms,’ but have drastically different value structures that are not understood well by potential deterrers, giving rise to the perception that they are ‘irrational.’ In 2001, Payne extended his argument by contrasting the terms ‘rational’ and ‘reasonable’ – while potential aggressors could be rational, they might not share the same values or norms as their deterrers. To assume both rationality and reasonableness, he argued, would increase the lethal risk of being surprised by opponents who were rational but unreasonable. Gray, who has supported Payne’s thesis in his writings as well, encapsulates the new argument for ‘reasonableness’:

The cardinal errors in the still orthodox perspective upon deterrence are the assumptions that rational behavior has a universal content, and that rationality is synonymous with reasonableness. Alas, the rational pursuit of goals that we judge unreasonable must lead to the committing of unreasonable acts. This ceases to be a fine academic point, when one recognizes that the authors of the rational pursuit in question may well soon be nuclear-armed in their unreasonable behavior. It should be needless to add that the behavior at issue will seem unreasonable only in our eyes, not theirs.

Payne’s thesis is important here, since an oft-quoted paper by his National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP) has formed the intellectual basis for much of the Bush Administration’s moves in 2001 towards drastic nuclear arms reductions, ballistic

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207 Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, p 7
209 Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, pp 7-8
210 Gray, ‘The Reformation of Deterrence,’ pp 443-444
211 The NIPP report, which was led by Payne, stressed the need for adaptability in US nuclear force structure, given that far less was known about potential challengers like North Korea. Consequently, the scope was much greater for potential challengers’ unfamiliar or idiosyncratic factors to shape responses to US deterrence postures in surprising directions. Again, the report – like many of Payne’s writings that was to follow – stressed that it was risky to assert that the outcome of US deterrence policies can be predicted reliably because opponents will be ‘reasonable’ according to Washington’s frame of reference. See Keith B. Payne, Rationale and Requirements for US Nuclear Forces and Arms Control, Fairfax: National Institute for Public Policy, January 2001
missile defences and lowering the threshold for nuclear weapon use.\textsuperscript{212} Gray encapsulates this new explanation of deterrence failure:

A recurring theme in U.S. public discourse is that of the rationality or irrationality of a particular foreign leadership. While genuinely irrational leaders do exist from time to time, meaning people who cannot connect means purposefully with ends, their occurrence is so rare and their longevity in power is so brief, that they can be ignored. The problem is not the irrational adversary, instead it is the perfectly rational foe who seeks purposefully, and rationally, to achieve goals that appear wholly unreasonable to us. American strategic thinkers have long favored the fallacy that Rational Strategic Persons must think alike [italics added].\textsuperscript{213}

A good example of the Payne/Gray thesis is Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. This is one of the many examples Payne uses to illustrate the dangers involved in believing that ‘rationality’ is synonymous with ‘reasonableness’. At about the same time Prime Minister Tojo Hideki told the Japanese Emperor that Japan had ‘no alternative but to begin war’ with the United States, Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson was advising the President that war was unlikely because no ‘rational Japanese could believe an attack on us could result in anything but disaster for his country.’\textsuperscript{214} The fact that Japanese leaders ultimately concluded that war was the only acceptable option surprised Washington. Before the attack, American officials judged that such a war to be a clear violation of what a ‘reasonable’ actor would have done.

Another good illustration of the Payne/Gray thesis involves American perceptions, developed since the 1990s, that Iran is an ‘irrational’ state. This narrative has carried over into the U.S. 2008 presidential elections, where candidates on either side of the partisan divide have continued to refer to Iran and its leadership as ‘thugs’ who are ‘irrational’.\textsuperscript{215} The depictions of Iran are essentially of the ‘mad’ thesis variety described earlier (i.e. that they are both ‘irrational’ and ‘bad’). The National


\textsuperscript{213} Gray, Maintaining Effective Deterrence, p vii

\textsuperscript{214} Quoted in, Scott Sagan, ‘The Origins of the Pacific War,’ Journal of Interdisciplinary History 18(4), Spring 1988, p 906

Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran’s nuclear capabilities issued in November 2007 sought to demolish perceptions that Iran was an ‘irrational’ state. Rather than portraying Iran as a rogue, irrational country determined to join the club of nations that possess nuclear weapons, the NIE argued that Iran’s decision-making was ‘rational’ – Iran had halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003 because it had weighed the costs and benefits of not doing so, and that any further move by Iran towards developing its nuclear weapon capabilities would be driven by the use of covert nuclear facilities which would flout international non-proliferation norms.\(^{216}\) The NIE report is worth quoting at length here:

Our assessment that Iran halted the program in 2003 primarily in response to international pressure indicates Tehran’s decisions are guided by a cost-benefit approach rather than a rush to a weapon irrespective of the political, economic, and military costs. This, in turn, suggests that some combination of threats of intensified international scrutiny and pressures, along with opportunities for Iran to achieve its security, prestige, and goals for regional influence in other ways, might—if perceived by Iran’s leaders as credible — prompt Tehran to extend the current halt to its nuclear weapons program [italics added by author].\(^{217}\)

To use the terminology employed by Payne and Gray, the NIE concluded that Iran’s decision-making concerning nuclear weapons development was essentially rational, but that the values driving the push to go nuclear was ‘unreasonable.’

Payne and Gray’s criticisms of deterrence in theory and practice were firmly situated in the third wave of deterrence theory in that they contested the supposed workability and effectiveness of deterrence strategies. Their criticisms were directed at what they perceived to be the excessive triumphalism that accompanied the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. Their call for a ‘deterrence reformation’\(^{218}\) largely reflected concerns that deterrence in theory and practice did not appear to be challenged during the Cold War. This in turn had contributed to general perceptions that deterrence had ‘worked’ and was successful. Such confidence extended to subsequent debates over the deterrence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) used by so-called ‘rogue

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\(^{217}\) National Intelligence Council, ‘Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities’

states’. As a result, the defence establishment in Washington grew increasingly bullish about how deterrence could be ‘tailored’ to fit the altered post-Cold War landscape. William Perry, the Secretary of Defense under President Bill Clinton, wrote in 1996 that deterrence had ‘worked’ in the four decades after the end of the Second World War and ‘World War III was averted.’ Perry, a Democrat, challenged Republican plans for national missile defence, arguing that deterrence had ‘protected us from the established nuclear arsenals for decades, and it will continue to protect us’ against established nuclear arsenals.\(^{219}\) Similarly, Jan Lodal, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense, said that deterrence would work against rogue threats, given that ‘nuclear deterrence worked throughout the Cold War, continues to work now, and it will work into the future … the exact same kinds of nuclear deterrence calculations that have always worked will continue to work.’\(^{220}\)

Writing in the late 1990s, Payne and Gray challenged what they perceived to be a misplaced confidence in the workability of deterrence strategies. Payne argued that the U.S. could no longer rely on deterrence working ‘reliably’ to prevent strategic attack as it did during the Cold War. Deterrence, he added, ‘can and will likely ‘fail unpredictably’ in the future.’\(^{221}\) Gray argued that deterrence was a ‘psychological relational variable’ that cannot be assured, since the success of a deterrence strategy was dependent on whether the other side was willing to be deterred.\(^{222}\) The strident pronouncements about the effectiveness of deterrence strategies – and Payne and Gray’s challenge to them – illustrates one of the classical dilemmas in deterrence theory: the age-old problem of proving a negative. Traditionally, positives – events that actually happened – can be proven with a high level of confidence. For example, if ‘A’ wanted to deter ‘B’ from committing ‘X’, deterrence failure is fairly obvious if ‘B’ were actually to commit ‘X’. The converse, however, is much harder to prove – and this remains the key problem behind sweeping statements that a particular deterrence posture had actually ‘worked’. If a parent tells a child not to jump headlong into the pool for fear of injury, and the child does not do so, it is hard to prove whether (a) the


\(^{222}\) Gray, ‘The Reformation of Deterrence,’ p 441
child was deterred by the parent’s warning; (b) the child felt that jumping into the pool would lead to other unfavourable outcomes e.g. getting his clothes wet or making him uncomfortable, or (c) the child never intended to jump into the pool in the first place. The three options mean that the parent’s deterrence threat has ‘worked’ if – and only if – scenario (a) was true. The same typology can be applied to the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Freedman argues that deterrence could be employed as a strategy and fail – or be irrelevant, in that there was nothing to deter.\footnote{Freedman, Deterrence, p 29} Kissinger adds that it is ‘especially difficult to assess’ whether the existing policy of deterrence during the Cold War was the best possible policy or a just barely effective one – again because it was impossible to prove that a negative did not occur.\footnote{Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994, p 608} Gray takes it a step further by suggesting that U.S. employment of deterrence strategies only provided a context that prevented Moscow from breaching its deterrence posture:

Plainly, whatever needed to be deterred in Soviet misbehavior that probably would have led to World War III, was deterred. That was no small matter and no small accomplishment. Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing what needed deterring, or even if in an active sense Soviet leaders ever actually were deterred. Nonetheless, that said, it is unarguable that U.S. policy (capabilities, declarations, and actions) provided at least one context for Soviet policymaking which should have helped those in Moscow who were unattracted by the prospect of dangerous adventure.\footnote{Gray, ‘The Reformation of Deterrence,’ p 434}

A few comments on reasonableness are necessary here. Payne’s reformulation of rationality is not altogether new. Manneheim defines a rational actor as one who achieves a ‘means to an end,’\footnote{Zagare and Kilgour, Perfect Deterrence, pp 42-43} regardless of the ‘morality’ or ‘rightness’ of that particular end. Zagare and Kilgour argue that even a leader who prefers systematic genocide to the benign neglect of a minority population may be rational – despite the repugnant preference ordering involved.\footnote{Cited in Philip Green, Deadly Logic: The Theory of Nuclear Deterrence, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966, p 216} Like other analysts before him, Payne – through his conceptualisation of ‘reasonableness’ – has added a normative dimension to rationality. Compared to earlier deterrence theorists, who had assumed detached, objective and rational players, policymakers have long recognised that decision-makers

\footnote{\textsuperscript{223} Freedman, Deterrence, p 29} \footnote{\textsuperscript{224} Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994, p 608} \footnote{\textsuperscript{225} Gray, ‘The Reformation of Deterrence,’ p 434} \footnote{\textsuperscript{226} Cited in Philip Green, Deadly Logic: The Theory of Nuclear Deterrence, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966, p 216} \footnote{\textsuperscript{227} Zagare and Kilgour, Perfect Deterrence, pp 42-43}
bring their own biases, values and beliefs into the crafting of foreign policy. Kaplan notes that Kissinger has a worldview of international relations that was highly cognizant of the human factors in policy-making:

By concentrating on personalities – Metternich, Castlereagh, Talleyrand – Kissinger demonstrated that policy is not made in an emotional vacuum by ‘objective’ people. The religious and social backgrounds of officials are inseparable from their opinions. Policymaking, like lovemaking, is an intensely human activity.228

Similarly, Weber’s definition of ‘instrumental rationality’ (‘zweckrationell’) and ‘value rationality’ ‘wertrationell’ is congruent with Payne’s formulation of rationality and reasonableness. The former is defined as the efficiency involved in achieving ends through means; the latter, like ‘reasonableness,’ refers to action in relation to some form of ‘value.’229 Payne’s conceptualisation of reasonableness does not always refer to widely-shared values and goals. According to Payne, ‘reasonableness’ is in the eyes of the beholder (i.e. the potential deterrer). By defining ‘reasonableness’ in the eyes of a particular observer or deterrer, Payne introduces the idea of relativity – the relativity of values and goals between an observer and the observed. Usually, a potential deterrer ‘predicts’ the behaviour of a deterree based on the deterrer’s conceptions on the world and how the deterrer understands it, not necessarily how the deterree or other observers in the world see it. An observed party conducts a surprise attack, but if this had been predicted and understood by a particular observer or deterrer, this in itself is not seen as an unreasonable act. It only becomes ‘unreasonable’ if the observer does not, as Payne defines it, ‘share’ or ‘understand’ the observed party’s goals and values.

Within the literature, the lack of sharing or understanding of the observed party’s goals is understood as a key route to deterrence failure. Planners of deterrence threats can only issue threats based on what they know about an opponent’s perceived goals and a lack of knowledge of the opponent’s goals can lead to threats which have not been ‘tailored’ to a specific adversary. In his seminal Origins of War, Kagan sums up such relatively opaque motivations in a word – honour:

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The reasons for seeking more power are often not merely the search for security or material advantage. Among them are demands for greater prestige, respect, and deference, in short, honor. Since such demands involve judgments even more subjective than those about material advantage, they will be even harder to satisfy.\textsuperscript{230}

Similarly, Gray cites the Thucydidean trinity of ‘fear, honor, and interest’ as the ‘local details’ that provide the context for failures in deterrence.\textsuperscript{231} The concept of honour is not confined to history; it has many contemporary manifestations in international politics. Its existence – though not always perceptible to potential defenders – is a key factor behind misunderstandings which lead to possible deterrence failures. North Korea’s pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability is a classic example. While American strategists can confidently surmise that Pyongyang wants such a capability to deter attack, much less perceptible is the possibility that North Korea wants to fulfill some longstanding need for ‘honour.’ Harrison argues that North Korea leader Kim Jong Il has ‘consciously attempted’ to soften the impact of the country’s economic stagnation by putting forth the country’s satellite and missile programmes as the symbols of national pride.\textsuperscript{232} As Pyongyang threatened to carry out its first-ever nuclear tests in October 2006, a Foreign Ministry statement warned that it would take ‘all necessary measures’ to defend the ‘sovereignty of the country and the dignity of the nation’ from what it deemed the Bush Administration’s ‘vicious hostile actions.’\textsuperscript{233}

Such adherence to concepts of honour is not confined to small powers like North Korea. China has continually cited the ‘humiliation’ behind colonial intrusions into its territory before 1949 as the reason for having ‘strong emotions’ about the country’s sovereignty, national independence and the integrity of its territory regarding contentious issues such as the recovery of Taiwan.\textsuperscript{234} Similarly, Russia continues to use the possession of its nuclear arsenal to assert its status as a great power. Hence talks

\textsuperscript{230} Donald Kagan, \textit{On The Origins of War}, p 569
\textsuperscript{232} Selig Harrison, \textit{Korean Endgame}, p 19
\textsuperscript{233} \textit{British Broadcasting Corporation Monitoring: Asia Pacific}, ‘N Korean Statement on Nuclear Test,’ 3 October 2006, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/5402292.stm} [accessed 6 October 2006]
between Washington and Moscow have involved Russian ‘manhood’ – in short, its honour.235 Deterrers are typically surprised by deterrence failure because they have assumed that their opponent was ‘rational’ and ‘reasonable’ based on their (the deterrers’) own conceptions of what ‘reasonableness’ constituted. However, the deterree was ‘rational’ but ‘unreasonable’ due to some intangible value such as ‘honour.’ This value was not shared or understood by the deterrer.

3.3 Friction

This chapter has thus far elaborated on rationality and reasonableness, which are two variables that are determinants of deterrence success or failure. An all-encompassing variable that works in tandem with rationality and reasonableness is friction. As defined by Clausewitz, friction refers to the milieu of causes and obstacles that frustrate the most well-articulated plans of war – factors that defy the achievement of ends through means. Frictional forces frustrate the proper application of deterrence i.e. such forces might turn what a deterrer had assumed to be an effective deterrence strategy into deterrence failure, or vice versa.

Clausewitz’s earliest known use of the term ‘friction’ defined it as the ‘effect of reality on ideas and intentions in war.’236 In his subsequent treatise On War, he described friction as the ‘the only concept that more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper.’237 It was a phenomenon which defied the clear-cut mathematical certainty that inhered in plans for war; in essence, he described it as the source of ‘difficulties’ that eventuate into situations which were previously unforeseen by the participants of war:

We see, therefore, how, from the commencement, the absolute, the mathematical as it is called, nowhere finds any sure basis in the calculations in the Art of War; and that from the outset there is a play of possibilities, probabilities, good and bad luck, which spreads about with all the coarse and fine threads of its web, and makes War of all branches of human activity the most like a gambling game.238

235 Kunsman and Lawson, A Primer on U.S. Strategic Nuclear Policy, p 88
238 Clausewitz, On War, p 117
As applied in the realm of deterrence, friction frustrates the very application of a theoretical, rational actor model of deterrence in a real-world situation which is prone to risk, chaos and general happenstance. The concept of friction is associated more with third-wave theorists, since such theorists were more interested in exploring how deterrence outcomes could be affected by 'real world' factors such as misperceptions. The presence of frictional forces means that the aims and objectives as laid out by a general theory of deterrence (as per the first and second waves) might not be achieved. Gray sums up Clausewitz's understanding of friction as the force that actually frustrates the application of deterrence. He writes that friction can be 'profoundly depressing for those theorists and policymakers who aspire to a certainty in deterrence performance.'\(^\text{239}\) This thesis agrees with Gray's interpretation of friction, but it is also noteworthy that because friction frustrates the proper application of deterrence strategies, it can also lead to a clear-cut deterrence success when a deterrer expected only a low probability of deterrence success or even failure (although in the latter case, the potential deterrer would not have implemented a deterrence strategy from the outset). Friction can lead to both good and bad deterrence outcomes that are not expected by a potential deterrer.

Some contend that while friction is a major causative element behind the frustration of war aims, the concept has become too intangible. Andrew Marshall, for example, contends that Clausewitz's broad conception of general friction (\textit{Gesamtbegriff einer allgemeinen Friktion}) has embraced so much of war that it does not provide a 'very precise instrument for analyzing the phenomenon at issue.'\(^\text{240}\) Watts suggests three sources of general friction as a late-20th Century alternative to Clausewitz's eight factors behind friction\(^\text{241}\) – the fallibility of human decision-making, the lack of information in military affairs and general chaos:

\(^{239}\) Colin Gray, 'The Reformation of Deterrence: Moving On,' pp 448-449
\(^{241}\) These are: (1) insufficient knowledge of the enemy (2) rumors (3) uncertainty about one's own strength and position (4) the uncertainties that cause friendly troops to tend their own difficulties (5) differences between expectations and reality (6) the fact that one's own army is never as strong paper (7) the difficulties in keeping an army supplied and (8) the tendency to change or abandon well-thought-out plans when confronted with the vivid physical images and perceptions of the battlefield. See Paret, \textit{Clausewitz and the State}, pp 197-198
(a) Constraints imposed by human physical and cognitive limits, whose magnitude or impact are inevitably magnified by the intense stresses, pressures, and responsibilities of actual combat;

(b) Informational uncertainties and unforeseeable differences stemming, ultimately, from the spatial-temporal dispersion of information in the external environment, in military organisations, and in the mental constructs of individual participants;

(c) The structural nonlinearity of combat processes which can give rise to the long-term unpredictability of results and outcomes by magnifying the effects of unknowable small differences and unforeseen events (or, conversely, producing negligible results from large inputs).

Watts’ elaborate attempt at adding a more conceptual component to the Clausewitzian concept of general friction can basically be distilled into three main factors that separate war in the abstract and war in reality – ‘human factors,’ ‘informational uncertainties’ and ‘nonlinearity.’ Watts argues that the concept of friction is not without contemporary examples. The ‘most troubling’ manifestation of general friction is seen in America’s most recent conflicts (Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001-2002 and Iraq in 2003), where the U.S. has struggled to achieve long-term political ends after the cessation of major combat operations.

Watts’ three factors of friction – the fallibility of human decision-making, the lack of information in military affairs and general chaos – mirror the work done by third wave deterrence theorists. Like Clausewitz and Watts, third wave theorists argue through inductive case studies that deterrence success is not always an immutable fact due to ‘real world’ factors. Applied to a specific context, these factors are in essence an elaboration of the general concept of friction. They include misperceptions, individual-centred factors such as psychopathy or idiosyncrasies, human error, stress, loss of control and organisational dysfunction.

242 Watts, Clausewitzian Friction and Future War, pp 120-121
surrounding deterrence threats can lead to varied outcomes. This converges with the general criticisms of deterrence theory by third-wave theorists, who argue that contextual factors are critical in determining whether a specific deterrence threat can be successful. George argues that coercive diplomacy – of which deterrence is a variant – is an ‘abstract model of diplomacy’ that spins out its general logic without ‘reference to the characteristics of any particular situation’ – the specific context:

... in transforming the model into a variant of the strategy to be used in an actual situation, the policy maker must pay close attention to whether and how the logic associated with successful coercive diplomacy can be achieved in that particular set of circumstances. Many different situational-contextual factors vary from one crisis to another. The policy maker faces the difficult but necessary task of adapting the strategy of coercive diplomacy to the special configuration of the situation.

George adds that the abstract model of coercive diplomacy does not incorporate into the practice of deterrence factors that could affect the potential deterree’s mode of decision-making – this includes misperceptions, miscalculations, or ‘rationality’ impeded by an opponent’s psychological variables or values, culture and traditions that vary from the deterring state. Such factors essentially frustrate the successful application of deterrence strategies. Similarly, Lebow and Stein argue that deterrence strategy makes ‘unrealistic assumptions’ about the way people reason. Based on their historical case studies, they argue that:

Human beings are not always instrumentally rational and are even less likely to be so in acute crises when they are emotionally aroused and confront intense conflict among their objectives. Yet this is precisely the situation in which defenders most rely on deterrence. The policy-making environment is also far from transparent. Cultural, political and personal barriers to assessment frequently combine to make it opaque to outsiders.

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245 George and Simmons (eds.), The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, pp 20-21, George, Forceful Persuasion, p 4
246 Lebow and Stein, We All Lost the Cold War, pp 330-331
The compounded effect of contextual factors leads to deterrence outcomes not foreseen by potential deterrears. A good example of this is the story of a Russian chief of state in 1914 who, after persuading the Tsar to mobilise, smashed his telephone so that he could not be contacted if the Tsar changed his mind.\(^{247}\)

Here it is useful to elaborate on the relationship between friction and the various types of rationality discussed thus far – substantive rationality, bounded rationality and irrationality. It could be argued that frictional forces have the biggest impact on irrational actors, a lesser impact on boundedly rational actors and the least impact on substantively rational actors. The irrational actor or deterree is by definition unable to gather information intelligently as he goes about listing his options, or choose the option that maximises his utility. Friction acts as a multiplier of such irrationality. Friction also appears to be intimately related to boundedly rational actors, since such actors are – as discussed earlier – dealing with ‘bounds’ on knowledge, calculation and multiple objectives. Arguably, the substantively rational actor should be less affected by frictional forces, given that he should be able to assess all the outcomes available to him. However, the uncertainty associated with such outcomes could also still leave a substantively rational actor vulnerable to frictional forces as he seeks to come up with the probabilities attached to the outcomes. Since bounded rationality is the rationality most prevalent in the ‘real world’, the following section details how two kinds of frictional forces – misperceptions and organizational dysfunction – can affect boundedly rational actors.

### 3.3.1 Misperceptions

Boundedly rational actors encounter misperceptions as they seek to employ, as Jervis has argued, short cuts to rationality their decision making. In the absence of perfect information about their complex environments, these actors use images, perceptions or conceptions – sometimes incorrect – as heuristics to make sense of their world. The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis is one example. Both Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and U.S. President John Kennedy felt that they were defenders of the status quo. Khrushchev felt that the status quo was the perpetuation of the successful revolution in Cuba, while Kennedy felt that the status quo was a Western hemisphere

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free of foreign military bases and subversion. As a result, Kennedy initially perceived – erroneously – that the missile deployments on Cuba were inherently threatening and signs of the aggression of Soviet communism. This only changed later when Kennedy realised that there were some defensive objectives behind the deployment. Khrushchev failed to see that the deployment was inherently threatening to Washington – instead he saw it as a defence against American intimidation. This led to his rather confident claims that the deployment would not invite American encroachments. He intended the missile deployments to primarily deter ‘those who would attack Cuba.’

3.3.2 Organisation Dysfunction

Although organisations are composed of human beings, they are not like them. Organisations function within bounded rationality, with inherent limits on calculation and coordination. Like individuals, organisations use simplifying mechanisms or short cuts to understand and respond to uncertainty in the outside world. They develop routines and standard operating procedures to satisfice – adopt the first option that satisfies utility minimally – instead of maximising expected utility.

Arguments used by observers of organisational and bureaucratic behaviour are fundamentally questions about the level of analysis – while the rational actor model views governments as acting rationally, the alternative view is that the leaders of such governments see their beliefs, the options available to them and the final implementation of their decisions as being influenced by powerful forces within the country. These powerful forces impact on such leaders could be political factions, bureaucracies, organisations or individuals; the key point is that such competing rationalities have a dampening effect on the state acting as a unitary rational actor. The term ‘organisational dysfunction’ covers a wide range of ‘possible sins’ – in the absence of perfect and centralised control, different rationalities might impede states

248 Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*, pp 310-311
249 Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*, p 331
250 Schecter and Lucknov (trans. and eds.), *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, pp 171-172
from rational decision-making, leading to a distorting impact on the collective rationality of a government. Frei argues that even if men act rationally, governments—which are made up of different individuals, groups and factions—may not necessarily do so.\textsuperscript{254}

Rhodes goes on to define two routes which lead to non-unitary decision-making at the state level. Firstly, a top decision-maker must share power with advisers and bureaucrats who control access to information and specialised knowledge. Secondly, the top decision-maker also effectively shares power with subordinates who must interpret his instructions, translating commands that might or might not be ambiguous into actual policies on the ground.\textsuperscript{255} In their case studies of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the Middle East crisis in 1973, Lebow and Stein found that both American and Soviet leaders encountered insubordination, institutional planning and politically autonomous allies that interfered with their ability to control strategy and made both crises more difficult to manage.\textsuperscript{256}

The first route means that the formulation of the decisional problem, and subsequently, the policy choice, by a top decision-maker is influenced by information provided by his colleagues—some of whom might not share the same preferences as he does. A good example of this is supplied by Kahn, of a hypothetical conversation between Nikita Khrushchev and a general who sought to convince him on the chance of a perfect pre-emptive strike: the latter argues that Khrushchev, by pressing ‘three hundred buttons,’ has a ‘good chance of getting away scot-free’ from a retaliatory strike by the Americans; all that the Soviet leader has to do is to ‘pick up the telephone and give the order.’ In answer to Khrushchev’s query that some ‘mad’ Ukrainian down the chain of command might get him into trouble by pressing the buttons ‘ahead of time,’ the general answers that there were no Ukrainians in the nuclear strike force, and that all officers involved in the strike operations ‘are married and have children and we

\textsuperscript{255} Rhodes, \textit{Power and MADness}, p 75
\textsuperscript{256} Lebow and Stein, \textit{We All Lost the Cold War}, p 341
have told these officers that if they fire early not only they will be shot but their families will be severely punished.\textsuperscript{257}

The second route – whereby the implementation of a rational policy could be curtailed by subordinates – is a frequent occurrence. In 1941, unauthorised action by Dean Acheson led to a de facto embargo of oil exports to Japan – a move not approved by the President and one that potentially escalated the risks of war with Japan. President Roosevelt had instead approved plans for the automatic granting of oil import licences to Japan. But he had not focused on the mechanics of the release. While he was absent, Acheson purposely created an effective embargo against Japan. The effective embargo was a noose around Japan that ‘pulled so tightly that he (Roosevelt) could not loosen it when he returned’ from a meeting with British premier Winston Churchill in August.\textsuperscript{258} During the Cuban Missile Crisis, disgruntled military officers sought to take matters into their own hands. Outraged at having to tolerate American intelligence overflights of Cuba, they gave a Soviet surface to air missile (SAM) commander permission to shoot down a U-2 spy plane – an incident that constituted, arguably, the most serious moment during the crisis.\textsuperscript{259} Similarly, General Thomas Power, the commander of U.S. Strategic Air Command, ordered a DEFCON II alert in the clear, not in an encrypted form. This was done against regulations and without the knowledge of the joint chiefs of secretary of defense. If the Soviet Union had alerted its forces in response, General Power could – in true Strangelovian fashion – have argued that the Soviet alert was the precursor of an attack and that pre-emption was necessary to protect American lives.\textsuperscript{260} A more recent example is Israel’s offensive against Lebanon in August 2006, when Israeli generals continued to bombard Lebanon from the air. This was despite Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s private agreement with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to halt temporarily Israel’s air bombardments of Lebanon for two days following civilian deaths in a Lebanese town. The generals had

\textsuperscript{257} Herman Kahn, \textit{Thinking About The Unthinkable}, London: Weidenfled and Nicolson. 1962, pp 151-152, cited in Morgan, Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis, p 118

\textsuperscript{258} Scott Sagan, ‘From Deterrence to Coercion To War,’ in George and Simmons (eds.), \textit{The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy} (2\textsuperscript{nd} ed), p 70

\textsuperscript{259} Robert Kennedy, \textit{Thirteen Days: A Memoir Of The Cuban Missile Crisis}, New York: W.W. Norton, 1969, p 98, cited in Lebow and Stein, \textit{We All Lost the Cold War}, pp 302-305

interpreted liberally the proviso that Israel reserved the right to strike at perceived threats – a move that ran counter to the decision made by the Israeli premier.  

3.4 The Interaction of Rationality, Reasonableness and Friction

This chapter has thus far discussed two key variables – rationality and reasonableness – and also how frictional forces affect the implementation of deterrence strategies. It will now address the issue of how the interaction of all three variables – rationality, reasonableness and friction – leads to different deterrence situations.

As discussed earlier, rationality is an important determinant of deterrence success. As the literature on rationality suggests, a high level of rationality leads to a high level of deterrability – a rational actor is able to gather the information available to him, list his options and choose the option that is his utility. Therefore, it is likely that such a rational actor would take cognizance of the net costs that he would incur if he were to take an action proscribed by a potential deterrer. At this juncture, however, it can be argued that the ‘perfect’ form of rationality – substantive rationality – can be left out of our interaction of rationality, reasonableness and friction, given that the ability to predict all possible outcomes is not one found in the ‘real world.’ This narrows the discussion down to bounded rationality. Arguably, the relationship between boundedly rational actors and deterrability is not so clear cut. Boundedly rational actors are deterred, if and only if the choice they take (i.e. the ‘satisficing’ choice’) is congruent with the outcome preferred by a potential deterrer. If the ‘satisficing’ choice they take (which arises due to the ‘bounds’ of knowledge and processing capability) is not congruent with the choice preferred by the deterrer, deterrence fails. An irrational actor, by definition, is unable to choose consistently the option that maximises his utility; as a result, the likelihood of deterrence success if likely to be low.

Reasonableness is another determinant of deterrence success. According to Payne’s formulation, an actor is deemed reasonable if the observer understands his decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some ‘shared or understood set of values or standards.’ This means that deterrer who correctly deems his potential deterree to be ‘reasonable’ would understand or share the values that drive the

261 Harvey Morris, ‘Israel’s Unlikely Warrior,’ Financial Times, 5 August 2006, p 9
262 Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, p 7
Moving Towards Empathy

deterree’s actions, and thus would be able to design a deterrence strategy that is likely to be successful. Conversely, an unreasonable actor is one whose values or standards that his potential deterrer does not understand or share. As a result, the likelihood of deterrence success is arguably lower.

As defined, frictional forces disrupt the proper application of deterrence strategy as envisioned by a potential deterrer. For example, a deterrer could be facing a rational and reasonable deterree. In such a case, the deterree rationally picks the choice that gives him the highest utility (which is incidentally the choice preferred by the deterrer). In addition, the deterrer shares or understands the values that drive the deterree’s actions. As a result, the deterrer would expect a high probability of deterrence success.

Friction, however, disrupts the implementation of deterrence strategy. Due to organisational dysfunction, for example, a lower-level military commander in the state to be deterred could – against the commands of that state’s leaders – fire off a missile that leads to deterrence failure. The same friction could also apply in reverse. A potential deterrer could be facing an irrational and unreasonable actor and expect deterrence failure. Due to friction (for example, the lower-level commander could have fallen asleep when ordered by his political superiors to fire the offending missile that leads to the failure of deterrence), however, deterrence failure is avoided.

3.4.1 The 2x2 Matrix of Deterrence Situations

The interaction of rationality, reasonableness and friction can be distilled into a 2x2 matrix, representing a typology of various deterrence situations (see Figure 1 on page 78). The vertical columns represent the two types of rationality – ‘bounded rationality’ and ‘irrationality.’ As discussed earlier, ‘substantive rationality’ – which was associated with the first and second wave of deterrence theory – has been left out because it does not represent rationality inherent in the ‘real world.’ The horizontal rows represent the two different types of reasonableness – ‘reasonable’ and ‘unreasonable.’ Friction is represented by the two diagonal lines in the 2x2 matrix. The two diagonal lines going from left to right divide the matrix into 3 separate areas – 2 white areas representing deterrence failure and 1 gray sector representing deterrence success. In all, the interaction of different permutations of the two variables of rationality and reasonableness, together with the effects of friction, is presented as a 2x2 matrix that comprises 4 different types of deterrence situations. These situations suggest deterrence success or failure, depending on the level of friction inherent in each
situation. In Situation 1 at the bottom right quadrant, for example, a deterrer faces an irrational-unreasonable actor. This would suggest deterrence failure; however, there is a small possibility of deterrence success (as represented by the relatively small white area in the quadrant) due to frictional forces. In Situation 3 at the top left quadrant, a deterrer faces a rational-reasonable deterree. This would suggest deterrence success; however, deterrence failure is still possible due to friction. This is represented by the relatively small grey area at the bottom right corner of the quadrant.

In summary, the 2x2 matrix provides an overview of the literature on rationality and reasonableness. The 4 deterrence situations offered, however, provide nothing more than a typological shorthand to assess the potential success or failure inherent in a particular deterrence situation. It does not predict definitive and discrete outcomes of deterrence strategies resulting from the character of potential deterrees; it only suggests that a failure or success would occur, depending on the interaction of the various variables described.
FIGURE 1: TYPOLOGY OF DETERRENCE SITUATIONS

Clausewitzian 'Friction'

Rational

Irrational

Reasonable

Unreasonable

SITUATION 3

SITUATION 2

SITUATION 4

SITUATION 1

Deterrence Failure

Deterrence Success
3.4.1.1 Situation 1 – Irrational and Unreasonable

In instances of Situation 1, deterrees face actors who are irrational and unreasonable. As Dror argues, such ‘crazy states’ have a low level of predictability and their actions are likely to be inherently surprising.\(^{263}\) These actors, however, occur very rarely; Gray comments that one can discount the phenomenon of ‘truly irrational political leaders,’ given that such a situation, though severe, is usually short-lived.\(^{264}\) In such situations, deterrees typically precipitate deterrence failures. As described earlier, such tendencies can cause certain actors to succumb to the three routes of irrationality – unreasoned choice, inconsistent evaluation and miscalculation. But other factors – stress, alcohol and drug consumption – can also lead to one, two, or all three pathways to irrationality. As defined in Chapter 2, ‘mad’ is simply equivalent to an actor being both irrational and unreasonable. Due to the effect of friction, however, the possibility of deterrence success cannot be ruled out.

Saddam Hussein’s war on Iran in 1980 and the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 are representative of deterrees under Situation 1. Saddam was irrational in that he miscalculated the net costs of the two campaigns. He was also unreasonable in that the goals that supported his actions were not understood or shared by the Iranians and Americans respectively. The Kuwaiti invasion was driven by Saddam’s tendency to pursue courses of action involving high risk. This was not a value understood or shared by the Americans.

3.4.1.2 Situation 2 – Rational and Unreasonable

Knox argues that professional historians tend to underrate the degree of ‘unwisdom’ in the world of action; as a result, they often expect leaders to behave rationally. He argues that Mussolini’s outwardly erratic actions have aroused ‘widespread contempt, which in turn has inhibited analysis of his intentions and actions on their own terms.’\(^{265}\) His comments hew to Situation 2, where the victim of a surprise attack or deterrence failure did not understand his opponent’s goals and values. This is an interpretation of Payne and Gray’s rational and unreasonable actors. The irony with

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\(^{264}\) Gray, Maintaining Effective Deterrence, p 21

such occurrences is that the initiator of the surprise was rational and unreasonable, but was perceived to be irrational by the victim.

In Situation 2, deterrees are boundedly rational – they do not possess perfect information, they use procedures or heuristics to seek to maximise their expected utility. While American officials perceived the Japanese to be ‘irrational’ for launching their attack on Pearl Harbor attack, the Americans failed to understand Japan’s goals i.e. Japan wanted to fight the U.S. rather than concede. Sagan argues that the Japanese were rational since they did seek to maximise the country’s national values based on a ‘consistent set of values’. Their attack on Pearl Harbor stemmed from such consistent values. On September 6, 1941, an Imperial Conference agreed that given what were deemed America’s hostile intentions towards Japan, war with the United States ‘could not be avoided’ and there was ‘nothing else’ to be done about it.

Chapter 2 provided several examples of Situation 2 actors. The Soviet Union’s doctrine of nuclear warfighting is one of them. Such a doctrine was perceived to be irrational by the Americans, but to the Soviets it was a rational – albeit different – way of prevailing in the event of a nuclear war. The Soviets were unreasonable – they were driven by values that were not understood or shared by the Americans. The overarching impact of Marxist-Leninist ideology made them reject Western concepts of deterrence and strategic stability. Similarly, Saddam’s launching of SCUD missiles into Israel during the first Gulf War was a rational but unreasonable act. He rationally but wrongly calculated that such a strike would have hurt the Israelis enough to draw them into the war and tear the U.S.-led coalition apart, but not be damaging enough to elicit a nuclear response by Tel Aviv. Saddam’s values and motivations were also not understood or shared by the Americans or the Israelis.

Chapter 2 discussed the use of ‘feigned irrationality’ strategies by Khrushchev, Mao and Saddam. They were rationally projecting the image of irrationality to deter

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266 Scott Sagan, ‘From Deterrence to Coercion To War,’ p 83
267 Chapter 4 will argue that goals are derived from interests, which are in turn derived from a country’s values
their opponents from taking certain actions against them. To the extent that such actions stemmed from goals and values not understood or shared by their opponents, such strategies were unreasonable – but rational. This mode of ‘calculated craziness’ could be perceived to be outright irrational or surprising, but they do not automatically lead to deterrence failure.

Through history, the U.S. has also used such ‘rationality of the irrational’ strategies. Such strategies might come across as a surprise to certain observers, but they do not necessarily lead to deterrence failure. In 1994, while the Nuclear Posture Review was being prepared, the Strategic Advisory Group recommended a policy of not appearing ‘too rational or cool-headed’ in deterring WMD usage. The group used the example of U.S. President H.W. Bush’s 1991 warning to Saddam Hussein not to use chemical weapons. A SAG paper proposed that if within the American nuclear establishment, ‘some elements … appear potentially ‘out of control,’ it would reinforce fears and doubts within adversaries.’ In 1969, President Nixon sent a fleet of 18 thermonuclear-equipped B-52 bombers over Alaska. The aircraft were refuelled in midair by KC-135 tanker aircraft, and then flew in oval patterns toward the Soviet Union and back, on 18-hour ‘vigils’ over the northern polar ice cap. Sagan argues that Nixon’s aim behind the move was to convince Soviet and North Vietnamese leaders that he might do anything to end the war in Vietnam, in accordance with a ‘madman theory’ of coercive diplomacy. At the height of Syria’s attempted overthrow of Jordan’s King Hussein a year later, Nixon underscored how he still adhered to his ‘madman theory.’ Nixon told a group of newspaper editors that ‘it would not be such a bad thing if the Soviets believed he was capable of irrational action.’

The ‘rationality of the irrational’ strategies have a long theoretical lineage that traces back to nuclear war fighting debates at the height of the Cold War in the 1960s. Thomas Schelling discussed the merits of ‘not having everything under control, for being a little impulsive or unreliable,’; Herman Kahn and Glenn Snyder discussed the rationale for such strategies in the context of retaliatory strategies in the first strikes on the US by the Soviet Union. See Herman Kahn, On Escalation, pp 57-58; Schelling, Arms and Influence, pp 38; Snyder, Deterrence and Defense, pp 25-28. Also see Jeffrey Kimball, ‘Did Thomas C. Schelling Invent the Madman Theory?; Jeffrey Kimball, ‘Is Bush Trying out the Madman Theory?’ History News Network, at http://hnn.us/articles/10428.html [accessed 20 February 2006]; Thomas C. Schelling, Strategies of Commitment and Other Essays, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, pp 2-3

269 The ‘rationality of the irrational’ strategies have a long theoretical lineage that traces back to nuclear war fighting debates at the height of the Cold War in the 1960s. Thomas Schelling discussed the merits of ‘not having everything under control, for being a little impulsive or unreliable,’; Herman Kahn and Glenn Snyder discussed the rationale for such strategies in the context of retaliatory strategies in the first strikes on the US by the Soviet Union. See Herman Kahn, On Escalation, pp 57-58; Schelling, Arms and Influence, pp 38; Snyder, Deterrence and Defense, pp 25-28. Also see Jeffrey Kimball, ‘Did Thomas C. Schelling Invent the Madman Theory?; Jeffrey Kimball, ‘Is Bush Trying out the Madman Theory?’ History News Network, at http://hnn.us/articles/10428.html [accessed 20 February 2006]; Thomas C. Schelling, Strategies of Commitment and Other Essays, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, pp 2-3


272 Kaplan, ‘Kissinger, Metternich and Realism,’ pp 81-82
3.4.1.3 Situation 3 – Rational and Reasonable

In instances of Situation 3, deterrees are rational and reasonable – they are boundedly rational, and have goals which are understood or shared by their potential deterrers. In such instances, deterrence success is likely. This is arguably the ‘sweet spot’ in the matrix that many potential deterrees would aspire to. On the other hand, there is an element of friction in this quadrant of the matrix as well that could possibly frustrate the application of a successful deterrence strategy (the grey area). The following chapter will argue that rational-reasonable deterrees might have different goals compared to their deterrers, but that the latter can implement deterrence strategies with a fairly high chance of success, given his (the deterrer’s) ability to fashion a deterrence strategy that has some empathy with the deterree’s goals. It could be argued that at the height of detente in the 1970s, the Soviet-American relationship had entered an instance of Situation 3. Conversely, however, it can be argued – yet again – that deterrence success is not verifiable.

3.4.1.4 Situation 4 – Irrational and Reasonable

In instances of Situation 4, deterrees have goals that are understood and shared by their potential deterrers (they are reasonable). But they are irrational due to the three routes to irrationality examined earlier – miscalculation, unreasoned choice and inconsistent evaluation. As described earlier, various factors can lead to these three routes to irrationality – stress, drug intake, psychopathy, stress, mistakes and accidents. Stress, alcohol or drug consumption can lead to miscalculation and unreasoned choice. Psychopathy could lead to all three – miscalculation, unreasoned choice and inconsistent evaluation. In essence, deterrees in instance of Situation 4 do not seek to precipitate deterrence failure deliberately, but deterrence failure results from their being affected by the factors listed above. In her classic March of Folly, Tuchman details with some clarity how some actors through history have demonstrated unreasoned choice in their actions:

A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests. Mankind, it seems, makes a poorer performance of government than of almost any other human activity. In this sphere, wisdom, which may be defined as the exercise of judgment acting on experience, common sense and available information, is less operative and more frustrated than it should be. Why do holders of high office so often act contrary to the way reason points and enlightened self-interest
suggest? Why does intelligent mental process seem so often not to function? [italics added]273

Of the three routes to irrationality, unreasoned choice – actors behaving against their own interests – seems to be the most common. The rulers of Troy dragged the ‘suspicious looking wooden horse’ inside their walls, despite ‘every reason to suspect a Greek trick’; Charles XII, Napoleon and then Hitler invaded Russia despite the disasters suffered by their predecessors, King George III opted to coerce rather than conciliate with the American colonies, despite advice from his counsellors to the contrary.274 Other examples of actors who execute decisions based on unreasoned choice include daydreamers, sleepwalkers and hot-tempered individuals.275

3.5 Conclusion

Two major points need to be made here. Firstly, while the matrix seeks to encompass as many factors that could lead to certain deterrence situations, it cannot be applied to all instances where deterrence strategies are employed. Not all deterrence failures, for example, eventuate from rational but unreasonable actors. A deterree might have been bent on challenging a deterrence posture from the onset, without regard for the costs or consequences of such an action. Secondly, instances of truly irrational actors are rare. Most actors in the ‘real world’ are boundedly rational, but as highlighted, the factors behind irrationality – stress, alcohol consumption, psychopathic tendencies, and so on – need to affect a particular actor for a long enough duration and with considerable strength to lead to the three ‘routes’ to irrationality of unreasoned choice, inconsistent evaluation and miscalculation. Therefore, Chapter 4 – and the three case studies in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 – will focus on deterrence situations involving actors who are rational in a bounded or limited sense

274 Tuchman, The March of Folly, pp 2-3
275 Rhodes, Power And Madness, p 65
CHAPTER 4: THE THREE-STEP REASONABLENESS MATRIX

This chapter will refine Payne’s conceptualisation of ‘reasonableness’ with three different types of reasonableness: ‘unrecognised unreasonableness,’ ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and ‘recognised reasonableness.’ It will propose that each type of reasonableness involves at least one of the following three components: knowledge of an opponent’s goals; appreciation of this knowledge and empathy, which is defined as the defender’s ability to view the world from the perspective of his deterrer, the conveyance of such understanding to the potential challenger and the coordination of expectations. The first type of reasonableness – ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ – involves a deterrer’s lack of appreciation of his knowledge of his opponent’s goals. It is typically associated with deterrence failure. The second type of reasonableness, ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ involves a deterrer’s appreciation of his knowledge about his opponent’s goals. This type of reasonableness is associated with deterrence either not attempted or coupled with other strategies such as reassurance. The third type of reasonableness – ‘recognised reasonableness’ – involves a deterrer’s knowledge of his opponent’s goals, an appreciation of this knowledge as well as empathy. This chapter will also show that lessons are learnt and norms formed via a process of learning and adaptation, following each deterrence episode. Depending on the ‘type’ of ‘reasonableness’ in a previous deterrence encounter, such lessons and norms increase appreciation and empathy in a long-standing bilateral relationship.

This chapter is structured into three sections. The first section will explore the similarities between strategic surprise and deterrence failure, highlighting the processes that cause victims of surprise or deterress to perceive their opponents as ‘reasonable’ when they are actually ‘unreasonable.’ The second section attempts to refine Payne’s concept of reasonableness. It does so by defining an opponent’s conceptual framework as his decision-making process supported by his values, interests and goals. It will also elaborate on the processes involved in assessing reasonableness – knowledge, appreciation and empathy. The third section will propose that learning and adaptation from deterrence encounters leads to the formation of certain lessons and norms that subsequently improve appreciation and empathy in later deterrence encounters.
4.1 Surprises and Deterrence Failures: Some Parallels

Strategic surprise and deterrence failure are fraternal twins. Payne mentions four incidents of surprise in history – the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Chinese entry into the Korean War in November 1950, the emplacement of nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba in late 1962 and Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. All four are also referred to as deterrence failures elsewhere in the literature. There is a clear reason for the parallel drawn between strategic surprise and deterrence failure – both concepts deal with the faulty assumptions that victims of deterrence failure and surprise make about possible courses of action by deterrees and initiators of surprise. Strategic surprises are, in essence, instances where acts initiated by one party do not conform to the strategic assumptions of the victim. As Kam notes, surprise ‘is a military act not consistent with the victim’s expectations and assumptions.’ From this standpoint, he concludes that, the strength of surprise depends on the ‘nature and depth of these assumptions.’ As in strategic surprises, deterrence failures do not conform to the assumptions of the deterrer (i.e. that the deterree would be deterred).

Betts has provided the clearest linkage between studies of strategic surprise and deterrence. He argues that in cases of deterrence failure, the apparent strength of deterrence varies directly with the probability of surprise. In other words, the stronger the deterrer perceives their deterrence postures to be, the more likely such postures may fail. A deterrer who assesses his deterrence posture to be solid, Betts adds, will perceive an enemy attack as ‘irrational,’ such that signals that deterrence is failing ‘may not be understood as soon as they would be if an enemy decision to strike did not seem crazy.’ This chapter suggests that that deterrence failures are generally strategic surprises, but not all strategic surprises are deterrence failures. For example, the launch of a weather-research ballistic missile by Norway in January 1995 which put Russia on a nuclear alert was a strategic surprise but not a failure in deterrence.

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277 See, for example, George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 1974, Lebow and Stein, We All Lost the Cold War, Lebow, Between Peace And War, p 193, Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, Sagan, ‘From Deterrence to Coercion To War,’ in George and Simmons (eds), The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (2nd ed), pp 76-83


279 Betts, Surprise Attack, p 20
Betts and other analysts are stating that strategic surprises ‘work’ because they follow a course that follows no logical course to the rational mind – or more specifically, to the mind of the victim. In other words, surprise works because it violates rational expectations – or more specifically, what has been defined to be rationality in the eyes of the victim. Similarly, potential challengers to deterrence postures in the four cases cited by Payne are frequently mentioned as ‘irrational’ actors who had failed to assess their cost/gain calculus properly. In 1962, President Kennedy’s National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy said he doubted the Soviets would ‘do anything as crazy from our standpoint as placement of Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba.’ Similarly, when confronted with intelligence data showing that the Chinese might intervene in the Korean War on behalf of the North Korea, Americans officials deemed such a potential act as ‘sheer madness.’

Moreover, the fact that the act of surprise or deterrence failure was implausible in the eyes of the victim actually made it more plausible for the initiator. This counter-intuitive logic is best expressed by Handel’s risk paradox:

‘... the greater the risk, the less likely it seems (to the victim), and the less risky it becomes. In fact the greater the risk, the smaller it becomes (to the initiator).’

Flowing from Handel’s logic, Japan’s consideration of a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was a risky proposition, since Tokyo was considering an initiative which would require something far beyond its capabilities. As a result, the eventual victims of surprise – the Americans – dismissed such a possibility as harebrained. Paradoxically, the precise fact that the Americans deemed such an attack as harebrained made it less risky to the Japanese. Wrote U.S. Ambassador Joseph Grew: ‘National sanity would dictate against such an event, but Japanese sanity cannot be measured by our own standards of logic.’ What Grew meant was that American standards of

280 Kam, Surprise Attack, p 72
281 Kagan, On The Origins Of War, p 503
282 U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations Of The United States, Minutes, Wake Island conference, 15 October 1950, pp 953-954, cited in Zhang, Deterrence And Strategic Culture, p 102
285 Cited in Kam, Surprise Attack, p 69
'national sanity,' as applied to their expectations of Japanese, could not predict the eventual attack on Pearl Harbor. But the Japanese had a different logic in their decision-making framework. Such different perceptions of risk are the essence of surprise. The same paradox applied to Egypt’s surprise attack on Israel in 1973. Five months before the war, U.S. Director of Central Intelligence James Schlesinger informed Henry Kissinger that the Egyptian General Staff had been ordered to prepare a plan to cross the Suez Canal. But CIA analysts argued that such a plan must have been developed for psychological purposes because it did not coincide with ‘rational objectives.’ The U.S. was not the direct victim of surprise attack in this case; but the CIA at the time deemed that any attack across the Canal would be irrational in their eyes.

Using Payne’s ‘reasonableness’ concept, it can be argued that the ‘rationality’ of initiators of deterrence failures or surprise attacks is not the issue in question. According to Payne, while the victims of deterrence failure or strategic surprise may perceive ‘irrationality’ on the part of such initiators, distinct instances of irrationality are rare. Instead, both deterrence failures and strategic surprises are mainly initiated by actors who are manifestly rational, yet their conceptual frameworks were not known or shared by their victims. In other words, such actors are, in Payne’s terms, rational but ‘unreasonable.’ They breach ‘reasonableness’ by cleverly ‘designing around’ deterrence postures in ways unknown to their opponents. During the 1973 Middle East crisis, for example, the Israelis did not know about Egypt’s goals – that Cairo was willing to lose in a war that could eventually be used as leverage for political negotiations. In clandestine fashion, the Egyptians ‘designed around’ Israeli deterrence postures – they developed a military strategy to minimise Israel’s advantages, exploited the available constraints on Israel’s use of its full range of military capabilities and ‘imposed ground rules on the level and pattern of violence that would favour their assets and diminish their liabilities. Israel’s failure to know Egypt’s goals – that Cairo wanted to wage a war, not to win it, but to secure political concessions from Tel

\[286\] Amos Perlmutter, ‘Israel’s Fourth War, October 1973: Political And Military Misperceptions,’ Orbis vol. 19, Summer 1975, p 440

\[287\] The phrase was first coined by George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, p 521

\[288\] Janice Gross Stein, ‘Calculation, Miscalculation and Conventional Deterrence I: the View From Cairo,’ in Jervis, Lebow and Stein (eds.), Psychology and Deterrence, p 44
Aviv through subsequent negotiations – led to deterrence failure.\textsuperscript{289} In 1941, the U.S. did, to an extent, have knowledge about Japanese goals – an attack on the U.S. to reduce American naval power in East Asia. But the U.S. did not appreciate – reflect upon or evaluate critically – such knowledge. Washington also failed to appreciate this knowledge, and as a result did not conclude that America’s deterrence posture could be put at risk. Again, the result was deterrence failure. The Americans had ascribed ‘reasonableness’ to the Japanese, when such a quality was actually absent.

4.1.1 Strategic Surprise/ Deterrence Failure: Mirror Imaging

Two major factors lead to deterrence failures or strategic surprises – mirror-imaging and ethnocentrism. Both factors are similar in that they often lead victims of deterrence failure and strategic surprise to incorrectly ascribe ‘reasonableness’ (before the occurrence of the event) to a potential deterree or attacker. Later in the chapter, I will propose that mirror-imaging and ethnocentrism are barriers to ‘appreciation’ on the part of deterrers, leading them to erroneously ascribe ‘reasonableness’ to their deterrees. Appreciation will be defined as the ability to evaluate critically or reflect upon one’s knowledge of an opponent’s goals.

When present, mirror-imaging causes policymakers to predict the potential of their opponent through the lens of their own values and conceptions of reality. Mirror-imaging is one of the central criticisms of deterrence theory and well covered in studies of strategic surprises and deterrence failures.\textsuperscript{290} It occurs when we cannot fully discern an opponent’s intentions. Schelling offers an example of this practice:

\begin{quote}
You can sit in your armchair and try to predict how people will behave by asking how you would behave if you had your wits about you. You get, free of charge, a lot of vicarious, empirical behaviour.\textsuperscript{291}
\end{quote}

This, argues Handel, is the process of mirror-imaging. He argues that various psychological, culture and anthropological studies of perceptual errors have arrived at

\textsuperscript{289} The concept of appreciation or critical evaluation of an enemy’s goals will be discussed later in this chapter


\textsuperscript{291} Quoted in Kathleen Archibald (ed), Strategic Interaction and Conflict: Original Papers and Discussion, Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1966, p 150; cited in Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, p 19
similar conclusions about mirror imaging. He argues that actors tend to see the external world inside out, which typically involves the projection of one’s own belief systems, and by ‘definition causes the underestimation, if not denigration of the opponent’s culture.’ Such mirror-imaging causes defenders to project their version of rationality onto potential attackers, resulting in a misestimation of the attacker’s motivation and mistakes in judging the opponent’s risk-taking propensity. Before the Tet Offensive in 1968, for example, the Americans considered a direct confrontation from the Viet Cong and the People’s Army of Vietnam as suicidal – hence it was discounted as a possibility.

The reasons for mirror-imaging are relatively straightforward. A major study of deterrence failures has found that when policymakers need to manage a steady stream of complex and ambiguous information and are bereft of credible data on an opponent’s intentions, their perceptions are heavily influenced by their own beliefs about how the world works and what patterns it is likely to present. An illustrative example is Dean Acheson’s mirror-imaging of opponents’ mindsets in 1941 and 1950. As Assistant Secretary of State, he famously remarked to President Roosevelt that war with Japan would be unlikely because, according to his estimations, no ‘rational Japanese could believe an attack on us could result in anything but disaster for his country.’ As stated earlier, Acheson – then Secretary of State – also advised in 1950 that, while Chinese intervention in the Korean War would achieve a major gain in prestige, it would be ‘sheer madness’ for the Chinese to enter to Korean War. This assessment was based on how he thought Chinese decision-makers would appraise the situation, based on his own perceptions.

Mirror-imaging is derived from ‘preconceptions ... predispositions, preset patterns of perceptions and analysis.’ Such cognitive structures hinder accurate perception by policymakers – even those with very good information about their

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292 Handel, ‘Intelligence And The Problem Of Strategic Surprise,’ p 23
293 Morgan, ‘The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,’ p 217
296 Lebow, Between Peace And War, p 209
297 Betts, ‘Analysis, War, and Decision,’ p 63, Morgan, ‘The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,’ pp 212-218
The Three-Step Reasonableness Matrix

opponents' conceptual framework. The most fundamental cognitive structures are assumptions and beliefs about aspects of reality; other structures are values, which are subjective preferences as to what one would like to see reality to be. Images, which are more elaborate cognitive structures, are a product of the interplay among assumptions and values, with considerable amounts of past information. According to Morgan, such cognitive structures embody prior experience and learning and hence are costly to change. They are also resistant to change because perception involves sampling from available stimuli, and such sampling is biased in ways to conform to cognitive structures and reinforce them. It follows that there is a strong tendency to overlook information that clashes with existing views. In other words, the available facts presented to policymakers do not speak for themselves; they only take on meaning within a network of preconceptions and assumptions.

In her studies of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Cuban Missile Crisis, Roberta Wohlstetter argues that a focus on an opponent's disposition, intentions and capabilities obscure the fact that the collection of data cannot speak to policymakers apart from a 'very large complex body' of assumptions and estimates. This argument helps explain why the Americans underestimated the risks that the Japanese were willing to take prior to Pearl Harbor. The Americans possessed various signs pointing to a Japanese attack on the United States' naval assets in the Pacific, but they were rejected outright because, according to American 'assumptions and estimates,' this would have been tantamount to national suicide. One's preconceptions and predispositions – which involve one's own values, assumptions and images – tend to lead to a mirror-imaging of enemy intent. This is a process which tends to ascribe 'reasonableness' to a potential deterree when no such quality may be present.

An examination of mirror-imaging in the literature shows that Payne's concept of 'rational-but-unreasonable' actors is not entirely new. Payne suggests that 'rational-

\[298\] Morgan, 'The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,' pp 213-214
\[299\] Morgan, 'The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,' pp 213-214
\[301\] Wohlstetter, \textit{Cuba And Pearl Harbor}, p 37
but-unreasonable' actors are perceived to be 'irrational' by their deterrers who judged
the former by their own values. Wasserman, whose writings study the problem of
intelligence failure, shows many parallels with Payne's thesis about how the lack of a
good understanding of opposing conceptual frameworks can lead to deterrence failures:

Intelligence prediction is the estimation of the likely actions or
intentions of foreign nations, and its failure can be reduced in the last
analysis to a misunderstanding of foreigners' conceptual frameworks,
i.e., a failure to understand properly the assumptions or interpretations of
the situation upon which foreigners base their decisions. Such
misunderstanding is due to the uncritical interpretation of foreign states'
actions in terms of one's own framework . . . the uncritical
interpretations of the actions and intentions of foreign states in terms of
an inapplicable conceptual framework makes these irrational and
senseless. 302

In another study of intelligence failure during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962,
Knorr proposes a differentiation between intrinsically irrational and the 'apparently
irrational' policy maker. Like Payne, Knorr argues that which 'appears irrational' could
actually be quite rational but based on differing values:

The behavior of people with a culture different from one's own often
appears irrational when in fact they act rationally, but evaluate the
outcomes of alternative courses of action in terms of values that differ
sharply from ours. Thus, different societies differ in the value they place
on individual life or on the political integrity of the individual. 303

Similarly, Jervis states that coercive threats may misfire if a country's leaders
do not understand what their opponent 'values.' Coercive threats can fail when the
country using such threats imposes its own values on a situation instead. Jervis argues
that the United States misjudged how much North Vietnam valued reunification and
believed that an American threat to fight a prolonged war and inflict very heavy
punishment on the North could dissuade Hanoi from continuing its struggle. While
American decision-makers paid a great deal of attention to how to make their threats
credible, their underlying misjudgment led them to ignore the crucial problem - that the
North was willing to fight the sort of war the U.S. was threatening rather than to

302 Benno Wasserman, 'The Failure of Intelligence Prediction,' Political Studies 8, June 1960, pp 156-
168 cited in Handel, 'The Yom Kippur War', p 475
303 Klaus Knorr, 'Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles,' World
Politics 16(3), April 1964, p. 459

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concede. Jervis adds that the United States could have done very little about the problem even if it became aware of North Vietnam's willingness to fight. It could be added that American preoccupation with its own values hampered a better appreciation of the situation. If the Americans had appreciated the situation well, they would have taken into account how highly motivated North Vietnam was to achieve goals opposed to those of the United States. By doing so, the Americans would have realised that North Vietnam's goals – to fight the very war the Americans thought they would not fight – would have defeated the American strategy of coercion through massive bombing.

4.1.2 Strategic Surprise/ Deterrence Failure: Ethnocentrism

This discussion of values connects with the concept of strategic culture, specifically how different national styles in strategic decisions have an impact on deterrence outcomes. Almost by definition, different strategic cultures involve the pursuit of different values or goals. Snyder defines strategic culture as:

'... the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction of or imitation and share with each other'

The phrase 'different strategic cultures' means that these cultures are distinctive and separate. For example, Gray argues that there is a particular American strategic culture, in that the American national historical experience has produced 'modes of thought and action with respect to force' that have resulted in a unique set of 'dominant national beliefs' with respect to strategic choices. While the definitions sound clear-cut, there has been some debate about how strategic culture influences. Johnston, for example, argues that the dominant approach to strategic culture is both under-determined and over-determined and so has so far been unable to offer a convincing research design for isolating its effects. Desch argues that at best, cultural theories

305 Jervis, 'Deterrence and Perception,' p 8
308 It is under-determined because strategic culture is held to have a strongly deterministic effect on behaviour. It is over-determined because the concept of strategic culture is seen as an amalgam of a wide
can be used as a supplement to realist theories, given methodological obstacles associated with defining and operationalising various variables.\(^{309}\)

This section is interested in how strategic culture affects appreciation. Within the literature on strategic culture, the concept of ethnocentrism is useful for our purposes, specifically with regard to how different strategic cultures can have difficulty appreciating opposing values within the context of deterrence. According to Booth, the characteristic features of ethnocentrism include:

... strong identification with one’s own group and its culture, the tendency to see one’s own group as the centre of the universe, the tendency to perceive events in terms of one’s own interests, the tendency to prefer one’s own way of life (culture) over all others (seeing it as involving the best and right ways of acting, with an associated bias against other groups and their ways of acting), and a general suspicion of foreigners, their modes of thought, action and motives.\(^{310}\)

Booth adds that ethnocentrism is a ‘universal social phenomenon.’\(^{311}\) In a similar fashion, Zhang users the term ‘culture-bound’ to refer to the ‘danger’ of strategists attempting to ‘know the enemy’ in an ‘ethnocentric fashion.’\(^{312}\) In sum, ethnocentrism is similar to, but at the same time distinct from, the concept of mirror-imaging. While mirror-imaging does not explicitly imply a feeling of cultural inferiority or superiority when projecting one’s values onto an opponent, ethnocentrism does. Essentially, however, both concepts share similar foundations in that actors under the influence of either or both attempt to interpret motives and values of opposing parties through a focus on one’s own motives and values. Through the broader lens of strategic culture, the argument here is not that different strategic cultures necessarily have different values at all times – at times, Clausewitzian ‘grammar’ can dominate strategic culture. During the Cold War, for example, the taboo against nuclear first use transcended the apparent differences in strategic culture. Rather, it is suggested that a deterrer’s focus on his own strategic culture – that is, ethnocentrism – limits appreciation of how the goals and values of his opponent might undermine deterrence.

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\(^{310}\) Ken Booth, *Strategy And Ethnocentrism*, London: Croom Helm, 1979, p 15

\(^{311}\) Booth, *Strategy And Ethnocentrism*, p 15

\(^{312}\) Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, p 272
The Vietnam example mentioned earlier is useful here – again, the Americans implemented what they thought was a war-winning strategy based on their own conceptions of value. By doing so, they failed to appreciate how North Vietnam’s goals would have undermined their coercive war strategy. Ethnocentrism prevented Americans’ appreciation of the intense motivation that supported the North Vietnamese goal of unification.

As the three Sino-American case studies in this thesis will show, differences in strategic culture affect appreciation. Zhang argues that policymakers in China and the United States had studied each other very little prior to 1950. Each group neglected the possibility that cultural differences between the two countries might be reflected in different styles of strategic thinking. In addition, officials from both countries failed to realise that such differences might ‘lead decision makers, consciously or subconsciously, to evade reality.’\(^{313}\) Differences in strategic culture work through the processes of mirror-imaging and culture-boundedness, making it easier for a potential deterree to become ‘reasonable’ in the eyes of his deterrer when the former actually has quite different values. In other words, the lack of appreciation leads a deterrer to perceive a deterree to be reasonable when reasonableness is actually absent.

### 4.2. Refining Payne’s Concept of Reasonableness

Substantive rationality implies a purposive gathering of information related to a certain problem, listing options and choosing the option that maximises utility. The rationality that Payne espouses is akin to Simon’s ‘bounded rationality’ – an approximation of ‘real-world’ rationality. This is a departure from perfect or substantive rationality, where human agents are assumed to always act in ways that subsequently best serve their interests under given conditions.\(^{314}\) In bounded rationality, decision-makers cope rationally, instead of acting rationally. In the face of an incalculable problem, they soon hit the limits of their cognitive and information-processing capabilities.\(^{315}\)

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313 Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, p 272


315 Augier and Kristian Kreiner, ‘Rationality, Imagination and Intelligence,’ p 665
Since the 1990s, Keith Payne and Colin Gray have argued that decades of 'deterrence old think' cultivated during the Cold War has assured potential deterress, in particular the United States, that potential opponents were 'rational.' They contend, however, that being 'rational' does not equate to potential deterrees being 'sensible' or 'reasonable' i.e. while they are rational they could have conceptual frameworks unknown to or not shared by their deterress.\(^\text{316}\) Payne argues that suggesting another party's decision-making to be reasonable suggests that the 'observer understands that decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some shared or understood values or standards.' In this sense, reasonableness, like rationality, could be measured objectively if the definition is 'how much of a deterree's conceptual framework – e.g. motives, values, objectives – the deterreer understands.'\(^\text{317}\) Payne's model of reasonableness can be expanded in four major aspects which will now be discussed.

**4.2.1 Convergence on Goals and Conceptual Frameworks**

The first aspect concerns convergence on goals by a deterreer and his deterree. Writing in *Deterrence in The Second Nuclear Age* in 1996, Payne argued that a deterreer will deem his deterree 'sensible' when the deterreer understands the latter's conceptual framework. This did not necessarily mean that both parties needed to have shared values or goals. Payne wrote that a deterreer would perceive a deterree as being 'sensible' when the latter was:

> ... perceived as behaving in ways that are understandable to the
> observer, and may therefore be anticipated. This may involve goals, a
> value hierarchy and patterns that, if not shared, are familiar to the
> observers.\(^\text{318}\)

In his later work, *The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction*, Payne set out detailed similar requirements for the attainment of 'reasonableness' – the deterreer had to either understand the deterree's conceptual framework or share his values. In his later definition of 'reasonable' (a concept synonymous to 'sensible').


\(^{318}\) Payne, *Deterrence In The Second Nuclear Age*, pp 52-53
Payne wrote that for an observer to deem the observed ‘reasonable,’ this would suggest that:

... the observer understands that decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some shared or understood set of values and standards.\textsuperscript{319}

While Payne uses the terms ‘understood’ and ‘shared’ somewhat synonymously, the two terms entail significantly different connotations. To understand an opponent’s goals does not imply an empathy with such goals – individuals might understand a serial killer’s goals, but for obvious reasons this does not mean that such individuals see the world from the perspective of the serial killer. This differentiation in the two terms has important implications for the study of deterrence outcomes. Different deterrence choices can occur due to different permutations of whether a deterrer understands or shares the goals of his deterree’s conceptual framework. A finer definition of conceptual frameworks will also be offered. An opponent’s conceptual framework will be defined as his goals, which are derived from his interests, which are in turn derived from the values he holds. This will elaborated later in this chapter.

### 4.2.2 Knowledge, Appreciation and Empathy

Payne’s concept of reasonableness does not involve appreciation for and empathy with an opponent’s goals (which form part of his conceptual framework). Payne’s concept of ‘understanding’ will be broken down into two components – knowledge of an opponent’s goals and an appreciation or critical evaluation of such knowledge. Empathy with such goals involve three components – the ability of a deterrer to take the perspective of the opponent, a communication of this understanding to the deterree and coordination of goals between the two parties.\textsuperscript{320}

### 4.2.3 Types of Reasonableness

The third aspect involves situations where deterrers’ assessments about deterree reasonableness are examined after the fact and judged to have been incorrect. For example, Payne cites the example of Pearl Harbor, when the Americans felt that the Japanese prior to December 1941 were too ‘rational’ to attack Pearl Harbor.\textsuperscript{321}
hoc, the Americans’ original assessment was proven incorrect because it became clear that the Japanese felt that they had no other option but to attack. Payne classifies this as a distinct case where the Americans thought the Japanese were ‘rational’, but in actuality, the Japanese were ‘rational but unreasonable.’ In other words, the Americans had a poor understanding of Japan’s conceptual framework. They also did not share the goals that were supported by such a conceptual framework – that a war with the U.S., though contingent with risks of great loss, was preferable to no war and a deterioration in Japan’s strategic position. This is the ‘classical’ Payne case of a ‘rational-but-unreasonable’ actor that foils deterrence. This can be defined as an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ This consists of two components: first, a deterrer has a limited knowledge of his deterree’s conceptual framework; second, the deterrer fails to appreciate – or make a critical evaluation – of such knowledge.

To refine Payne’s concept of reasonableness, however, it would be useful to see how choices with regard to deterrence vary when a deterrer’s assessment of deterree’s reasonableness are actually correct. Firstly, there are instances where deterrees have a fair or good knowledge of their deterree’s conceptual framework, and where such deterrees might appreciate – or evaluate critically – this knowledge and decide that a deterrence strategy (or such a strategy alone) is not feasible. In such instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ a deterrer’s assessment of a deterree’s unreasonableness is correct. Here there is likely to be a decision to forego deterrence (since the deterree is seen to be less deterrable) or to execute deterrence with a deft touch, seeking feedback from the deterree to assess if deterrence may fail, or otherwise abandon deterrence for other options altogether. This could happen in cases where a deterrer might assess that a deterree is too highly motivated to achieve his goals, and as a result decide not to continue pursuing a strategy of deterrence.

In cases of ‘recognised reasonableness,’ a deterrer has a fair and good knowledge of his deterree’s conceptual framework. With appreciation, he also critically evaluates such knowledge. With empathy, the deterrer takes the perspective of his deterree’s view of the world, conveys to the deterree that he has such a perspective, and implements deterrence with a high confidence in success. In instances of ‘recognised reasonableness,’ the deterrer assesses that his deterree can be coerced into taking up a goal acceptable to both parties.
4.2.4 Mutual Learning and Adaptation

The fourth and last aspect involves a process of learning and adaptation that typically leads to some shared norms or lessons learnt after repeated interactions between a deterrer and deterree. Payne’s model could be expanded to study strategic interactions across time between two powers in a mutual deterrence relationship – for example, the United States and China. There have been a few longitudinal studies of this mutual deterrence relationship, and those that do so have focused on the 1950s period.\(^{322}\) One study of the Israeli-Egyptian deterrence relationship between 1948 and 1977 shows that reputation concerns and learning contributed to deterrence stability, even in the more difficult cases in which both challenger and defender ‘seriously’ intended to attack and defend.\(^{323}\) However, no longitudinal study on deterrence has focused on the impact of ‘reasonableness’ on the Sino-U.S. relationship.

4.3 A New Definition of Reasonableness

Payne’s definition of reasonableness involves a deterrer ‘understanding’ his opponent’s ‘decision-making and judges it to be sensible based on some shared or understood set of values and standards.’\(^{324}\) This section refines it along the four routes described earlier.

4.3.1 Conceptual Frameworks

A new definition of reasonableness requires a definition for conceptual frameworks. In his work, Payne proposes a detailed, ‘deterrence framework’ that seeks to accumulate ‘as much information as possible’ about the specific opponent and the specific context. This ‘deterrence framework’ can be called the opponent’s ‘conceptual framework’ or general decision-making process. Payne lists the key elements of such a framework:

\(^{322}\) J.H. Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises: Political-Military Interactions in the 1950s, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975.  \(^{323}\) Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture  
\(^{324}\) Payne, The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence, p 7
- the opponent’s issue at hand, objectives and actions;
- the factors likely to affect the opponent’s decision-making i.e. his rationality, leadership characteristics and motivations, value/risk structure;
- the opponent’s strategic profile i.e. his predictability, cost/risk tolerance, will, determination and freedom to conciliate or provoke;
- the opponent’s susceptibility to deterrence policies.$^{325}$

This approach, he argues, is a more empirical one in contrast to the ‘convenient method of mirror-imaging and deductive logic’ during the Cold War. It helps deterress ‘get inside’ the decision-making process of the challenger, and to ascertain as far as possible the basis for its decision-making with regard to a specific context.$^{326}$ It can be argued that generally, an opponent’s conceptual framework involves his decision-making pertinent to his assessment of a particular deterrence threat. This framework will be centred on three inter-related concepts: values, interests and goals. The practical outcrop of such frameworks are actions which occur if a deterree decides to challenge a particular deterrence posture. For obvious reasons, such actions do not eventuate if a challenge does not occur (see Figure 2).


$^{326}$ Payne, *The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence*, pp 101-103
FIGURE 2: AN OPPONENT'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Actions

Goals

Interests

Values

Conceptual Framework

Immediate Deterrence

General Deterrence
In the literature, an opponent’s conceptual framework is generally defined as the factors that go into his decision-making process as it pertains to deterrence. As stated earlier, Wasserman defines an opponent’s conceptual framework as the ‘assumptions or interpretations of the situation upon which foreigners base their decisions.’ In a study of intelligence failures, Wasserman writes:

‘the only satisfactory basis for intelligence prediction is the universalizable or objective standard of estimating the actions of other states rationally in terms of their assumptions.’

Similarly, George advocates the study of an opponent’s values, ideology, culture and mind-set – in other words, an ‘actor-specific model of an opponent.’ This seeks to obtain a ‘differentiated understanding of the opponent’s decision-making.’ Kam defines an enemy’s conceptual framework as the ‘values, assumptions and expectations’ of a potential enemy’s decisions.

This section will elaborate on the three key ‘pillars’ behind an opponent’s conceptual framework – his values, interests and goals, which are discussed in Payne’s discussions of reasonableness and deterrence. These three concepts are often used interchangeably, and for this chapter’s purposes it will be beneficial to examine their potential similarities.

4.3.1.1. Values and Strategic Culture

As defined by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, a ‘value’ is ‘something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically … desirable.’ The Oxford English Dictionary defines a value as ‘a thing regarded as worth having.’ Recalling the earlier discussion about mirror-imaging, Morgan defines values – together with other

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327 Wasserman, Benno, ‘The Failure of Intelligence Prediction,’ Political Studies 8, June 1960, p 160, cited in Kam, Surprise Attack, p 63  
330 Kam, Surprise Attack, p 64  
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'cognitive structures' such as assumptions and beliefs – as 'subjective preferences as to what one would like to see reality to be.'

Within the context of coercive diplomacy, it is argued that goals form part of the opponent's 'values' and 'interests' in a particular time period, context and place. Expressed in these terms, goals – from the perspective of potential deterrees – are part of an actor's overall conceptual framework or decision-making process.

4.3.1.2. Relationship Between Values, Interests and Goals

In the literature, the term 'value' is related to, and often used synonymously with 'national interests.' According to Morgenthau, the concept of 'national interest' is the 'main signpost that helps political realism through the landscape of international politics.' In a later work, he stressed that '... it is not only a political necessity but also a moral duty for a nation to follow in its dealings with other nations but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: THE NATIONAL INTEREST.'

The term 'value' is a relatively abstract and subjective concept given that it seeks to express a country's highest and most cherished ideals. The term 'national interest' is also fairly abstract, so much so that some have called it an 'analytically fuzzy' concept, a 'meaningless phrase or at best an indication of subjective preferences.' The 'national interest' is seen as something 'intangible and invisible, and as an excuse for politicians in defending their foreign policies.' The terms 'values' and 'national interests' have been used interchangeably in the literature. In a discussion of the American national interest, Brands notes how the 'promotion of democracy and associated American values and institutions' – together with other

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332 Morgan, 'The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,' p 213
335 Friedrich Kratochwil, 'On the Notion of 'Interest' in International Relations,' International Organization 36(1), Winter 1982, p 2
values such as prosperity and security—fell under the rubric of the 'national interest.' Jervis, in his discussion of American primacy, argues that differences between Europe and the United States arose because of differences in 'values, interests, or beliefs rather than different placements in the structure of the international system.' Given this definitional treatment, it is not surprising that there is a perceived similarity between 'values' and 'national interests.'

At the turn of the century, for example, a high-level commission formed in the U.S. to formulate America's national interests noted that Henry Kissinger had wrestled with the dichotomy of 'interests' and 'values' in his classic book, *Diplomacy*, without resolving the issue. At the centre of this dichotomy, the commission wrote, was the competition in 20th century U.S. foreign policy between Woodrow Wilson's 'idealism' (i.e. values) and Theodore Roosevelt's 'realism.' (i.e. 'interests'). In its report, the Commission treated 'interests' and 'values' not as opposing concepts but as highly similar ones. Their study deserves to be quoted at length here:

The Commission is more comfortable with a concept in which *values and interests are seen less as dichotomous poles, and more as alternative expressions of valuation*. The survival and well-being of the United States is not just an interest in contrast to Americans' values, but also a core value essential to all Americans ... Similarly, Americans are not uninterested in human rights in China or Burundi or indeed in the well-being of other individuals with whom they share the globe. But the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution assert first and foremost Americans' interest in the idea and ideal that America survive and thrive. *Freedom for individuals, democratic government, and conditions that secure life, liberty, and opportunities for happiness are both interests and values* [italics added by author].

The term 'interest,' according to the Oxford English Dictionary, refers to a 'thing in which one has (a) ... concern.' The 'fuzziness' of both 'values' and

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337 Brands, 'The Idea of the National Interest,' pp 239-240
338 Robert Jervis, 'International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?' *International Security* 17(4), Spring 1993, p 60
340 Ellsworth, Goodpaster and Hauser, *The Commission on America's National Interests*, p 18
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‘national interest’ is due to their relatively subjective nature. Although the two terms are conceptual cousins, it is argued that the ‘national interests’ are derived from, a country’s ‘values.’ Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 2000, Condoleezza Rice, foreign policy adviser to then-presidential candidate George W. Bush, seems to suggest that ‘values’ are a *a priori* requirement for America’s national interests. She wrote:

> America can exercise power without arrogance and pursue its *interests* without hectoring and bluster. When it does so in concert with those who share its core *values*, the world becomes more prosperous, democratic, and peaceful. [italics mine]

Rice – a former Professor of Political Science at Stanford University – rightly tags as ‘academic’ the long-running debate between ‘power politics’ (i.e. the realist approach centred on national interests) and a more idealist and values-based foreign policy. She argues that such an ‘academic debate’ spells ‘disaster for American foreign policy’ since ‘American values are universal.’ Rice’s statement is controversial and not entirely accurate, but the Bush Administration in which she served has made it quite clear, as far as it is concerned, that values and national interests are related concepts, and that the latter stems from the former. In its 2002 National Security Strategy, the Bush Administration said it would advocate a ‘distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests.’ In its subsequent 2006 National Security Strategy, the Administration wrote that it had ‘long championed freedom because doing so reflects our values and advances our interests.’ More importantly, the Administration goes on to elaborate that the ‘goal’ of the ‘value’ or ‘interest’ of freedom would be the defeat of tyrannical regimes and the promotion of effective democracies. Hoffman argues that any attempts to highlight differences between ‘values’ and ‘interests’ would be a sham as a great power has an ‘interest’ in a world order that goes beyond strict national security concerns; moreover

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342 Rice, ‘Promoting the National Interest,’ pp 47-62
343 Rice, ‘Promoting the National Interest,’ p 49
344 *National Security Strategy* 2002, p 1
that definition of order is largely shaped by its ‘values.’ His statement appears to support this chapter’s argument that interests stem from values.

This interpretation of the relationship between ‘values’ and ‘interests’ applies in corresponding Chinese literature as well. In a paper examining Chinese conceptions of the national interest, Deng argues that ‘interests’ are derived from a society’s values: The conception of national interests is embedded in the broad domestic values and institutions prevailing in society... the ascendant paradigm governing a state's foreign policy-making is sustained by the predominant values in the political discourse and the prevailing patterns of the state-society relations.

Within the deterrence literature, the terms ‘values’ and ‘interests’ have been used in instances where the term ‘goal’ could have been applicable as well. Many Chinese scholars and officials are frustrated by China’s inability to make foreign policy initiatives. One scholar summed up this predicament:

China’s present foreign policy guideline is ‘seeking interests while avoiding harm’; yet in reality, ‘the primary goal is avoiding harms’ without actively promoting China’s national interests (italics added by author).

Payne notes that one factor for effective deterrence that is likely to be missing is a ‘mutual appreciation of goals, value structure, and threat perception, and an inability to communicate.’ Lebow and Stein state that over the course of the Cold War the superpowers became reluctant to confront each other militarily, given that they had developed a ‘better appreciation of each other’s interests.’ Similarly, in his treatment

347 Stanley Hoffman, ‘In Defense of Mother Teresa: Morality in Foreign Policy,’ *Foreign Affairs* 75(2), March/April 1996, pp 172-172. Hoffman’s article was a rebuttal of an earlier *Foreign Affairs* article. In the article, Michael Mandelbaum, argued that interests should be pursued separately from values. Mandelbaum argued that the Clinton’s Administration’s interventions in Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia represented its pursuit of a values-based American foreign policy that had become a ‘branch of social work.’ This was a recipe for ‘deep, protracted costly engagement in the tangled political life of each country.’ Instead, he suggested that the U.S focus on three core national interests – a military presence in Europe, preventing nuclear proliferation and trade. See Mandelbaum, ‘Foreign Policy as Social Work,’ *Foreign Affairs* 75(1), January/ February 1996, pp 16-32


349 Deng, ‘The Chinese Conception of National Interests,’ p 327


351 Lebow and Stein, ‘Deterrence and the Cold War,’ p 180. The relationship between ‘appreciation’ and the differing ‘goals’ between potential deterrers and deterrees would be explored in the next section.
of the classical deterrence relationship of ‘A deters B,’ Freedman states that A is seeking to persuade B not to ‘act against its interests.’ I would argue that Freedman’s deterrence equation could apply as much to ‘goals’ as ‘interests.’ The relationship between ‘goals’ on one hand and ‘values’ and ‘interests’ on the other is analogous to the one between immediate deterrence and general deterrence. Morgan explains:

In general deterrence an actor maintains a broad military capability and issues broad threats of a punitive response to an attack to keep anyone from seriously thinking about attacking. In immediate deterrence the actor has a military capability and issues threats to a specific opponent when the opponent is already contemplating and preparing an attack.

Like general deterrence, ‘values’ and ‘interests’ are expressed in broad terms and do not target any particular state or entity. However, ‘goals’ have greater specificity, in that they are directed at one or more states or entities in a particular relationship in a specific period of time, context and place. This interpretation gels with the existing literature, which states that the effectiveness of deterrence always depends on a certain context. George argues that the entire tradition of coercive diplomacy and deterrence is ‘highly context-dependent’ – that is, many variables and the interaction between these variables combine to explain or predict resultant outcomes from efforts to employ deterrence and coercive diplomacy.

Goals constitute the part of an opponent’s conceptual framework that results in a particular ‘action’ (see Chart 1) i.e. ‘actions’ are the practical outcrop of such a framework. In terms of immediate deterrence, a deterrer seeks to prevent his deterree from committing certain ‘actions’ based on a promised threat of punishment; this in turn, is based on the deterrer’s assessment of what his deterree’s ‘goals’ are. In essence, ‘actions’ are the output of an opponent’s conceptual framework, while ‘values,’ ‘interests’ and ‘goals’ relate more to the opponent’s decisional processes and, to borrow from Wasserman, the opponent’s assumptions and interpretations of a particular situation. Appreciation occurs at the level of goals (i.e. applies to a specific opponent, context, time and place), which are in turn derived from interests and values. A lack of appreciation can thus result in a failure of immediate deterrence – in effect, a deterrer

352 Freedman, Deterrence, p 27
353 Morgan, Deterrence Now, p 9
354 Alexander George, ‘The Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,’ in Schneider and Post, Know Thy Enemy, p 301
Moving Towards Empathy

fails to prevent an opponent from carrying out a specific action(s) to achieve certain goal(s).

‘Goals’ and ‘actions’ entail greater specificity compared to ‘interests.’ A good illustration of this would be the Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in Europe. There was certainly a general deterrence relationship in terms of the maintenance of broad military capabilities on both sides and the existence of broad threats. This was based on the mutual opposition in broad ‘interests.’ - At the level of interests, the U.S.-led grouping of Western and Asian nations sought to curb Soviet expansionism around the world. At the level of goals, the U.S. and its allies sought to prevent the Soviet Union and its allies from infringing upon Western territory in Western Europe. Such ‘goals’ sought to prevent certain ‘actions’ – for example, the movement of Soviet/Warsaw Pact divisions across the Fulda Gap or a trespass on Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin. Such ‘actions’ – together with ‘goals’ – formed the basis for immediate deterrence. The carrying out of such actions by the Soviet bloc in Europe would have achieved its goals in Europe and correspondingly resulted in a failure of the West’s posture of immediate deterrence. Williams and Bowker argue that détente in the second half of the 1970s was gradually abandoned as Soviet expansionism revealed, once again, the relentless nature of the Soviet challenge to the West and the ‘fundamental incompatibility of Soviet and American interests and objectives.’ Given that ‘objectives’ is synonymous to ‘goals,’ this merely demonstrates the close relationship between ‘interests’ and ‘goals.’ At one level, the mutual opposition in ‘interests’ is general deterrence; at another level, the mutual opposition expressed in opposing ‘goals’ and ‘actions’ is immediate deterrence.

To sum up, ‘values’ are the lofty ideals expressed in the form of ‘national interests.’ Both terms are of a general nature, while ‘goals’ – which are in turn derived from them – are of a more specific nature and applied to a particular context. This does not mean, however, that two countries having similar values or interests will have the same goals. The interaction of two states is too multi-dimensional, their individual domestic politics too fluid, and their perspectives too varied, such that two countries

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355 At the same time, it could be said that the Soviet Union and the U.S. also had a mutual interest in avoiding a massive, catastrophic – and possibly nuclear – war.

356 Mike Bowker and Phil Williams, Superpower Detente: A Reappraisal, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1988, p 4
with similar values or interests could conceivably hold different goals. A good example of this would be the American opposition to the Anglo-French attempt to retake the Suez Canal in 1956. The three Western countries could be said to have similar values – the common ‘Western values’ of freedom, democracy and security. They also had similar interests in terms of seeking to contain expanding Soviet influence and power. McDermott writes about U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower’s dilemma:

The United States, despite its opposition to the Anglo-French intervention, forcefully rejected Soviet proposals for joint action in the region to contain European allied military action. While Eisenhower clearly did not support allied military intervention in the Middle East, he adamantly refused to tolerate Soviet intervention in the Middle East either. Eisenhower’s trepidation about the Soviet Union using this crisis to gain access to the region in ostensible defense of Egypt was one of the main reasons Eisenhower wanted to pre-empt further conflict in the area.

While there was a certain convergence in interests between the Americans, British and the French regarding the Middle East – all three wanted to prevent Soviet encroachment into the region but their goals during the Suez Canal were markedly different. According to one account of the crisis, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower put intense pressure on the Europeans to withdraw their forces from region. In a clear expression of opposing goals between America against the British and their French partners, President Eisenhower implemented a coercive strategy; he refused to deliver any oil to them or allow any financial assistance to be remitted to the British and French until they had withdrawn their troops from the vicinity of the Canal.

4.3.2 Knowledge, Appreciation and Empathy

Having provided a finer definition of an opponent’s conceptual framework, this section seeks to explain the three concepts undergirding three types of reasonableness –

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357 The phrase ‘Western values’ is a broad concept, but there is some agreement that they espouse, among other things, the values of democracy, the rule of law, a free press, free markets, pluralism, the separation of church and state. See Dan Clendenin, ‘Why They Hate Us: Cultural Reform or Resurgent Culture?’ 21 October 2002, at [http://www.stanford.edu/group/iyfaculty/Essays/20021021J1J.shtml](http://www.stanford.edu/group/iyfaculty/Essays/20021021J1J.shtml) [accessed 19 November 2007]. Samuel Huntington argues that ‘individualism’ is a universalisable ‘prime value’ of Western civilization that peoples of non-Western societies desire, even if they do not desire Western culture of Westernisation. See Public Broadcasting Corporation, Think Tank With Ben Wattenberg, No. 1005 ‘When Cultures Collide’ (Interview with Samuel Huntington), 24 January 2002, at [http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/transcript984.html](http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/transcript984.html) [accessed 19 November 2007]


359 Rose McDermott, Risk-Taking in International Politics, p 142
knowledge, appreciation and empathy This section will break down the term ‘understanding’ into two components: knowledge of an opponent’s goals (which are in turn derived from his interests and values) and appreciation which involves a critical evaluation of such knowledge. Empathy is the third and last component needed for the attainment of ‘recognised reasonableness’ – a refinement of Payne’s conceptualisation of ‘reasonableness.’ These are shown in Figure 3 which will be explained in the sections to follow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge (Relative)</th>
<th>Unrecognised Unreasonableness</th>
<th>Recognised Unreasonableness</th>
<th>Recognised Reasonableness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deterrence Outcome</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Deterrence abandoned or supplemented with other policy tools</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2.1 Understanding

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, to ‘understand’ is to ‘to have knowledge of, to know or learn, by information received,’ or to ‘comprehend; to apprehend the meaning or import of; to grasp the idea of.’ The term ‘understanding’ is used in disciplines such as educational science, history and philosophy. In educational science, the term ‘understanding’ refers to ‘a student’s ability to creatively use presented information to solve transfer problems,’ where ‘transfer problems’ refer to problems that were not part of the originally lesson. Similarly, White and Gunstone argue that the description of ‘understanding’ must involve certain ‘targets,’ for example, whether one understands ‘my children,’ or ‘poetry.’ They list six specific targets – understanding of concepts, whole disciplines, single elements of knowledge, extensive communications, situations and people. In history, understanding is related to the history of ideas. To understand a given literary or philosophical work, Skinner suggests that two methods. Firstly, one must be able to grasp to the context of ‘religious, political, and economic factors’ that determined the meaning of any text. The second method would be to insist on the autonomy of the text itself as the sole necessary key for its meaning.

For our purposes, the most useful definition of understanding is found in the field of philosophy. Philosophers agree that the term understanding is derived from explanation. This is Hempel’s classic deductive-nomological (D-N) model, where a description of one phenomenon or event can explain the description of a second phenomenon only if the first description entails the second. Friedman states that this model advanced by Hempel connects a ‘model of explanation’ with the ‘notion of understanding,’ since the D-N model shows that, ‘given the particular circumstances and laws in question, the occurrences of the phenomenon was to be expected; and it is

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363 Quentin Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,’ History and Theory 8(1), 1969, pp 3-4

in this sense that the explanation enables us to understand why the phenomenon occurred.\textsuperscript{365} Von Wright notes that German historian-philosopher Droysen has introduced a dichotomy between explanation and understanding (in German, *Eklären* and *Verstehen* respectively), such that the aim of the natural sciences was to explain, while the aim of history is to understand the phenomena which fell into its domain.\textsuperscript{366} Despite this perceived dichotomy, however, von Wright concedes that there is little distinction between understanding and explanation given that ‘practically every explanation, be it causal or teleological, involves furthering our understanding of things.’\textsuperscript{367} More importantly for our study, however, von Wright argues that understanding is differentiated from explanation since the former is connected to intentionality – one can ‘understand the aims and purposes of an agent, the meaning of a sign or symbol, and the significance of a social institution or religious rite [emphasis mine].’\textsuperscript{368}

The classical definition of understanding – that it involves prediction and explanation – is a potent tool in strategic studies. Schneider, for example, argues that for the U.S. to put together an effective deterrence mix, it must first ‘understand ... adversary leaders and their strategic cultures.’\textsuperscript{369} Understanding, however, is a broad term that involves two elements – knowledge and appreciation. Knowing an opponent’s goals involves becoming familiar with the relationships between components of his conceptual framework i.e. his values, interests and goals. Understanding, however, involves a broader connotation than mere knowledge. By understanding certain facts, we can draw inferences or certain implications from the said facts. Such a process is essentially appreciation. For example, by understanding an opponent’s ‘goals,’ one should appreciate, as von Wright states, the ‘aim and purposes’ of his ‘interests’ and ‘values’ i.e. predict the direction of such ‘goals’ in terms of his ‘interests,’ as well as the direction of his ‘interests’ in terms of his ‘values.’

\textsuperscript{365} Friedman, ‘Explanation and Scientific Understanding,’ p 8
\textsuperscript{367} Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, p 6
\textsuperscript{368} Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, p 6
\textsuperscript{369} Barry R. Schneider, ‘Deterring International Rivals From War and Escalation,’ in Schneider and M. Post, *Know Thy Enemy*, p 14
4.3.2.2 Knowledge

Sun Zi’s adage to ‘know thy enemy’ is well known and its essence has been captured and disseminated by generations of policymakers and scholars from every ideological stripe and cultural background:

One who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself, will sometimes be victorious. One who knows neither the enemy, nor himself, will invariably be defeated in every engagement.\(^{370}\)

As White and Gunstone note, ‘understanding is a higher form of learning than rote acquisition of knowledge.’ They argue that there are two levels of understanding in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. At one level, there is the knowledge of ships and giants described in the novel; at another level, there is a ‘higher’ understanding of the story as being a satire of 18th century Britain.\(^{371}\) As defined earlier, ‘understanding’ is more than *knowledge* in two ways – by understanding a certain a group of facts, we know why they had happened and can expect or predict what stems from them. Knowledge is akin to ontology, which has been defined as the ‘science or study of being; that branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature or essence of being or existence.’\(^{372}\)

Ontology is concerned with the observation of patterns stemming from certain ‘hard’ material facts. Scientists, for example, ‘know’ what they know through the organizing frameworks that allow the factuality of their scientific descriptions to emerge; descriptions that match the ‘rules’ of scientific method will be accorded the status of objectivity and factuality.\(^{373}\) According to Knorr-Cetina, ontology in philosophy implies “… an investigation into the most general nature of things – into their ‘necessary’ structure. From this view, logical principles may be principles of being as well as principle (sic) of inference.”\(^{374}\)

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\(^{371}\) White and Gunstone, *Probing Understanding*, pp 10-11


\(^{373}\) Jervis Whiteley, ‘Mundane Reason and Epistemic Culture as Organizational Theory,’ Graduate School of Business Working Paper No. 31, Perth: Curtin University of Technology, December 2003, p 6

Whiteley uses the term ‘mundane reason’ to describe a world primarily concerned with knowledge of facts which involves the production of ‘objective’ accounts of human which are constructed while at the same time assuming there is a ‘real’ world out there.\footnote{Melvin, Pollner, \textit{Mundane Reason: Reality in Everyday and Sociological Discourse}. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, cited in Whiteley, ‘Mundane Reason and Epistemic Culture,’ pp 15-16} Within the mundane reasoning world of scientists, the objective, factual and concrete kind of knowledge is highly valued; on the other hand, the subjective and perceptual kind of knowledge is not.\footnote{Whiteley, ‘Mundane Reason and Epistemic Culture,’ p 6} From this point onward, the use of the phrase ‘State A’s knowledge of State B’s goals suggested that State B will do X’ will used in the three case studies to follow in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.3.2.3 Appreciation

The subjective and perceptive kind of knowledge is appreciation. In an earlier section, we discussed how mirror-imaging and ethnocentrism inhibits appreciation for deterriers. Appreciation implies something more than mere knowledge. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines appreciation as the ability ‘to judge with heightened perception and understanding.’\footnote{Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, at \url{http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=appreciate} [accessed 16 April 2007]} The Oxford English Dictionary Online defines appreciation as being ‘sensitive to, or sensible of, any delicate impression or distinction.’\footnote{Oxford English Dictionary Online (Second Edition 1989), at \url{http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50010869?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=appreciate&first=1&max_to_show=10} [accessed 13 July 2007]} The term ‘appreciation’ is used in many disciplines, such as accounting, business management, literary criticism, philosophy and psychology. While the definitional scope of the word is broad, it can, for our purposes, be narrowed down to one – meaning appreciation is the ability to reflect upon, evaluate critically or grasp the deeper meaning behind a known set of facts.

In philosophy, the word ‘appreciation’ is used to refer to the practice of perceiving the ‘bigger picture’ behind a milieu of facts and observed data. Urban argues that there can be no ‘appreciation’ without scientific ‘description.’ He writes:

\begin{quote}
It would not be difficult to show that, when we make abstractions in any science for the purposes of description, the direction and extent of those abstractions is really determined by an act of appreciation. All abstraction is, in the last analysis, purposive. Whether the product of our
\end{quote}
abstraction is in any sense the concrete thing with which we started, is finally to be decided only by an act of appreciation.\textsuperscript{379}

Similarly, Iseminger – writing in the discipline of the philosophy of the arts – argues that aesthetic appreciation involves the process of experiencing the quality of something, in what ‘might be called an epistemically ‘weighty sense.’\textsuperscript{380} Within the discipline of psychology, appreciation means something more than merely knowing or understanding; Klein defines the ‘power of appreciation’ as a ‘powerful vehicle for knowing’ which presents ‘complex, systemic phenomena and fosters an understanding of the simple, fundamental realities underlying them.’ He goes on to state that appreciation is a ‘direct, full, uncensored, unmediated, and unqualified experience’; it is a ‘kind of knowing’ that is different from the ‘mind’s way of categorizing, classifying, and judging.’\textsuperscript{381}

Appreciation is equivalent to epistemology, which involves ‘reflecting, experiencing and describing.’\textsuperscript{382} This is analogous to Almsted’s definition of ‘appreciation,’ which is derived from the German phrase Ein Tieferes Sich Besinnen,\textsuperscript{383} meaning a deeper understanding, contemplation or reflection. The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘epistemic’ as ‘of or relating to knowledge or degree of acceptance.’\textsuperscript{384} This suggests that epistemology is an appraisal or weighing of one’s knowledge. The Oxford English Dictionary cites the 1856 work of James F. Ferrier, whose Lectures on Greek Philosophy and Other Philosophical Remains presents the general question: “What is Knowing and the Known?” or more shortly, ‘What is

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{379} Wilbur M. Urban, ‘Appreciation and Description and the Psychology of Values,’ \textit{The Philosophical Review} Vol. 14, No. 6, November 1905, p 647


\textsuperscript{381} Donald C. Klein, ‘The Power of Appreciation,’ \textit{American Journal of Community Psychology} 16(3), 1988, pp 306, 308

\textsuperscript{382} Pollner, \textit{Mundane Reason}, p 127, cited in Whiteley, ‘Mundane Reason and Epistemic Culture,’ p 10

\textsuperscript{383} Hermann Almstedt, ‘Appreciation (Ein Tieferes Sich Besinnen),’ \textit{The Modern Language Journal} 7(2), November 1922, p 90

\end{footnotes}
Knowledge? Similarly, Knorr-Cetina, in her research examining knowledge processes in two different sciences, defines ‘epistemic culture’ as:

... those amalgams of arrangements and mechanisms – bonded through affinity, necessity, and historical coincidence – which, in any given field make up how we know what we know. Epistemic cultures are cultures that create and warrant knowledge, and the premier knowledge institution in the world is, still, science [italics added].

Beyond the ability to be able to perceive a bigger picture or reality behind a mass of facts, appreciation also involves the invocation of ‘values’ – the estimate of the ‘worth’ of something. In the realm of philosophy, one is appreciating something when ‘in experiencing the qualities of a thing one finds them worthy or valuable.’ In accounting, ‘appreciation’ is used in a different sense – it is defined as the increase in ‘value’ of a particular asset; Carpenter et al defines appreciation as the ‘accretion to the value of an asset’ over a long period of time. Almsted, a literary scholar, states that to ‘appreciate life is, really, to give a value to it, and what word is there that so truly synthesizes all our endeavor, all our aspirations and all our hopes as the word value.’ Defining appreciation in terms useful for our purposes, Almsted goes on to state that the process of appreciation involves a ‘nice balancing of values.’

This is useful in our evolving definition of appreciation, which involves the ability to perceive, as defined earlier, ‘delicate distinctions’ in values between two parties (goals, as described in the earlier section, being the derivative of values and interests). It is here that the various definitions of appreciation from the various disciplines become highly beneficial to this study. Klein, a community psychologist, argues that ‘appreciation’ involves exploring the ‘pervasive rightness’ of two parties caught up in a debate. While debates typically see the emergence of one winner at the expense of a loser, Klein argues that when appreciation is involved, the debate starts

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386 Knorr-Cetina, Epistemic Cultures, p 1
389 Almstedt, ‘Appreciation (Ein Tieferes Sich Besinnen),’ p 90
390 Almstedt, ‘Appreciation (Ein Tieferes Sich Besinnen),’ p 90
from a premise that both parties are right. This eventuates in the ‘delightful result (where) you and I together arrive at a resolution of our difference that satisfies each of us more than the position from which we started.’\textsuperscript{391} Appreciation, he adds, is the ability to manage ‘differences, disagreements and conflicts’ – when values and goals are in opposition – through ‘creative synthesis,’ whereby an interacted outcome is derived from exploring shared ‘rights’ on either side.\textsuperscript{392}

This study’s evolving definition of appreciation can be applied to the realm of strategy along two routes: (a) appreciation is the ability to see differences in goals and a potential deterree’s strength of motivation involved in achieving such goals; (b) appreciation is the ability to make evaluations of one’s knowledge based on past experience.

\textit{Estimations of Value}

\textit{Appreciation} involves a deterrer’s critical evaluation of his knowledge about an opponent’s goals. These goals are usually opposed to those of a deterrer. Appreciation enables the deterrer to ‘see’ the bigger picture behind conflicting goals, and in particular the asymmetry in motivation between the deterrer and deterree in achieving their respective goals. This is well covered in deterrence literature.\textsuperscript{393} Wolf, for example, examines cases where weaker states attacked stronger states due to the former state’s ‘strong commitment to particular values.’\textsuperscript{394} This so-called asymmetry of motivation can be illustrated by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. America’s interception of Japanese diplomatic communications through the breaking of Japanese ciphers (called MAGIC) had already exposed the innermost thoughts and instructions of the government in Tokyo. At the level of goals, we stated earlier that the U.S. had some knowledge about Japanese goals – an attack on U.S. naval assets in the Pacific. The essence of America’s vulnerability to such attack was not the overlooking of such a possibility, or the lack of knowledge of Japan’s goals. Instead, Washington suffered from a ‘general underestimation’ of Japanese ‘determination to fight’.\textsuperscript{395} Using our

\textsuperscript{391} Klein, ‘The Power of Appreciation,’ pp 315-316
\textsuperscript{392} Klein, ‘The Power of Appreciation,’ p 316
\textsuperscript{393} George and Smoke, \textit{Deterrence and in American Foreign Policy}, pp 221-222, Jervis, ‘Deterrence Theory Revisited,’ p 298, 315, Wolf, ‘When The Weak Attack The Strong,’ p 5
\textsuperscript{394} Wolf, ‘When The Weak Attack The Strong,’ p 5
\textsuperscript{395} Patrick Morgan, ‘Examples of Strategic Surprise in the Far East,’ in Knorr and Morgan (eds.), \textit{Strategic Military Surprise}, p 54
evolving definition of *appreciation*, Washington failed to appreciate or evaluate critically the significance of such knowledge – that Japan was highly motivated to carry out a surprise attack.

*Past Experience*

*Appreciation* also involves the ability to make evaluations of knowledge based on past experience. In interviews with policymakers, George noted that their eyes would glaze over when the term ‘theory’ was used. On the other hand, they nodded approvingly when the term ‘generic knowledge’ was used. Generic knowledge, he adds, is the most useful when it:

> takes the form of 'conditional generalizations derived from analysis of *past cases.* Such generalizations identify the conditions under which, for example, deterrence or coercive diplomacy is likely to be effective or likely to fail [italics added by author].

George stresses, however, that conditional generalizations are not ‘prescriptions for action,’ but that their relevance is in helping policymakers diagnose new situations. Generic knowledge would, judging from past cases, help policymakers identify the conditions under which deterrence is likely, or not likely, to work. Based on our evolving framework, *appreciation* typically involves the ability to reflect on one’s own knowledge about an opponent based on past interactions, leading to a decision as to whether deterrence as a policy tool should be used in a particular situation; and whether it should be coupled with other tools or strategies (e.g. conciliation, reassurance, active/passive defences, consequence management), or abandoned altogether.

Using past experience to appreciate one’s own knowledge about an opponent does not always work. In the spring of 1941, a joint U.S. Army-Navy conducted a study of Pearl Harbor’s defenses. It indicated that a Japanese attack would occur along a particular direction, size of force used, and strategy. This assessment turned out to be correct after the Pearl Harbor attack. The study also assessed that an attack would come early on a Sunday morning. In addition, Navy officers took note of the successful British air attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto in November 1940. Essentially, the

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396 George, ‘The Need for Influence Theory,’ p 300
397 George, ‘The Need for Influence Theory,’ pp 300-301
398 George, ‘The Need for Influence Theory,’ p 301
399 Morgan, ‘Examples of Strategic Surprise in the Far East,’ p 54
Americans' knowledge suggested the possibility of a Japanese attack on U.S. naval assets in the Pacific. One scholar argues that 'limits of interpretation' – for the purposes of this chapter it could be said to be the failure of appreciation – hindered appropriate American assessment of the threat behind the clues provided by MAGIC intercepts of Japanese diplomatic communications.\(^4^0^0\) Such 'limits to interpretation' are analogous to the lack of epistemic knowledge, which like appreciation suggests something more than knowledge. In essence, the Americans failed to take information pointing to a potential attack on Pearl Harbor into account. If they had done so, they would have appreciated or evaluated critically their knowledge about possible Japanese goals (i.e. an attack on American naval assets in the Pacific), and took appropriate action to hedge against such an outcome.

A more contemporary example of appreciation would be the shift, over recent years, in American policy towards the use of ballistic missile defences against so-called 'rogue states.' Through the 1990s, Washington policy-makers have accumulated knowledge of North Korea's interests – that Pyongang wanted to prevent American intervention in North Korean affairs. The goal that stemmed from such an interest was the defence of North Korea against possible American/South Korean encroachment. In 1998, North Korea staged the launch of a Taepaedong ballistic missile over Japan, and more recently, Pyongyang conducted its inaugural nuclear test in October 2006.\(^4^0^1\) Such actions have made Washington appreciate or evaluate critically its knowledge of North Korean's goals. The erection of ballistic missile defences in recent years shows that Washington has a lower confidence in its deterrence posture vis-à-vis North Korea. Such appreciation has led to a strategy of complementing a general deterrence posture with a strategy of active defences i.e. missile defences and robust diplomacy.

4.3.2.4 Empathy

One dictionary defines empathy as 'the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another.'\(^4^0^2\) The use of the word empathy in social science literature has been be traced to Theodore Lipps' use

\(^4^0^0\) Betts, *Surprise Attack*, p 46


The Three-Step Reasonableness Matrix

of the German word *Einfühlung*. Translated literally, *ein* equals ‘one’ or ‘into’ and *fühlung* means ‘feeling.’ Thus, *empathy* was initially used to describe a state in which the receiver experiences the same ‘one feeling’ as the target.  

There has, however, been considerable debate over what empathy means. Some scholars use the term to describe vicariously shared emotions that do not require the use of higher mental processes; others treat empathy as synonymous with the cognitive skill of perspective taking, which involves the ability to understand another person’s inner experiences and feelings as well as a capability to view the outside world from the other person’s perspective. 

From the literature on empathy, four main components can be identified. The first component is cognitively-driven perspective-taking, where the therapist identifies and understands his client’s feelings and perspective objectively. The second component involves the sharing of emotions, where the therapist subjectively experiences and shares in another’s psychological state or feelings. 

The third component is a moral one, which refers to the ‘internal altruistic force that motivates the practice of empathy,’ while the fourth, al component is a ‘communicative response (used) to convey understanding of another’s perspective.’ (see Figure 4) 

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FIGURE 4: COMPONENTS OF EMPATHY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotive</td>
<td>The ability to subjectively experience and share in another’s psychological state or intrinsic feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>An internal altruistic force that motivates the practice of Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>The therapist's intellectual ability to identify and understand another person's feelings and perspective from an objective stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural</td>
<td>Communicative response to convey understanding of another's perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this thesis, a focus on the cognitive and behavioural elements of empathy is appropriate. La Monica writes:

Empathy signifies a central focus and feeling with and in the client’s world. It involves accurate perception of the client’s world by the helper, communication of this understanding to the client, and the client’s perception of the helper’s understanding. [italics added]

Based on La Monica’s definition, empathy encompasses two of the components stated above – cognitive perspective-taking and behavioural – as well as an additional component, coordination. Firstly, medical professionals carry out ‘perspective-taking’ – seeking to understand the client’s ‘perception’ of the world. Secondly, the behavioural component involves a communication of this understanding to the client. This involves an interactive mode of communications between the medical professional and patient. Thirdly, the client’s perception of his helper’s empathy enables coordination to take place. Reynolds and Scott argue that ‘relational empathy’ offers the client the opportunity to validate the medical professional’s perceptions, and to experience being understood. The client’s awareness of his helper’s communication allows him to say, ‘yes, that’s how I see things,’ and ‘yes, that is what I would like to happen.’

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408 Morse et al, ‘Exploring Empathy,’ p 274


coordination between medical professional and client involves a two-way interactive process with a shared goal of enabling the client to progress along the path to recovery.

The cognitive, behavioural and coordinative components of _empathy_ apply in the realm of strategy, but not the emotive and moral components. The realist school of international relations, with its emphasis on self-interested, rational unitary actors seeking to their utilities dispassionately, would hardly countenance the ‘sharing’ of other parties’ emotions, much less be driven by ‘moral’ _empathy_. In the practice of deterrence and other forms of coercive diplomacy, however, the cognitive perspective-taking, behavioural and coordinative elements do occur – regardless of whether there are divergent or convergent goals in play. In cognitive perspective-taking, the deterrer sees and understands the world as seen by his deterree. This is possible for two parties involved in a long-term bilateral relationship. The behavioural component of _empathy_ can also apply in deterrence situations, when the deterrer conveys to the deterree his understanding of the latter’s perspective. This involves effective communication of their respective goals and interests. Finally, the coordinative element of _empathy_ is a key element in strategic bargaining. Indeed, the Reynolds-Scott model of ‘relational empathy’ has an uncanny resemblance to the ‘I think you think I think’ process[^1] that is intrinsic in all forms of strategic bargaining, including deterrence and coercive diplomacy.[^2] As Schelling notes, the ‘fundamental problem in tacit bargaining is that of coordination. ‘[^3]

_Empathy_ does not mean that parties involved in deterrence or coercive relationships are altruistic, as per the ‘moral’ component of empathy. They are simply self-interested parties involved in a process of coordinating expectations. With empathy in hand, a deterrer uses deterrence or other coercive strategies – in effect, he maps out a goal for his deterree that the latter would find acceptable. At this point, a distinction can be made between _empathy_ and _appreciation_. In cases of _appreciation_, the deterrer does not take _knowledge_ of his opponent’s goals _in toto_; rather he critically evaluates such _knowledge_ and concludes that the successful application of his deterrence strategy might be compromised. As a result, there is no coordination of expectations here; the deterrer merely chooses whether to continue pursuing his deterrence strategy, and

[^1]: Schelling, _Arms and Influence_, p 18
[^2]: Ayson, _Thomas Schelling And The Nuclear Age_, p 96, 125
[^3]: Schelling, _The Strategy of Conflict_, p 69
possibly risk failure, or modifying the deterrence strategy to lessen the possibilities of failure. By contrast, in cases of empathy the deterrer ‘takes’ the perspective of the deterree well enough, and conveys such empathy to the deterree, to enable the deterree to accept a goal desired by the deterrer. In cases of empathy, deterrence strategies are usually successful. Any goal that helps them achieve some utility through empathetic coordination is better than an outcome that involves no utility due to the failure of coordination. Such ‘coerced coordination’ does not entail any ‘moral’ component of empathy as described earlier, but the empathy here involves a certain level of coordination as implied by Schelling, with both parties feeling each other out for a possible agreement on a mutually-agreeable outcome. As Schelling describes, ‘conflict situations are essentially bargaining situations’ where ‘there is some range of alternative outcomes in which any point is better for both sides than no agreement at all.’ This ‘range of alternative outcomes’ is also similar to Schelling’s definition of stability, which describes actors as having common interests in avoiding war in the nuclear age. A will help B to achieve stability insofar as the achievement of that stability benefits A.

It is also useful to highlight for our purposes that cases of empathy between two adversaries are relatively rare. Empathy suggests a long-term relationship where the parties have had significant strategic interaction and a history of communicating each other’s values, interests and goals. Lessons or norms developed in previous deterrence encounters can also contribute to empathy. It is also useful to highlight the distinction between incomplete empathy and total empathy. When incomplete empathy is present, both sides have shared goals, but there are some implicit and unsettled differences. During a crisis, these differences amplify the effects of opposing goals, which require the use of coercive strategies. The existence of the shared goals, however, lightens the burden placed on deterrence strategies and enhances the possibility of success. Deterrence strategies can reconcile the opposing goals that come into contention through the process of coordination. The deterree chooses the goal preferred by the deterrer. By contrast, total empathy is an ideal situation where two parties have already

414 Schelling, The Strategy Of Conflict, p 5
415 Schelling, The Strategy Of Conflict, pp 21-22
arrived at a broad agreement as per their interests and goals. Here, there is little use for coercive strategies. This usually applies to strategic allies or partners – there is little ground for Britain and the U.S. to apply coercive strategies against one another, for example.

**4.3.3 Three Types of Reasonableness**

The three types of reasonableness have different combinations of *knowledge*, *appreciation* and *empathy*. All these types of reasonableness also typically lead to different deterrence outcomes. It is noteworthy here that *knowledge* across the three types of reasonableness is limited only to a relative degree – for example, instances of ‘recognised reasonableness’ should entail more *knowledge* of an opponent’s goals than ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ and the latter more *knowledge* than instances of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ But *knowledge* about an opponent’s goals is never total or absolute.

In instances of ‘recognised reasonableness,’ three elements are required – *knowledge*, *appreciation* and *empathy*. This is our refined version of Payne’s conceptualisation of ‘reasonableness.’ Here, a deterrer’s *knowledge* of the goals of his opponent’s conceptual framework is good, and *appreciation* enables the deterrer to evaluate critically such knowledge to a high level of confidence. Additionally, with *empathy*, the deterrer takes the perspective of his deterree and conveys to the deterree that he has taken such a perspective. With empathy – the ability to take an opponent’s perspective and convey this understanding to the deterree – the deterrer is able to design a deterrence strategy with a preferred goal that his deterree will choose. This in essence is ‘recognised reasonableness’ – the deterrer recognises that his deterree is ‘reasonable’ enough to be deterred. This type of reasonableness will be explored in our third case study, which examines the Sino-American confrontation during the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis.

By extension, any deterrence encounters which lack *appreciation* and/or *empathy* will result in other types of reasonableness. In instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ a deterrer has some *knowledge* about the goals within his deterree’s conceptual framework. He also *appreciates* or critically evaluates such knowledge, which enables him to see how his deterrence posture could be compromised by the deterree’s high motivation in achieving his goals (which are opposed to those of the
deterrer). As a result, the deterrer seeks to abandon deterrence, or couples a deterrence strategy with a strategy of reassurance, or supplements a deterrence strategy with other policy tools, such as consequence management or passive/active defences. The deterrer could also choose to manage his deterrence posture carefully – on the one hand, he seeks to make his deterrent credible, on the other, he seeks to reduce undue provocation that could lead to deterrence failure. In short, the deterrer has recognised that his deterree is ‘unreasonable.’ This type of reasonableness will be explored in our second case study, which examines the Sino-American conflict during the Vietnam War.

In instances of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness,’ a deterrer has some knowledge about the goals within his deterree’s conceptual framework. However, he fails to appreciate or evaluate critically such knowledge. As a result, the deterrer fails to recognise that his opponent’s ‘unreasonableness’ (i.e. high motivation to achieve his goals, which are opposed to those of the deterrer) could compromise deterrence. In other words, the deterrer fails to recognise that his deterree is ‘unreasonable.’ The outcome is deterrence failure. This type of reasonableness will be explored in the first case study, which examines the Sino-American confrontation during the Korean War.

4.4 Learning and Adaptation

Klein’s concept of an evolved outcome (discussed in the earlier section on ‘appreciation’) derived from opposing values or goals has many parallels with Schelling’s concept of a ‘resting place’ arrived at two parties with divergent interests. Writing about bargaining, communication and limited war, Schelling argues that ‘tacit’ bargaining allows both parties to resolve their conflict of interests around a coordinated outcome despite them having conflicting or divergent interests. A modus vivendi is reached when ‘one of both parties either cannot or will not negotiate explicitly or when neither would trust the other with respect to any agreement explicitly reached.’ This suggests that in each deterrence encounter between two parties, there can be a measure of learning and adaptation through the formation of new lessons or norms. These lessons or norms are carried into subsequent encounters between the two parties.

417 Schelling, The Strategy Of Conflict, p 71
418 Schelling, The Strategy Of Conflict, p 53
The process of learning and adaptation ‘moves’ the type of ‘reasonableness’ towards the right in Figure 3. For example, two parties may have been in a situation of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ in one deterrence encounter. This leads to a process of learning and adaptation that moves them into an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ in a subsequent encounter (the key component of this type of reasonableness being appreciation). In the same vein, another process of learning and adaptation could move them into a situation of ‘recognised reasonableness’ in another deterrence encounter (the key components of this type of reasonableness being appreciation and empathy). For obvious reasons, such a sequential movement through higher types of ‘reasonableness’ is an idealised scenario.

Part of this analysis is captured in the canon of deterrence theory. According to Lebow, deterrence describes an interactive process between defenders and challengers. The defender is expected to define and publicise its commitment and do its best to make that commitment credible in the eyes of its adversary. Would-be challengers are expected to update frequently their assessments with regard to their own capability and resolve. The repetitive cycle test-and-challenge is expected to provide both sides with an ‘increasingly sophisticated’ understanding of each other’s ‘interests, propensity for risk taking, threshold of provocation and style of foreign policy.’ Lebow adds that there is ‘some evidence’ for Jan Kalicki’s attempt to validate this process. Faulty communication contributed to the U.S.-China confrontation that triggered the Korea War in 1950 because both parties were insensitive to each other’s needs and signals. But the experience of Korea and succeeding Sino-American crises in the 1950s brought ‘increased empathy and signalling.’ This facilitated crisis resolution as ‘crisis interactions became more bilateral and responsive, each crisis phase – escalation, declension and de-escalation – was experienced by the U.S. and China simultaneously; and messages and signals, threats and warnings, were exchanged with less exaggerated responses, at least in operational terms.’ It is noteworthy here that Kalicki uses the term ‘empathy’ in a general sense. The definition of the term in this thesis is stricter, and involves the components of cognitive perspective-taking, behavioural and coordination. While Kalicki shows how his version of empathy led to generally

419 Lebow, ‘Conclusions,’ in Psychology And Deterrence, p 229
420 Lebow, ‘Conclusions,’ p 229, Lebow, Between Peace And War, p 150n4
421 Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises, pp 211-217
improved crisis management procedures in subsequent Sino-American interactions, his studies do not detail how this empathy led to high confidence in the implementation of deterrence strategies.

The process of learning and adaptation involves two major components – lessons and norms. Khong has done one of the best studies of so-called ‘historical analogies.’ He uses the concept of analogies to describe how policymakers use lessons in their foreign policy decision-making. Khong’s study builds on previous attempts to understand the role of ‘learning of history’ in international history – how policymakers look into the past to help them deal with the present. He argues that the ‘principal device’ used in this process is the historical analogy. For example, the appeasement of Hitler at Munich – and the subsequent start of World War Two – led to a ‘no more Munichs’ syndrome in the post-War period. In 1950, the Truman Administration reversed its previous assessment that the Korean peninsula was unimportant to U.S. security because it saw North Korea’s invasion of the South as analogous to the actions of Mussolini, Hitler and Japan in the 1930s. Lessons of history are different from norms, which involve shared behaviour or values. Lessons can be learnt by a single party or both parties in a long-term deterrence relationship. But if both parties have drawn lessons from a previous encounter, it still might not result in shared – and behavioural – change (i.e. a shared norm).

Schelling has explained the impact of norms on strategic behaviour. He details the test-and-challenge model in his conceptualisation of strategic interaction, interdependence and learning. Ayson uses these concepts to interpret the concept of ‘stability’ within Schelling’s writings. Ayson notes that one criticism of American strategic thinking (of which Schelling’s forms an important part) was that it developed without allowing much for the existence of different strategic cultures at both sides of a deterrence relationship. Schelling’s concept of stability is not based on the assumption that the parties (i.e. the Soviet Union and the United States) will naturally see things the same way. Instead, these differing approaches converge when parties become part of

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423 Khong, *Analogies at War*, p 4
the same process – when there is interaction.\textsuperscript{424} This in effect puts an extra premium on the interdependence of the parties.\textsuperscript{425} Schelling’s interest in the prospects for strategic ‘adaptation’ and ‘learning’ rely on his understanding of feedback processes. While ‘learning’ involves an adaptation to one’s environment as one finds it, ‘teaching’ involves manipulating the environment to affect the interaction.\textsuperscript{426} In effect, Schelling’s model of learning is predicated on the creation of a single norm or pattern through a process of separate interactions:

When norms are created for parties in the same processes, each player’s developing norm influences the other’s. There is a process of genuine learning with respect to values; each side adapts to its own system of values to the other’s, in forming its own.\textsuperscript{427}

Ayson credits this strand of Schelling’s to the work of social psychologist Muzafer Sherif, whose studies of group norms had a major influence on group processes in American social science.\textsuperscript{428} The manner in which a continual process of interaction could increase the possibility of stable equilibrium is illustrated by a Prisoner’s Dilemma computer game tournament started by Robert Axelrod in 1980. Fourteen strategies were submitted, but the highest-scoring strategy was a ‘tit for tat’ strategy, which cooperated on the first move and then did whatever the other player did on the preceding move.\textsuperscript{429} Axelrod notes that the robustness of the strategy came from three features – it was never the first to defect, it was ‘provocable’ into retaliation by a defection of the other, and it was forgiving after just one act of retaliation.\textsuperscript{430} In effect, both ‘players’ in this iterated process could discern the process in which they could steer the other into a ‘pattern’ of either cooperation or defection. This bolsters Schelling’s analysis that some norm or pattern can emerge from interaction; in other words, cooperation based on reciprocity could emerge.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{424} Ayson, \textit{Thomas Schelling And The Nuclear Age}, p 170
\bibitem{425} Ayson, \textit{Thomas Schelling}, p 171
\bibitem{427} Thomas C. Schelling, ‘Prospectus for a Reorientation of Game Theory,’ \textit{RAND} P-1491, 17 September 1958, p 121, Schelling, \textit{The Strategy of Conflict}, p 168
\bibitem{428} Ayson, \textit{Thomas Schelling}, p 169
\bibitem{430} Axelrod and Hamilton, ‘The Evolution of Cooperation,’ p 1393
\end{thebibliography}
The idea that norms between two parties converge at some point due to repeated interaction has some basis. Before their confrontation over Korea in 1950, both the United States and China had erroneous images of each other. Kalicki argues that the Korean War and other Sino-American crisis in the 1950s developed into a pattern in which the life cycle of each crisis became increasingly self-regulated and in which the ability of each other to handle crisis with the other become increasingly sophisticated. As a result of dealing with each other in crisis conditions, both sides learnt to respect each other’s commitments, since to challenge them would lead to disproportionate costs similar to those suffered in the Korean crises. The end of the Korean War also established spheres of Sino-American commitment in a country which had suffered long stretches of foreign domination. In effect, this became a stalemate in the Cold War – a concept akin to Schelling’s ‘resting places’, which allow two parties to settle on a ‘bargain’ across a range of outcomes.

The concept of learning, however, can be extended too far. Strategic interactions between two parties might not always proceed along a virtuous cycle, whereby intensified interactivity leads to a higher degree of learning. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, learning is very much dependent on how preconceptions and predispositions change. Such cognitive structures embody in themselves prior experience and learning and are resistant to change. To appreciate the goals of an opposing conceptual framework correctly, some preconceptions or misconceptions about the enemy might have to be eradicated – but leaders cannot operate purposefully without some form of preconception. Hence, in devising measures to improve the intelligence process via enhanced perception, policy makers are faced with ‘unresolved tradeoffs and dilemmas’ – they are thus ‘damned if they do and damned if they don’t’. Secondly, even if two adversaries in a confrontation have learnt lessons about each other in prior confrontations – i.e. they have increased appreciation – the utility of lessons learnt from the previous confrontation may not be useful due to contextual factors. At the start of the 1973 Middle East crisis, leaders from both the Soviet Union

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431 Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises, p 213
432 Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises, p 75
433 Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict, p 22
434 Morgan, ‘The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,’ p 214
435 Richard Betts, ‘Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable’ World Politics 31(1), October 1978, p 63
and the United States carried more nuanced images of their adversary, thanks to prior learning about their opponent’s motives and interests during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. During the 1973 crisis, however, leaders from both sides still misread each other’s signals and intentions. They did not manage the painful trade-off between protection of the superpower relationship and the search for unilateral advantage in indirect competition – they did not acknowledge how the pursuit of unilateral gain could derail Soviet-American relations. Neither did Washington and Moscow seek compromise by establishing ‘mutually acceptable limits’ to such competition. The 1973 example illustrates how increased appreciation from prior experience and learning about a certain opponent does not automatically lead to better choices regarding the use of deterrence or crisis management.

Similarly, Lebow argues that the ‘inner-directed focus of policymakers’ impedes the level of mutual learning of opposing intentions and modus operandi. He presents Soviet-U.S. relations as a case in point. The ‘lessons’ U.S. policymakers derived from Cold War confrontations with Moscow can only in the ‘loosest sense’ be said to have been derived from the of the adversary. Instead, the lessons appear to have been the result of a ‘subjective unilateral process’ whereby U.S. policymakers tended to interpret Soviet in terms of their ‘pre-existing notions of the motivations behind Soviet policy.’ President Kennedy projected his concern for American credibility onto Khrushchev and interpreted his behaviour in terms of this concern. Later descriptions of the Cuban Missile Crisis have confirmed in the minds of Americans what has become one of the ‘deeply entrenched shibboleths of the Cold War’: the belief that caution and hesitation invite challenge, while a reputation for resolve deters it. Similarly, using analogies may also be counter-productive. While historical analogies are not always inaccurate, they carry a psychological risk – the mind has a tendency to latch onto the certainties of the past as a guide to the future. The problem for sceptics of analogies is summarised by Schlesinger:

436 Lebow and Stein, We All Lost the Cold War, pp 282-287
437 Lebow, ‘Conclusions,’ in Psychology And Deterrence, pp 230-231
438 Lebow, ‘Conclusions,’ in Psychology And Deterrence, p 231
The past is an enormous grab bag with a prize for everybody. The issue of history as rationalisation somewhat diminishes the force of the argument that history is per se a powerful formal determinant of policy.\(^{439}\)

In 1989, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping cracked down harshly on student protesters at Tiananmen Square because he drew an analogy between the protests and the beginnings of the Cultural Revolution. Pirated notes from a meeting of Chinese leaders reported that Deng had – rather incorrectly – equated the students’ demands for democracy as ‘altogether the same stuff as what the rebels did during the Cultural Revolution. All they want is to create chaos under the heavens.’\(^{440}\) Having lived through those chaotic years, Deng could not countenance their possible return and as a result suppressed what he saw to the new Cultural Revolution.\(^{441}\)

The cumulative effect of the learning-inhibiting factors listed above can hinder appreciation and empathy in future encounters with the same opponent. If learning is constrained or the ‘wrong’ lessons learnt, appreciation in subsequent encounters can be affected. In 1973, Israeli officials failed to appreciate that their deterrence posture against the Egyptians could fail. Following their victory against massed Arab armies in 1967, Israeli officials developed a preconception that an Egyptian decision to resort to war would hinge on military calculations rather than ideological or psychological factors. For example, the Israelis took the withdrawal of Soviet technicians and advisers as a weakening of Soviet support for Cairo, and judged that President Anwar Sadat would not accept military risks without the return of such support.\(^{442}\) This preconception with military calculations hampered appreciation of the fact that Egyptian goals to ‘revolutionise the political situation and open up new diplomatic possibilities’ would defeat Israel’s deterrence posture in 1973.\(^{443}\)


\(^{443}\) Betts, Surprise Attack, p 68-72
4.5 Conclusion

This chapter’s significance lies in its refinement of Payne’s conceptualisation of reasonableness. Firstly, the reasonableness matrix validates Payne’s rational-but-unreasonable thesis, but adds that deterress can make choices with regard to the use of deterrence strategies, depending on the level of ‘reasonableness’ which they perceive in a deterree. Reasonableness can also be enhanced over time, that is, a deterrer gets a better understanding (i.e. knowledge and appreciation) of the goals in his deterree's conceptual framework over time. This new reasonableness framework suggests that deterres can develop appreciation and empathy in a bilateral relationship. They should seek to move from instances of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness to ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and ‘recognised reasonableness’"). Secondly, deterrence outcomes are dependent on the three ‘types’ of reasonableness.

The development of empathy in an evolving deterrence relationship is not always linear or absolute. In successive deterrence episodes between two parties (for example, the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War), empathy does not always grow stronger over time. By the 1970s, for example, it could be said that the U.S. and the Soviet Union had learned to temper their bilateral confrontation along the lines of détente. At that time, both sides displayed some empathy in the relationship in terms of the ability to perspective-take and coordinate expectations, such that their respective deterrence strategies ‘worked.’ Such empathy, however, became less pronounced later in the decade, when Moscow sought to expand its influence into Africa and Central America. In the 1980s, U.S. President Ronald Reagan again intensified superpower confrontation against the Soviet Union by spending more on the American military. By the early 1980s, both sides were displaying a lesser ability in perspective-taking and coordinating expectations to make their deterrence strategies work effectively – at least in terms of preventing the other from pursuing zero-sum moves (i.e. Moscow’s expansion into Africa and Central America, and Reagan’s increased military spending.) Therefore, the development of empathy in a bilateral relationship is as much a function of time as the particular contextual factors surrounding the relationship.

Despite the inherent tensions in a bilateral relationship, the formation of lessons and norms and the effect they have upon the processes of appreciation and empathy in
successive encounters result in a gradual search for ‘resting places,’ or havens of stability where their expectations converge.\textsuperscript{444} In instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ where appreciation is present, the resting place might well be a mutual decision not to employ deterrence strategies, or to couple such strategies with other policy tools such as active diplomacy or missile defences. In instances of ‘recognised reasonableness,’ a deterrer possessing some degree of empathy might be able to coerce a somewhat unwilling deterree to a goal they can both accept.

\textsuperscript{444} Schelling, \textit{The Strategy of Conflict}, p 71
PART B:  
CASE STUDIES OF SINO-AMERICAN DETERRENCE
The deterrence failures that occurred before the 1950 Korean War were the first deterrence episode between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. Before this confrontation, each country had very little to draw on in terms of experience with the other – in particular, experience in dealing with the other party in a previous deterrence encounter. Arguably, the deterrence failures suffered by both China and the U.S. in 1950 were due to the lack of such experience.

This case study serves to demonstrate three things. Firstly, the U.S. deterrence attempt against the Chinese in Korea was an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ Washington’s knowledge of China’s goals suggested that the Chinese would not intervene in the war. However, Washington failed to appreciate or evaluate critically such knowledge. Washington wrongly thought the Chinese were reasonable – i.e. that the Chinese would be deterred. This led to deterrence failure.

Second, China’s deterrence attempt in Korea was not an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ Instead, it was an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ albeit not a ‘pure’ or clear-cut one. Chinese leader’s knowledge suggested that the U.S. planned to attack China from three fronts – Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam. However, the Chinese failed to appreciate their knowledge of U.S. goals. Despite this lack of appreciation, they arrived at the conclusion that Washington could not be deterred (i.e. that the U.S. was unreasonable). As it turned out, Washington did not intend to attack China directly; it had a more modest goal, which was to reunify the Korean peninsula. Interestingly, China had already decided to execute its deterrence threat even if the Americans had been deterred.

Thirdly, this case study will argue that learning and adaptation led to the formation of shared norms and lessons learnt following the deterrence failures suffered in 1950. Following the Korean War, the shared norm established involved the

445 Instances of recognised unreasonableness involve three components: (a) a deterrer has knowledge that his deterree might challenge his deterrence posture; (b) he appreciates or critically evaluates such knowledge, and comes to the conclusion that the deterree is ‘unreasonable’; (c) the deterrer either abandons deterrence, supplements deterrence with other policy tools (e.g. conciliation) or manages his deterrence posture carefully so as to avoid deterrence failure. Using such a definition, the Chinese deterrence attempt in Korea is not a ‘pure’ case of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ because the the Chinese failed to appreciate their knowledge of U.S. goals.
limitation of conflict along a physical boundary. The biggest lesson learnt was the fear of intervention – a heightened sensitivity to how deterrence threats against the other party might fail in future encounters. Such learning and adaptation influenced the choices the U.S. and China made with regard to the use of deterrence strategies in Sino-American interactions later in the 1950s and in Vietnam in the late 1960s.

The structure of this case study is as follows: the first part provides a short historical narrative of the Sino-American relationship that preceded the dual deterrence failures in Korea in late 1950. The second part examines the American deterrence failures in Korea. It will argue that the failures were instances of 'unrecognised unreasonableness.' The third section examines the Chinese deterrence failures in Korea. It will be argued that the Chinese case represented a 'poor fit' to the conceptualisation of 'recognised unreasonableness' in this thesis because Beijing implemented a deterrence strategy which is not predicted by this thesis' model of 'recognised unreasonableness.' The last part will explain how the deterrence failures in Korea enabled the U.S. and China to embark on a process of learning and adaptation, which led to the formation of norms and lessons learnt. Such a process enhanced appreciation, or a critical evaluation of knowledge about their opponent's goals, in subsequent encounters.

5.1 Background of the Sino-American Relationship

The Sino-American relationship – and deterrence failures that preceded the outbreak of the Korean War – has been studied through the collective lens of mutual misperception and misconceptions.46 This chapter will argue that these misconceptions led to a failure of appreciation of one's knowledge about an opposing party's goals. Such lack of appreciation can lead deterrees to conclude that their deterrees are 'reasonable', when the latter is not.

At its most basic level, strategic communication between the U.S. and China in 1950 was hampered by the dearth of official diplomatic contacts. Whiting, for example, argues that Chinese Communist calculations depended primarily upon Soviet

interpretations of American and United Nations intentions. This introduced a ‘Soviet bias’ into the information available to decision-makers in Beijing. Likewise, American knowledge of Chinese Communist views came, to a considerable degree, from Indian channels. Such ‘objective limitations,’ together with ‘subjective limitations’ – which arose from the difficulty each side had with projecting itself into the other’s frame of reference – hampered effective strategic communications. The secrecy with which Beijing moved its forces across the Yalu River in mid-October 1950 led the Central Intelligence Agency to underestimate, by several orders of magnitude, the number of Chinese troops in Korea. This undermined the effectiveness of the military build-up as a method of communicating intent. Kalicki aptly sums up the quality of strategic communications between the United States and China as a ‘dialogue of the deaf,’ where both sides were incredibly insensitive to each other’s signals.

Like Kalicki, Lebow argues the Chinese failure to deter the Americans from crossing the 38th Parallel in October 1950 was due to ‘gross American insensitivity’ to Chinese interests, warnings, and military preparations to intervene. Lebow stresses how images – more specifically, the obduracy of erroneous images – injected an ‘air of unreality’ into American perceptions of China. He notes how students of Sino-American relations have been struck by the ‘air of unreality’ that has characterised American perceptions of China. From the very beginning, Sino-American contact has been fraught with ‘romantic images, distortions, wishful thinking, irrelevant generalizations and logical inconsistencies.’ (This influence of images hindered appreciation, or critical evaluation of one’s knowledge about an opponent’s goals.)

447 Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu, pp 168-172
448 Lebow, Between Peace And War, p 149, Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ p 14
449 Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises, pp 211-217
452 Shambaugh notes that the terms ‘images’ and ‘misperceptions’ have been used interchangeably in the literature. For Shambaugh, an image is used to describe categories of specific articulated perceptions. The image is mental construct that categorises and orders disparate pieces of information and helps to shape an articulated response (perception). Shambaugh adds that his distinction follows that of Allen S. Whiting, who states that ‘an image refers to the preconceived stereotype of a nation, state, or people that is derived from a selective interpretation of history, experience and self-image … Perception refers to the selective cognition of statements, actions, or events attributed to the opposite party as framed and defined by the pre-existing image. To use a figure of speech widely found in the literature, image provides the frame and the lenses through which the external world is perceived.’ See Whiting, China Eyes Japan, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p 19, cited in David Shambaugh, Beautiful Imperialist.
From the time of the ‘Open Door’ policy enacted in 1899, Americans prided themselves on their selfless concern for China’s independence and territorial integrity. When presented with clear signs of Chinese hostility, many Americans still clung on to the belief of America’s ‘historic friendship’ with China, even long after its largely mythical nature should have become apparent.\textsuperscript{453} Morgenthau argues that another myth held by the Americans was that they had ‘lost China’ after the Communist takeover of the country in 1949. While the Communization of China was a defeat for American foreign policy, the phrase ‘losing China’ underscored a ‘mythological element’ in American perceptions of China – one could only ‘lose China’ in the sense that one loses what has originally possessed as one’s own; but America did not ‘own’ China from the start.\textsuperscript{454}

In a sense, Washington did ‘lose China’ in that it missed a critical window of opportunity to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing after 1949. Such an opportunity presented itself following the Communist takeover, and if Washington had secured official relations with China, the aforesaid communications problems could have been ameliorated. This could have improved \textit{appreciation} and lessened the possibility of deterrence failure in Korea a year later. Christensen argues, however, that domestic political considerations – specifically, a tide of anti-Communist sentiment in the United States – triumphed over realpolitik considerations.\textsuperscript{455} In early 1949, the Truman Administration explored options to establish economic and political contacts with the Chinese Communists. On May 1949, Zhou En Lai’s assistant Huang Hua held out the promise of improved relations with the United States – an offer that was repeated a month later. But despite China fulfilling four conditions stipulated by Washington for recognition of the new Beijing regime – the last one being the proper treatment of American diplomats and representatives in China – the window had largely closed by mid-January 1950. The State Department believed that a softer stance towards the Chinese Communists would be dangerous to Truman’s anticommunist reputation, and the domestic legitimacy of the Truman Administration’s grand strategy,
which depended on the maintenance of that reputation.\textsuperscript{456} Tsou supports Christensen’s argument by claiming that America’s diplomatic disaster in 1949 and 1950 laid deep in the traditions of American policy since the dispatch of its Open Door notes in 1899.\textsuperscript{457} Post hoc, a softer stance might have ameliorated many of the misperceptions that came from the lack of effective bilateral communication. In turn, the lessening of such misperceptions could have enhanced \textit{appreciation}, this lessening the possibility of deterrence failure in late 1950.

Misconceptions also dominated Chinese views of America. This led to a lack of \textit{appreciation}. By 1950, Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders were convinced that America’s intervention in Korea was an ‘unambiguous, compelling threat’ to China’s security.\textsuperscript{458} Mao believed that a direct conflict with the U.S. was inevitable and that the latter would attack China from Korea, Taiwan or Indochina.\textsuperscript{459} Such a misconception of America’s goals was a significant change from Mao’s relatively positive perceptions of the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s. From 1936, when he met American journalist Edgar Snow until the end of the Second World War in 1945, Mao was absorbed with two goals: enlisting the U.S. as a \textit{de facto} partner in China’s struggle against Japan and the Chinese Communist Party’s struggle against its Nationalist rivals (it would be proved subsequently that Mao’s desires were fulfilled on the former goal, but not on the latter). Knowing little about the inner workings of the American government, however, Mao was unable to gauge accurately the real prospects of co-operation between the CCP and Washington.\textsuperscript{460} After the end of the Second World War, Mao welcomed the initial mediation of U.S. General George C. Marshall, seeing it as a method of pressuring Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek into slowing down the march towards civil war and thus providing the CCP the means to achieve power and legitimacy. The subsequent American moves to support Chiang and oppose the CCP angered Mao, who in turn changed his relative benign perceptions of Washington.\textsuperscript{461} Said Mao:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{456} Thomas Christensen, \textit{Useful Adversaries}, pp 91-104
  \item \textsuperscript{457} Tsou, \textit{America’s Failure In China}, p 30
  \item \textsuperscript{458} Andrew Scobell, \textit{China’s Military Use of Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March}, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p 79, Zhang, Mao’s Military Romanticism, pp 2-4
  \item \textsuperscript{459} Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, ‘China’s Decision To Enter the Korean War, History Revisited,’ \textit{China Quarterly} No. 121, March 1990, p 106
  \item \textsuperscript{460} He Di, ‘The Most Respected Enemy: Mao’s Perception of the U.S.,’ \textit{The China Quarterly} No. 137, March 1994, p 146
  \item \textsuperscript{461} Di, ‘The Most Respected Enemy,’ pp 146-147
\end{itemize}
We made mistakes in our work during the previous period ... It was the first time for us to deal with the U.S. imperialists. We didn't have much experience. As a result we were taken in. With this experience we won't be cheated again.\(^{462}\)

From a longer historical perspective, Mao’s love-hate relationship with Washington in the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) Century reflected China’s love-hate relationship with America in the preceding two centuries. In his classic work, Harold Isaacs argues that the Chinese have through history harboured mixed feelings for America. In the last two centuries, the U.S. has been the target of alternating amity and enmity for both the people and governments of China.\(^{463}\) Following the 1911 Revolution, for example, Sun Yat-Sen led the way in articulating the view that America – with its social vitality, political stability, technological prowess and economic efficiency – was progressive, benevolent and represented a model for China’s development. President Woodrow Wilson helped to reinforce this image briefly.\(^{464}\) The May Fourth Movement in 1919 led to the initial germination of Marxist-Leninist thought in China. The founding of the CCP in Shanghai in 1921 led to a new and critical interpretation of Chinese images of America. For broad masses of Chinese, images of America were largely defined through the U.S. commercial and military presence in China and the increasing perception of the Chiang Kai-Shek regime as an American puppet. This in turn contributed to negative and anti-American sentiments among the general populace.\(^{465}\)

In February 1950, when Mao returned from Moscow with a treaty of friendship and cooperation and a commitment to the Soviet model of education and research, even the way Chinese intellectuals saw the world had changed. According to the Stalinist interpretation of the world which Mao adhered to, America was considered as a capitalist power which was a ‘greedy and violent nation struggling to remain the strongest and wealthiest on the earth.’\(^{466}\) Thus before the Korean War erupted in 1950, Mao’s negative perceptions of the U.S. were shaped by these general perceptions.

\(^{462}\) “Mao Zedong wei huansong Xu Xiangqian de yanhu shangde jianghua” ("Mao's speech at a farewell banquet for General Xu Xiangqian"), July 1947, in the unpublished memoir of An Ziwen, cited in He Di, ‘The Most Respected Enemy,’ p 147


\(^{464}\) Shambaugh, ‘Anti-Americanism in China,’ p 145

\(^{465}\) Shambaugh, ‘Anti-Americanism in China,’ pp 146-147

\(^{466}\) Shambaugh, ‘Anti-Americanism in China,’ p 147
On the other side, Americans were influenced by the concept of ‘historic friendship’ between China and the U.S., and Washington’s selfless concern for China’s territorial sovereignty. Such perceptions were not entirely correct – in the Boxer expedition of 1900-1901, the U.S. dropped anchor in the Shanghai harbour and American troops fought on Chinese soil for the first time. However, when Truman and Acheson stressed the historic amity between China and the U.S. in 1950, they were not being disingenuous – rather, they really meant that America did not intend to violate China’s territorial sovereignty (although in China’s case, it felt that the American intervention in Korea constituted a precursor to such a violation).

5.2 Deterrence Failures in the 1950 Korean War

This backdrop of mutual misconceptions – and their resultant impact on appreciation of the knowledge of an opponent’s goals – led to the deterrence failures in late 1950. Following North Korea’s June 1950 invasion of the South, U.S. and U.N. forces entered the peninsula to defend the South. This led Beijing to believe that U.S. and U.N. forces would cross into North Korea to liquidate the communist regime, unify the two Koreas and subsequently invade China. Beijing then put into effect several means of deterring this move: an initial deployment of 60,000 troops in Manchuria, to bring the total there to 180,000 by mid-July; a massive propaganda campaign to prepare the Chinese people for possible intervention in Korea; and an additional deployment of forces into Manchuria beginning in mid-September that brought the total there by mid-October to around 320,000.\footnote{Rees, Korea: The Limited War, p 107} In late September, General Douglas MacArthur staged an amphibious landing at Inchon and routed the North Korean army. As U.N. forces moved towards the 38th Parallel, Beijing’s warnings against potential intervention became more explicit and urgent. On September 30, Chinese President Zhou En Lai issued China’s strongest warning, saying in a speech that any party that sought to solve any ‘Far Eastern problem directly concerned with China will certainly break their skulls.’\footnote{Tsou, America’s Failure In China, pp 572-573} China’s people, he warned, ‘will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbours savagely invaded by the imperialists.’\footnote{George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, pp 143-144} On October 1, South Korean troops crossed into North Korea. On October 3, Zhou summoned Indian Ambassador Pannikar to a 1am conference and told...
him that if U.S. and U.N. troops entered North Korea, China would enter the war. As Pannikar paraphrased the message: ‘The South Koreans did not matter, but American intrusion into North Korea would encounter Chinese resistance.’

On October 7, U.S. troops crossed the 38th Parallel – the same day the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution that endorsed the new war goals of occupying North Korea and unifying it with the South. Beijing’s deterrence effort had failed twice. First, it had failed to deter U.S. and U.N. forces from invading North Korea in early October. Second, Beijing had also failed to deter General MacArthur’s offensive towards the Yalu that started on November 24.

Following the Americans’ crossing of the Parallel in early October, Chinese ‘volunteers’ crossed the Yalu River in force on October 17 – secretly and without detection. On October 26 and November 2, they engaged in sharp tactical combat with South Korean and American units that were approaching the Yalu. On November 5, General MacArthur reported to the U.N. that more than 200,000 Chinese Communist forces had attacked U.N. forces in Korea and that the latter faced an ‘entirely new war.’

On November 5-7, Chinese forces disengaged from further contact. This led to revived optimism in MacArthur’s headquarters and in Washington. American officials thought – incorrectly – that there were limited goals behind China’s Korean offensive i.e. that China would not intervene heavily in the Korean War. As a result, MacArthur announced on November 24 his ‘end the war by Christmas’ offensive and sent his forces toward the Yalu to attack the North Korean military. Two days later, the Chinese launched a full-scale offensive and took the Americans by surprise, sending them reeling backward into the longest retreat in U.S. military history. Washington’s deterrence effort failed to deter Chinese forces from crossing the Yalu into North Korea on October 17. The Americans suffered a second deterrence failure in late November, when the Chinese launched another counter-offensive.

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470 Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ pp 8-9
471 Using fresh evidence from Chinese archives, Christensen argues that China did not execute the second deterrence attempt. This will be discussed later in the chapter
472 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, pp 184-186
473 Congressional Record, 1950-54, Military Situation In The Far East, Hearings before the Joint Senate Committee on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, USGPO, Washington, 1951, cited in Rees, p 157
5.2.1 A Failure of Deterrence or Expectations?

A few points here need to be made as to whether the deterrence strategies were actually employed by China and the U.S. during the run-up to the Korean War in late 1950. There is a stronger case for the Chinese deterrence threat that sought to prevent U.N. forces from crossing the 38th Parallel. Zhou En Lai’s October 3 warning to Ambassador Pannikar is a clear deterrence threat: China would enter the war if U.S. forces crossed the Parallel. Although the deterrence threat was issued via the Indians, it was nevertheless an overt threat contingent on the behaviour of U.N. forces in Korea.475

However, a case could be made that the U.S. did not actually try to deter Chinese intervention, given that it had never really issued a clear-cut deterrence threat. This is the argument posed by MacArthur and Spanier, who propose that Mao acted out of adventurism – he knew the U.S. would not respond with attacks on the mainland because Washington had not threatened Beijing with retaliatory air strikes if Chinese troops attacked in force.476 In his study of the bilateral failures of deterrence in Korea in 1950, Zelman stresses that the American attempt to prevent Chinese intervention ‘cannot be wholly regarded as a failure of deterrence, as it is questionable whether deterrence, in the strict sense of the word, was actually applied.’477 Lastly, the fact that the American deterrence threat was coupled to reassurances to Beijing could actually mean its dilution.478 On September 1, President Truman stated that ‘we hope in particular that the people of China will not be misled or forced into fighting the United Nations and the American people who have always been their friends.’ Throughout

475 Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p 151.


477 Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ p 30

478 Citing Chinese archival material, Christensen argues that an intensified deterrence threat would not have succeeded in deterring Beijing, given that Mao’s ultimate goal in Korea was the expulsion of all foreign forces from Korea. See Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, Thomas J. Christensen, ‘Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace’
October and November, Truman and Acheson continued to stress the ‘traditional friendship’ of the American and Chinese peoples.\footnote{Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ p 22}

It can be argued, however, that the U.S. goal to prevent Chinese intervention constituted a weak attempt at deterrence. Firstly, the U.S. clearly made an attempt at wedding these reassurances to a strategy of deterrence. George, Smoke and Zelman acknowledge that the U.S. policy of reassurance in Korea was backed up by the implicit threat of American air power against the Chinese mainland. Moreover, an effective policy of deterrence, as Schelling argues, seeks to encompass two critical elements – credibility of threat and reassurance.\footnote{Thomas Schelling, \textit{Arms and Influence}, pp 35-91} Essentially, threats and reassurances are two sides of the same coin – threats dictate the net costs applied to an actor who transgresses a deterrence threat, while reassurances promise the withdrawal of such net costs contingent upon the actor not transgressing the threat. Secondly, U.S. policy towards China – though not a case of immediate deterrence – was a case of general deterrence. The mere presence of U.S. troops – and more specifically, unrivalled air power – in the Korean peninsula constituted an implied, but still a significant, threat to Chinese interests. This fits into Morgan’s definition of general deterrence as a posture attempted by an actor who maintains a broad military capability and issues ‘broad threats of a punitive response to an attack’ to keep anyone from seriously thinking about attacking.\footnote{Morgan, \textit{Deterrence Now}, pp 9-10} The irony behind the feeble American attempt at issuing some firm form of threat is that the Chinese did receive the ‘signal’ from the Americans that there was a possibility of strategic bombing or use of atomic devices against the Chinese mainland. On September 25, General Nie Yanrong, governor of Beijing, told Indian Ambassador Pannikar that China would intervene if U.N. forces crossed the 38th Parallel. Gen Nie spoke of Beijing’s calculation of the costs and risks of stopping the Americans, but stressed that bombing – even atomic bombing – of China would have little effect on Beijing’s decision to intervene:

\begin{quote}
We know what we are in for, but at all costs American aggression has to be stopped. The Americans can bomb us, they can destroy our industries, but they cannot defeat us on land … they may even drop atom bombs on us. What then? They may kill a few million people ...
\end{quote}

\footnotetext[479]{Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ p 22}
\footnotetext[480]{Thomas Schelling, \textit{Arms and Influence}, pp 35-91}
\footnotetext[481]{Morgan, \textit{Deterrence Now}, pp 9-10}
In making their final decision on intervention in early October, Chinese leaders also believed that American air power could be used against them. According to Zhou, Mao was fully aware of the risks of intervention, and was prepared for the worst. China’s assessment of the possible use of American atomic weapons and air power indicate that despite a weak but implicit American threat, Chinese leaders had probably evaluated the implications of strategic bombing by the U.S. The fact that the Chinese registered elements of the U.S. bombing threat into their decision-making means that some form of deterrence – albeit general deterrence – posture was in place. The irony here was that the U.S. stumbled into a posture that was essentially a weak attempt at deterrence. Some hawks in Washington issued some deterrence threats and these warnings were registered in Chinese decision-making. On 25 August 1950, for example, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews called for a ‘war to compel cooperation for peace ... we would become the first aggressors for peace.’ Remarks made by Matthews two days earlier were paraphrased by Time Magazine as ‘why wait to be bombed? Why not strike the first blow?’ Chinese cognizance of such comments presents some evidence that China had assessed the implications of the impact of atomic attacks and strategic bombing – but still decided to intervene. Conversely, the explicit U.S. messages of reassurance – which Truman and Acheson consistently stressed – failed to register in the decision-making of the Chinese.

Using Shambaugh and Whiting’s definition of perceptions and images – that images provide the frame and the lenses through which a person perceives the external world – a general picture of how the American attempt at deterrence failed can be put together. The Americans’ combination of deterrence threat and reassurance attempted to influence Chinese perceptions of American resolve; to the extent that the Chinese factored the deterrence threats into their decision-making, the attempt was partly successful. But the threat-reassurance attempt failed to alter Chinese images of overriding American aggression directed toward China. The logic of images is

484 Cited in Whiting, China Cross The Yalu, p 96
congruent with the existing literature on cognitive dispositions. As detailed in Chapter 4, such dispositions – defined as ‘preconceptions … predispositions, preset patterns of perceptions and analysis’⁴⁸⁵ – comprise images, values, beliefs and assumptions. Cognitive structures are resistant to change because perception involves sampling from available stimuli, and such sampling is biased in ways to conform to cognitive structures and reinforce them.⁴⁸⁶ The literature on images and cognitive structures suggests that American attempts to reassure the Chinese failed because the Chinese had an ingrained image of American hostility. Washington’s reassuring signals – no matter how well-articulated and repeatedly stressed – did not alter the entrenched Chinese image of the U.S. On the other hand, deterrence threats from the U.S. – however contradictory to messages from Truman and Acheson – only served to reinforce the Chinese image of American aggression. A case could be made that Washington’s weak attempt at a deterrence threat, and subsequent deterrence failure, involved a failure of expectations i.e. the Chinese intervention went against American expectations of Chinese behaviour.

5.3 U.S. Deterrence Failures in Korea: ‘Unrecognised Unreasonableness’

In Chapter 4, it was argued that in instances of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness,’ a deterrer has some knowledge about the goals within his deterree’s conceptual framework. However, he fails to appreciate such knowledge. As a result, the deterrer fails to recognise that his opponent’s ‘unreasonableness’ could compromise deterrence. As a result, the deterrer fails to recognise that his deterree is ‘unreasonable.’ It will now be argued that the American deterrence attempt in Korea was an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’.

5.3.1 America’s Knowledge of China’s Conceptual Framework

The American deterrence effort in Korea was built upon one major premise – the Americans’ knowledge of Chinese goals, which suggested that the Chinese would not intervene in the war or escalate its offensive against foreign forces in the peninsula. Such knowledge – together with the lack of appreciation of such knowledge – led the Americans to wrongly conclude that the Chinese were ‘reasonable’ (i.e. deterrable) when they were not.

⁴⁸⁵ Betts, ‘Analysis, War, and Decision,’ p 63, Morgan, ‘The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,’ pp 212-218
⁴⁸⁶ Morgan, ‘The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,’ pp 213-214
5.3.1.1 Knowledge That China Would Not Intervene

America’s knowledge suggested that China was a long-standing friend of the United States and would subsequently not intervene in Korea. Acheson could not understand why Chinese leaders should be alarmed about what he deemed a temporary American military presence in Korea, given that the U.S. had promised to respect China’s interest in the Suiho hydroelectric plant and to withdraw U.S. forces as soon as elections were held in Korea.\textsuperscript{487} Truman, Acheson and other officials continued to stress traditional Sino-American amity, and hung on to such misconceptions even after the Chinese had intervened with forces in late November. As American fears about China’s entry into the war escalated, Acheson told a foreign policy conference on November 15 that the Chinese should be disabused of any illusion emanating from their propaganda that the U.S. or U.N. had any ‘ulterior designs’ on Manchuria.\textsuperscript{488} Following the Chinese intervention in late November, a bitter Truman told Congress on December 1 that the U.N. had proven ‘beyond any possible misunderstanding’ that it presented no threat to Chinese interests. He insisted that the U.S. had a ‘long history of friendship with the Chinese people.’ Given that there was no ‘conceivable justification’ for the Chinese attack on U.N. forces, Truman blamed it on the ‘imperialist designs’ of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{489}

The logic of images, or in particular, the obduracy of images can also apply to America’s knowledge of Chinese goals in Korea. Images of Sino-American amity so possessed the Americans, that even intervention by the Chinese in October 1950 was not attributed to Chinese aggression, but to Chinese subservience to a foreign power: Russia.\textsuperscript{490} To the Americans, China had few grounds to intervene in Korea as it had little to gain and much to lose by challenging the authority of the United Nations. A

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{487} Dean Acheson, ‘United States Foreign Policy,’ Remarks Made Before a National Conference on Foreign Policy on 15 November 1950, Bulletin (U.S. Department of State), 23(595), 27 November 1950, pp 853-855
  \item \textsuperscript{488} Department of State, Bulletin, 23(595), 27 November 1950
  \item \textsuperscript{489} Harry S. Truman, ‘President’s Message to Congress,’ Bulletin (U.S. Department of State), 23(597), pp 926-928
  \item \textsuperscript{490} Lebow argues that this American logic is fraught with serious contradictions. Acheson, for example, explained China’s apparent hostility to the U.S. in terms of Chinese support for Russia. On the other hand, Achesion said that the Chinese would not intervene in Korea, given that by doing so the Chinese would pull Russia’s chestnuts out of the fire – an action that was contrary to Chinese national interests. If, as Acheson alleged, the Chinese were controlled by Moscow, then it hardly mattered to them what impact intervention would have had upon Chinese national interest. If, on the other hand, Chinese were sufficiently independent of Russia to intervene or not as they chose, their hostility to the U.S. could not be explained as an expression of their subservience. See Lebow, Between Peace And War, p 214
\end{itemize}
CIA memorandum argued that the Chinese could no longer hope to halt the U.N. advance without ‘massive Soviet assistance,’ including air support. Soviet aid would make Beijing more dependent on Moscow and open Manchuria to further Soviet influence. The Agency also surmised that war with the U.S. would be unpopular with the Chinese people, who would accuse their leaders of being a ‘Soviet catspaw.’ This resentment would strengthen anti-Communist forces in China and possibly even jeopardise the continued existence of the regime in Beijing.491

5.3.2 America’s Lack of Appreciation of China’s Conceptual Framework

The U.S. attempt to deter the Chinese in Korea failed because American leaders did not appreciate their knowledge about Chinese goals. In Chapter 4, it was argued that appreciation could be applied to the realm of strategy along two routes: (a) appreciation is the ability to see differences in goals and a potential deterree’s strength of motivation involved in achieving such goals; (b) appreciation is the ability to make evaluations of knowledge based on past experience. It will be shown that America’s lack of appreciation stemmed from a failure to consider China’s asymmetry in motivation to achieve its goals in Korea (i.e. intervention) and America’s inability to appreciate its knowledge of Chinese goals based on past experience.

5.3.2.1 Incorrect Image of Sino-U.S Relationship

American leaders’ lack of appreciation stemmed from their inability to harness past experience correctly; this in turn was due to entrenched – and inaccurate – images of Sino-American amity. Compared to their American counterparts, Chinese leaders’ images of America were vastly different. Such negative images were not absolute. On one hand, Mao saw Washington as inherently hostile to his revolution; on the other, he viewed the U.S. as a ‘somewhat rational’ actor that could recognise the futility of armed intervention in China, going as far to speculate that the U.S. could end direct military assistance to the Kuomintang and recognise the CCP regime.492 While Mao’s image of the U.S. was nuanced, the dominant image among Chinese leaders was still one driven by an inflated threat picture of Washington. As they sought popular support for their intervention in Korea, Chinese leaders spoke about the aggressive policy which the U.S. had used against China since the early 19th century. The Chinese

491 Central Intelligence Agency, Memorandum, 12 October 1950, in Department of State (U.S.), Foreign Relations of the United States 1950, volume 7 (Korea), pp 933-938
492 Christensen, Useful Adversaries, pp 140-142
propaganda machine in the run-up to the intervention in Korea printed a history booklet that reviewed ‘historical facts’ about American imperialist aggression against China. The booklet stated how U.S. Navy Captain Lawrence Kearny led the East India Squadron to sail across the China Sea, the American participation in the Eight-Power Allied Forces’ invasion of China in 1900. It also wrote about American support for Chiang Kai Shek in the Chinese civil war and her more recent actions in Taiwan and Korea.493

5.3.2.2 China’s Weakness Fuelled Intervention

America’s lack of appreciation stemmed from its inability to ascertain that the Chinese were highly motivated to achieve their goals (i.e. intervention against U.S. and U.N. forces). American leaders such as Truman, Acheson and General MacArthur failed to grasp how Chinese leaders arrived eventually at the goal of intervention because they believed that by doing so they would preserve China’s territorial sovereignty in the long run. The Americans’ views are reflected in MacArthur’s comments to Truman at their Wake Island conference in October 1950, which were symptomatic of American hubris concerning the possibility of Chinese intervention in Korea. During the conference, the general told Truman that neither China nor Russia was ready to intervene in Korea. In his memoirs, Truman describes his conversation with MacArthur:

“What are the chances,” I asked, for Chinese or Soviet interference?”

The general’s answer was really in two parts. First, he talked about the Chinese. He thought, he said, that there was little chance that they would come in. At most they might be able to get fifty to sixty thousand men into Korea, but since they have no air force, “if the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang there would be the greatest slaughter.”494

Consistent with the American analysis of Chinese vulnerabilities, the Chinese elite recognised their own inherent weaknesses. The ruling elite knew they had a broad array of enemies within and without. While they had to face the U.S. abroad, domestically they faced a host of actual and potential enemies at home, including remnant Kuomintang forces, traditional secret societies, non-Chinese people and

493 Tang Tsou, America’s Failure In China, p 578, Li Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millet and Yu Bin, Mao’s Generals Remember Korea, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001, p 67
mountain bandits.\textsuperscript{495} In their arguments against intervention, Chinese leaders like Gao Gang and Lin Biao said that the rebuilding after the civil war was not complete and that the people were not trained or equipped for a modern war; instead, they proposed a defensive deployment along the northern bank of the Yalu.\textsuperscript{496} In addition, Mao was acutely aware of the military handicap that Chinese forces would face in confronting U.N. forces in Korea. Not only were Chinese forces vastly outgunned, but allied forces in Korea dominated the air. To eliminate one enemy corps, Chinese forces would also have to employ four times as many troops.\textsuperscript{497} The overall estimation by the Chinese, however, was that short-term losses via intervention in November 1950 would avoid long-term losses through a possible three-front assault by American forces on China via Taiwan, Indochina and Korea. Mao said the deployment of a passive defensive line along the Sino-Korean border would – in the long-term – make China vulnerable to American forces based in Korea: ‘How many troops are needed to guard a thousand kilometres of Yalu River? We would have to wait there year after year unsure of when the enemy will attack us.’\textsuperscript{498} In other words, Chinese leaders were keenly aware of their vulnerabilities; but this was precisely the reason they made the eventual decision about their goal regarding Korea – to cross of the Yalu to engage the Americans.\textsuperscript{499} Such an interplay of perceived vulnerability and active defense – in the form of a preventative attack against what they deemed a long-term threat – was not only significant in Mao’s day, but during the Deng era and the dawn of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.\textsuperscript{500}

The U.S. also miscalculated Chinese military capabilities by relying on traditional measures of military strength – weaponry, combat strength and strategic resources. It was guilty of mirror-imaging estimates of Chinese military capabilities. But China’s motivation to pursue its goals in Korea was driven by different assessments of military strength. In the Chinese view, its fighting capabilities were measured not only by military resources alone, but also by \textit{tianshi} (‘timeliness’), \textit{dili} (‘topographical advantage’) and \textit{renhe} (‘domestic harmony’). As good students of Sun

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{495}Whiting, \textit{China Crosses The Yalu}, pp 158-160
  \item \textsuperscript{496}Zhang, \textit{Deterrence And Strategic Culture}, p 96
  \item \textsuperscript{497}Li, Millett and Yu, \textit{Mao's Generals Remember Korea}, pp 11-12
  \item \textsuperscript{498}Quoted in Zhang, \textit{Deterrence And Strategic Culture}, p 96
  \item \textsuperscript{500}Andrew Scobell, \textit{China and Strategic Culture}, Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, May 2002, pp 12-13
\end{itemize}
Zi, Mao and other CCP military leaders tended to judge military strength by moral standards. If a state acquired dao (justice or moral strength), it would eventually win; if it did not, it was doomed to defeat. In other words, Chinese leaders were aware that their military strength lagged behind the Americans by several orders of magnitude; nonetheless, they believed that the factors above would increase the probability of victory. Chinese leaders also differentiated much less than their American counterparts between human and material costs. CCP leaders consistently believed in the necessity of sacrificing human lives to gain a final victory.

5.3.2.3 The Ideological/ Cultural Component

In retrospect, American leaders would have done better at appreciating their knowledge about Chinese intervention in Korea if they had an awareness about Chinese leaders’ views on asymmetrical warfare. Due to the ineffectiveness of strategic communications at the time, however, such appreciation was not possible. Unlike the Americans, Mao was concerned less about the order of battle than the historical and geopolitical aspects of the Korean War. Zhang argues that the most important factor that led to China’s intervention was Mao’s ‘military romanticism’ – his constant belief, supported by his deep appreciation of Chinese history and Marxist dialectics, that substantially weaker parties could defeat stronger opponents. These factors – which the Americans were not aware of – influenced Mao and helped him choose the goal of intervention. Mao believed in the ‘subjective capability’ of Chinese troops to determine victory in war against substantial odds. This idea that warriors, due to their godliness and virtue, could vanquish a stronger opponent finds parallels among the Christian crusaders, Islamic jihadists, the Japanese samurais and the Nazis. Tsou argues that a military clash between Communist China and the U.S. was inevitable because of the ‘ideological component in Peking’s foreign policy and the quest for greatness which had always been deeply imbedded in Chinese history and culture.’ The ‘revolutionary fervor, ideological perspective and the mental image of the U.S. ... play[ed] an

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501 Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, pp 116, 277-278
502 Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, p 282
503 Zhang, Mao’s Military Romanticism, pp 29-30
504 Zhang, Mao’s Military Romanticism, pp 29-30
important part in Peking’s intervention in Korea after U.S. forces crossed 38th Parallel.505

The process of appreciation of one’s knowledge about an opponent’s goals causes a deterrer to ‘think twice’ about implementing a deterrence posture, given perceived risks of failure. At one level, American leaders drew inaccurate references from the country’s past experience with the Chinese. They wrongly concluded that Chinese images of America were positive. At another level, the U.S. was simply not aware of the intense motivation that supported the Chinese goal of intervention. Appreciation would have laid out the equation in Korea in clearer terms to the Americans: at the level of goals, U.S. and China goals in Korea were simply not reconcilable. Americans goals were to push Communist forces back behind the 38th Parallel and later, liberation of the entire peninsula. This was the exact opposite of China’s goals – keeping foreign forces behind the Parallel and the liberation of the entire peninsula. Given the lack of appreciation of its knowledge China’s goals, the U.S. was simply not able to conclude that its knowledge was incorrect. The faulty assumption of Chinese reasonableness – that Beijing would be deterred – led to the implementation of a deterrence strategy, and subsequently deterrence failure.

5.4 China’s Deterrence Failures: Not a ‘Pure’ Case of Recognised Unreasonableness

The American deterrence attempt in Korea was an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ In Korea, the U.S. had some knowledge of China’s goals. However, American leaders failed to appreciate this knowledge, leading to the incorrect conclusion that China was ‘reasonable.’ This led to deterrence failure. In instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ by comparison, a deterrer has some knowledge of his opponent’s goals, and he appreciates this knowledge. Such appreciation leads the deterrer to become less certain about his opponent’s ‘reasonableness.’ As a result, the deterrer either abandons deterrence, couples it to other policy tools (e.g. conciliation or active defences) or seeks to manage his deterrence posture carefully so as to avoid deterrence failure.

In this section, it will be argued that the Chinese deterrence attempt in Korea does not represent adherence to the conceptualization of ‘unrecognised

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505 Tsou, America’s Failure In China, p 563
unreasonableness’ in this thesis but a better – albeit still poor – fit to ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ The Chinese did have some knowledge suggesting that the U.S. would attack China from Taiwan, Vietnam and the Korean peninsula. The Chinese failed to appreciate this knowledge – at no time during their deliberations did the Chinese become less certain about American aggression towards China. Without appreciation, however, the Chinese still concluded that the Americans were ‘unreasonable’ or not deterrable – in fact, they chose to implement a deterrence strategy. This is an outcome that is not predicted by the conceptualization of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ in this thesis.

5.4.1 China’s Knowledge of U.S. Conceptual Framework

In Korea, the Chinese held on to a consistent – but inaccurate image – of U.S hostility towards China. The lack of appreciation of their knowledge of U.S. goals in Korea did not help the Chinese reach a more accurate assessment of U.S. goals.

5.4.1.1 Knowledge that U.S. Would Attack China on Three Fronts

Mao’s knowledge of American goals suggested that the Americans sought to conduct direct attacks on Chinese soil from three fronts: Korea, the U.S. with Chiang Kai Shek in Taiwan and the U.S. with the French in North Vietnam. This was based on a consistent view that American intentions towards Communist China were hostile. Beijing’s misperceptions were fuelled by what it perceived to be a dramatic reversal in Washington’s policy in Asia. In Mao’s view, this assessment was validated and reinforced by the dispatch of the U.S. Seventh Fleet to ‘neutralise’ the Taiwan Strait in June 1950 following the invasion of South Korea by North Korean forces. While the U.S considered the deployment to be defensive in nature, Beijing considered it offensive. Chinese leaders such as Mao and Zhou En Lai saw the neutralisation of the Strait as part of a set of ‘new, premeditated aggressions’ of ‘American imperialism’ against the Asian people. Similarly, Mao saw the neutralisation not as an American bid to limit conflict but as an initial step to expand it across Asia. Mao felt that a Sino-American confrontation was only a ‘matter of time.’ Basing their assessment on Chinese sources, Hao and Zhai have argued that Mao’s decision to intervene in Korea

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506 Hao and Zhai, ‘Chinese Decision To Enter the Korean War’ p 106; Whiting, ‘China’s Use of Force,’ Zhang, Deterrence And Strategic Culture, p 115
507 Tsou, America’s Failure In China, p 563
was based on a choice of the ‘least dangerous of his limited options.’ China was faced with an enemy with vast resources, overwhelming air superiority and unparallelled technology. Despite this, Mao thought that Korea was the more ‘favourable battlefield’ compared to Taiwan and Vietnam, because of its short distance from the Soviet Union and the industrial centre of China. Zhou En Lai explained Mao’s thinking to Chinese People’s Volunteers’ higher-ranking officials:

With the decisive duel between China and the U.S. imperialists being inevitable, the question is where to do it; of course it is decided by the imperialists, but in some sense, also by us. Korea as a battleground chosen by the imperialists is favourable to us. Looking at three battlefronts, it is easy to understand that it would be much more difficult to wage a war against America in Vietnam, not to mention on the offshore islands, than here [Korea]. Here, we have the most favourable terrain, the closest communication to China, the most convenient material and manpower back-up ... and the most convenient way for us to get indirect Soviet support.

Given their knowledge of hostile U.S. goals, the Chinese set about deploying troops at the Sino-Korean border to counter the perceived American threat. At a July 1950 meeting, Mao and the country’s top political and military leaders decided that defence at the Sino-Korean border must be strengthened immediately, since ‘it is necessary to prepare an umbrella before its rains (wei you choumou).’ The participants at the meeting proposed the establishment of an individual northeast border defence command, to be headquartered in Shenyang, Liaoning province. By mid-July, three Chinese armies had been moved to Manchuria, each containing three or four divisions of approximately 10,000 men. After the Inchon landings in September, the military buildup was substantially increased, until by mid-October there were approximately 320,000 troops in Manchuria. For deterrence purposes, the troop movements were not concealed from diplomats in Beijing. This was probably intentional.

5.4.2 China’s Lack of Appreciation of U.S. Conceptual Framework

China’s knowledge of U.S. goals in Korea suggested – incorrectly – that the U.S. would attack China on three fronts. In Chapter 4, we defined cognitive structures

509 Hao and Zhai, ‘Chinese Decision To Enter the Korean War,’ p 106
510 Hao and Zhai, ‘Chinese Decision To Enter the Korean War,’ p 106
511 Yao Xu, From Yalu River to Panmunjon, Beijing: People's Press, 1985, p 22, cited in Hao and Zhai, 'Chinese Decision To Enter the Korean War,' p 106
512 Zhang, Mao's Military Romanticism, p 58
513 Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ p 5, Whiting, China Cross The Yalu, p 111
as 'preconceptions ... predispositions, preset patterns of perceptions and analysis.'\(^5\) Cognitive structures such as images, assumptions and values hamper appreciation of one's knowledge of an opponent's goals. In Korea, China's ingrained image of American hostility (a misconception) hampered its appreciation of its knowledge about U.S. goals.

5.4.2.1 Not Believing American Reassurances

The power of these images led China's leaders to discount the reassurances issued by Acheson, Truman and other American officials. Acheson's view of America as a benign power was not reciprocated in Beijing. According to Whiting and Tsou, China's dominant image of the U.S. was that of an imperial power which was the heir to Japan's ambition to reduce China's status to that of a vassal state.\(^5\) Writes Tsou:

The Chinese Communists saw American action in Korea as a repetition of Japan's course of aggression in the fifty years before the collapse of Japan at the end of the Pacific war. Their ideological perspective did not permit them to distinguish between Japan of yesterday as an expansionist nation and the United States of today as a status quo power. In their eyes, the United States inherited Japan's position in the Far East and was following Tanaka's plan of conquering China and the world. The only difference between the United States of today and Japan of yesterday was that the United States would not have to stop and consolidate their gains in Korea for as long a period of time as Japan did before attempting to invade Manchuria.\(^5\)

The power of such images or misconceptions prevented China from appreciation of its knowledge of U.S. goals – that Washington would attack China on three fronts. But China's leaders could not be faulted for employing such images or misconceptions in their assessment of American intentions. More than any single act, the neutralisation of Formosa confirmed Chinese suspicions about American hostility.\(^5\) Due to Beijing's strategic misconception, Mao and other Chinese leaders interpreted Washington's hostility as stemming from its imperialist character. In turn,

\(^{5}\) Betts, 'Analysis, War, and Decision,' p 63, Morgan, 'The Opportunity For Strategic Surprise,' pp 212-218

\(^{5}\) Whiting, China Crosses The Yalu, pp 169-171, Tsou, American Failure in China, pp 576-578

\(^{5}\) Tsou, American Failure in China, p 577

\(^{5}\) Tsou, American Failure in China, pp 561-564. In a 1958 speech, Commander Yang Yung cited the neutralisation of Formosa, the U.N. offensive into North Korea, MacArthur's threats against the northern part of North Korea, the Yalu hydroelectric dams and Manchuria as signs confirming U.S. threat to China's hostility. See Yang Yung, 'Report on the World of the Chinese People's Volunteer's During the Eight Years of Resistance to U.S. Aggression and Aid to Korea,' Current Background 535, 11 November 1958
Mao associated any potential American reassurances with environmental constraints – increased Chinese Communist Party power – rather than a change of heart in Washington.\(^{518}\) As a result, America’s attempt to reassure the Chinese did not change China’s entrenched image of the U.S. as being inherently hostile. Given that such images were not changed, the Chinese failed to appreciate their knowledge about hostile American goals in Korea.

The ingrained Chinese image of American enmity appeared to be confirmed by hawkish comments by members within Washington’s political and military elite. On August 25, General MacArthur in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars stressed that Taiwan was ‘an unsinkable carrier’ which was of strategic importance to Washington’s military potential in the Pacific.\(^{519}\) This appeared to confirm in Chinese eyes that Washington’s Korean campaign was an offensive – and not a defensive – endeavour aimed at China. Several days later, Major General Orvil Anderson, Director of the U.S. War College, made a statement that called for a preventive war against the Soviet Union. By conjecture, this meant that the indirect target of such a war could be China, given that Beijing was then allied with Moscow.\(^{520}\) Alarmed by the statements, Truman made General MacArthur withdraw his statements. The comments made by Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthew also led to the resignation of Defence Secretary Louis Johnson.

5.4.2.2 Failure to See Budgetary and Reputational Imperatives Behind America’s Movement Northward

Mao and other Chinese leaders were not aware that there were other explanations for American troop movements in Korea besides U.S. hostility. As a result, they failed to appreciate their knowledge of U.S. goals. While the U.S. was engaged in the Korean peninsula initially, American leaders (with the exception of General MacArthur) had no ulterior designs on the Chinese mainland.\(^{521}\) The neutralisation of the Formosa Straits and other American actions in Korea were aimed at discouraging Communist moves elsewhere and to induce Chinese withdrawal from the Korean peninsula by demonstrating American strength and determination. It was unfortunate, however, that Truman and Acheson got carried away by the ‘heady wine’ of military success.

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\(^{518}\) Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p 142

\(^{519}\) Cited in Whiting, *China Cross The Yalu*, p 96

\(^{520}\) Cited in Whiting, *China Cross The Yalu*, pp 96, 188

\(^{521}\) General George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, p 217
following General MacArthur’s landing at Inchon in September. As a consequence they changed the war goal of pushing the North Korean military back behind the 38th Parallel to liberating the whole of Korea. Washington’s enlarged war goal did not mean that it had any designs on the Chinese mainland, but Mao and other Chinese leaders remained unconvinced. At a CCP meeting in Beijing on October 4, all the participants doubted Truman’s promises that U.N. forces would stop at the Yalu. They believed that Washington had already reneged on an earlier promise that it would not cross the 38th Parallel.

Mao and other Chinese leaders were not aware that budgetary constraints and reputational concerns were behind the new and expanded American goal — unification of the entire Korean peninsula. Washington did not intend to attack the mainland directly. Truman intervened in Korea not because of the geo-strategic importance of Korea — indeed, American troops had been withdrawn from the peninsula in the spring of 1949 because they were needed elsewhere. But Truman intervened in Korea because he wanted to punish Communist aggression and bolster America’s global reputation for resolve against such aggression. While Korea was of little geo-strategic importance to Washington, helping South Korea to regain the boundary at the 38th Parallel would raise the long-term question associated with garrisoning and supporting Seoul (to defend against possible Communist incursions from behind the Parallel). Moreover, by restoring the border at the parallel, the U.S. would simply revert to its pre-war position in 1949, when it assisted South Korea at the expense of more strategic goals worldwide. Washington’s budgetary constraints meant that a decision to settle for a ceasefire near 38th Parallel in October 1950 would have cut deeper into resources earmarked for Europe than the ultimate decision to do so in 1953. Moreover, the military momentum generated by MacArthur’s drive north following his September landing at Inchon was an incentive for Truman and Acheson to settle this dilemma in Washington once and for all. Dean Acheson put the American dilemma in July of 1950 this way:

523 Hao and Zhai, ‘Chinese Decision To Enter the Korean War,’ p 106
524 Christensen, Useful Adversaries, pp 151-152
‘In the longer run, if we should succeed in reoccupying the South, the question of garrisoning and supporting it would arise. This would be a hard task for us to take on, and yet it seemed hardly sensible to repel the attack and then abandon the country. I could not see the end of it.’

On September 27, Truman’s advisers agreed on the pursuit of North Korean forces across the parallel, if nothing were to complicate the operation militarily. General MacArthur was told to seek the ‘destruction of the North Korean Armed Forces’ and was authorised to conduct military operations north of the 38th Parallel, provided there was no ‘threat by Russian or Chinese Communists.’ This new objective, if it had been achieved, would have finally resolved the dilemma Washington was facing with regard to the costly long-term garrisoning of American forces behind the parallel. By reunifying all of Korea, the long-term garrisoning and its associated costs would be avoided since less Americans troops would have been needed. In short, it was an extremely attractive and low-risk route to defeat North Korean aggression without the attendant long-term costs association with a permanent U.S. military garrison in Korea.

5.4.2.3 Unawareness of Political Pressures Behind U.S.’ Enlarged War Goal

Beijing was unaware of the intense political pressures placed on the Truman Administration to reunify the entire Korean peninsula following MacArthur’s successful Incheon landing on September 15. If Chinese leaders had been aware of such pressures, they would have been able to appreciate their knowledge of U.S. goals in Korea. The Inchon landing in September 1950 sent North Korean forces retreating northward and created political pressures in the U.S. for unification of the entire Korean peninsula. According to Lebow, public opinion polls in 1949 and 1950 showed that American people were disenchanted with the foreign policy of the Truman Administration. The collapse of the Nationalist regime in China, Russia’s unexpected detonation of an atomic bomb and the outbreak of the war in Korea aggravated the widespread feeling of insecurity and betrayal. Republican politicians struck a chord among the American public when they charged that the setbacks suffered by Truman (a Democrat) were due to the influence of communists and their sympathizers within the

526 Neustadt, Presidential Power, p 110
527 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, p 198
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State Department and the Truman Administration. During the confirmation hearings of General George Marshall, critics charged that Marshall — and the Administration that backed him — was soft on communism. As a result, public support for Truman and the Democrats dropped sharply. Thus in September 1950, Truman and his supporters needed a stunning victory over the Communists.

In June 1950, Truman had already laid the groundwork for a push across the 38th Parallel — a goal made possible by MacArthur’s successful Inchon operation. In his memoirs, Truman paraphrases the United Nations Security Council resolution in June 1950, which called for the U.N. to take ‘every step necessary’ to push the North Koreans behind the Parallel. He stressed that U.N. operations in Korea were designed to ‘restore the border’ in Korea. MacArthur’s September offensive and the Democrats’ ailing political currency at home only served to reinforce Truman’s resolve to expand the war goal to the unification of Korea. On September 1, a National Security Council paper authorised MacArthur to destroy the North Korean forces and to ‘make plans for the occupation of Korea.’ While the language of the NSC paper stopped short of proposing a new war goal of unifying Korea, it opened the door in that direction and constituted the first step towards making it ‘in stages.’ George and Smoke argue that the Administration slid into the new war goal ‘without every making an explicit, well-formulated decision to do so.’ On September 1 — the same day the NSC paper emerged — Truman told the nation in a broadcast that the ‘Koreans had a right to be free, independent and united.’ In his memoirs, Acheson implies that the NSC paper was the first step in a ‘slippery slope’ towards the new war goal.

By late September, MacArthur’s success at Inchon and his proclamation that U.N. forces stood at the cusp of victory — a sentiment widely shared by American leaders — put ‘almost irresistible’ pressure on the Truman Administration to unify Korea. The American people expected it and Congress, cognizant of the general mood,

528 Lebow, Between Peace And War, pp 174-175
529 Lebow, Between Peace And War, p 175
530 Neustadt, Presidential Power, p 104, Harry S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope (Volume 2), p 341
531 Truman, Years of Trial and Hope (Volume 2), p 359
532 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, p 196
533 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, p 196
534 Truman, Years of Trial and Hope (Volume 2), pp 358-359
535 Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department, New York: W.W. Norton , 1969, p 454
was nearly unanimous in favour of the new war goal. On September 21, Senator Knowland of California endorsed this consensus when he declared that a failure to invade North Korea would constitute 'appeasement.' Kalicki notes that the 'momentum created by past policy had begun to make total victory an ultimate sine qua non of American policy.' On October 7, 1950, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the more ambitious U.S. war goal of securing a unified, independent and non-communist Korea. This was not a modest extension from the initial goal of containment of communism and its accompanying goal of pushing the Communists behind the 38th Parallel. By then, Truman had committed the Administration to the new war goal and staked the prestige of the U.S. and the U.N. to its attainment.

5.4.3 An Imperfect Case Of ‘Recognised Unreasonableness’

The Chinese concluded that the Americans were unreasonable despite lacking a required component for an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ – an appreciation of their knowledge about American goals in Korea. This throws up a puzzle: if the Chinese recognised that the Americans were unreasonable, why did the Chinese implement a deterrence strategy against the United States? According to the theoretical model in Chapter 4, if a deterrer recognises that his deterree is ‘unreasonable,’ (i.e. an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness’) he adopts various choices regarding deterrence: he either (a) abandons deterrence; (b) couples a deterrence strategy to reassurances (or other policy tools, such as active defences) or (c) he seeks to manage his deterrence posture carefully to avoid deterrence failure. In Korea, the Chinese adopted none of the three. In particular, the Chinese did not implement a deterrence strategy and manage it carefully to avoid deterrence failure, as the conceptualisation of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ predicts. This is where the conceptualization of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ is inadequate. By drawing upon some contextual factors surrounding China’s deterrence attempt, some light can be shed on the puzzle.

Firstly, the Chinese sought to make their deterrence threats in Korea credible, despite their recognition that the Americans were unreasonable. According to Zelman,
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China sought to achieve credibility along four routes: troop movements and redeployments, domestic propaganda, official warnings and statements and means of initial intervention. This leads us to a classical application of deterrence theory – a deterrer can still apply deterrence even when he thinks his potential deterree is ‘unreasonable’ (i.e. cannot be deterred). A deterrer bolsters his deterrence posture by bolstering the posture’s credibility. This means that some instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ can result in deterrers implanting deterrence strategies, without the three different choices listed earlier.

Secondly, the Chinese did not manage their deterrence posture carefully to avoid deterrence failure because of the obduracy of their misconceived images of American hostility (a misconception). In contrast to their later decisions regarding deterrence in Vietnam, the Chinese sought to avoid any appearance of weakness in their deterrence posture since they were quite certain about American hostility towards China. In Chapter 4, it was stated that misconceptions hinder appreciation of one’s knowledge about an opponent’s goals. It could be said that with their growing strategic interaction between China and the U.S. (in the Taiwan Strait in 1954 and 1958, and Indochina in 1958), the U.S. and China managed to reduce some of the misconceptions in their relationship. As a result, by the time of the Vietnam War, China’s growing appreciation of its knowledge of America’s goals was able to affect a bigger influence in its choices regarding the use of deterrence strategies.

Thirdly, it can be argued that China did not manage its deterrence threat carefully as per an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ because it had already decided on intervention in Korea over deterrence. The latter was used as a last-minute warning to test American intentions, but even if the Americans had stayed behind the 38th Parallel, the Chinese would have nevertheless intervened since the presence of any foreign forces in Korea threatened the territorial integrity of China. According to Zhang’s account, even successful deterrence might not have precluded intervention.

Zelman, ‘Chinese Intervention In The Korean War,’ pp 5-10

Morgan argues that it is not a deterrer’s capacity to do harm that enables the practice of deterrence, but the deterree’s belief that it had such a capacity. See Morgan, Deterrence Now, p 15

In the next case study on the Vietnam War, it will be argued that the Chinese were in a ‘pure’ case of ‘recognised unreasonableness’: they recognised that the U.S. was unreasonable. As a result, they managed their deterrence posture carefully: they avoided the appearance of weakness in the face of the U.S., which would create political problems within China (and possibly invite U.S. aggression), but at the same time, they avoided unduly provocative actions that would bring about a war.
When China issued the most explicit warning to the Americans on October 3, 1950, it had already decided upon intervention. This means that the Chinese would have intervened in Korea even if the Americans had been deterred and stayed behind the 38th Parallel. The Americans crossed the 38th Parallel on October 7, 1950, but when Zhou En Lai issued China's clearest deterrence warning via Indian Ambassador Pannikar on October 3, China had already decided to intervene in Korea. Zhang argues that China's entry into the Korean War 'seemed almost certain in late September 1950.' In a telegram to Josef Stalin on October 2, Mao said that he had already decided to dispatch Chinese forces to fight to Americans in Korea and to drive all foreign forces out of the Korean peninsula. It was only after this decision was made that Zhou En Lai issued China's last-minute warning against a U.S. attack on North Korea on October 3. According to Zhang, Mao had:

‘... already made up his mind to intervene ... in his (Zhou's) view the message should not disclose Beijing’s unalterable decision to enter the conflict; otherwise China might offend neutral countries like India [italics added].

At a October 4 meeting in Beijing, Mao addressed arguments against Chinese involvement in Korea by arguing that a major Sino-American confrontation was already inevitable.

A counterfactual can be used here: if China had appreciated its knowledge of U.S. goals in Korea, it would have been more careful in the execution of its deterrence strategies i.e. China would have been less certain of its knowledge of U.S. hostility. To

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544 Zhang, *Mao’s Military Romanticism*, p 77
547 Hao and Zhai, ‘Chinese Decision To Enter the Korean War’ p 106
that end, Beijing would have sought to issue a strong-worded deterrence threat, but at the same time avoid undue actions that brought about a war with the Americans. The logic of appreciation would be:

(d) Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggests that U.S. goals in Korea are hostile towards China;

(e) China appreciates this knowledge. It becomes less certain about American hostility;

(f) Although China is uncertain about America’s goals in China, it adopts a hedging strategy. It executes a deterrence strategy, but at the same time takes steps to avoid unwarranted failure.

Without appreciation, however, the Chinese did not evaluate critically their knowledge of hostile U.S. goals. Instead, they appear to have favoured intervention in Korea over deterrence. Access to archival material from the Chinese side of the Korean War is relatively limited compared to the American side, but some of the available evidence on Chinese decision-making during the War shows that Beijing’s two deterrence attempts – to deter the Americans from crossing the 38th and subsequently, to deter the U.S. from approaching the Yalu – appear to have been subordinated to intervention.

On the one hand, the question as to whether China favoured intervention over its first deterrence attempt of October 3 remains moot. For example, it can be argued that Mao’s decision to intervene on October 2 was triggered by MacArthur’s call, on October 1, for North Korean troops on both sides of the Parallel to surrender. Moreover, Mao only ordered the formation of the Chinese People’s Volunteers on October 8 – a day after American forces crossed the 38th Parallel. This suggests that Mao still intended to deter when the warning to Pannikar was issued on October 3. This does not help us solve our puzzle as to why China did not manage its deterrence posture carefully to avoid deterrence failure when it recognised the U.S. was unreasonable.

On the other hand, Christensen suggests that China did favour intervention over deterrence. Drawing on fresh Chinese archival sources, Christensen’s analysis of China’s second deterrence attempt helps solve the puzzle. He argues that after U.S. forces had crossed the 38th Parallel, Chinese leaders did not implement a second
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deterrence attempt.\textsuperscript{548} Since what Mao feared most was a military stalemate in Korea while China remained vulnerable to American bombing, Mao tried to eliminate the possibility of such a deadlock by seeking the total destruction of American forces in Korea.\textsuperscript{549} Mao’s minimum defensive needs led him to reject the notion of a buffer anywhere in Korea, north or south of the 38\textsuperscript{th} Parallel. Between October 1950 and January 1951, he consistently rejected any notion of deterrence or local military compromise. Maintaining a defensive line in Korea would have carried many of the costs of a passive border defence in Manchuria as well as the risk of a two-front war with the U.S.\textsuperscript{550} To that end, Mao opted for intervention over a second deterrence attempt. In Mao’s eyes, a strategy of deterrence – a coercive strategy involving the threat of force – would not have worked against the ‘unreasonable’ Americans. Only a strategy of control – the used of armed force – would reduce America’s strategic choices in Korea.\textsuperscript{551}

Christensen’s analysis actually supports the conceptualisation of ‘recognised reasonableness’ this thesis.’ As the model predicts, China abandoned its deterrence attempt (the second one which sought to deter the Americans from approaching the Yalu) because it had chosen intervention over deterrence. Chapter 4 predicted that when a deterrer sees that he is engaging a deterree in an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ the deterrer will seek to either abandon deterrence, couple reassurance to deterrence or take steps to avoid deterrence failure. The three options are the outcrop of deterrence, a coercive strategy. Christensen’s analysis of Mao’s decision-making leads to a fourth option: if a potential deterrer recognises his deterree to be ‘unreasonable,’ the deterrer opts for direct intervention, or control (not coercion).

This discussion illustrates that in the absence of appreciation, the Chinese did not appreciate their knowledge of U.S. goals in Korea. Contrary to the predictions given in our model of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ however, China initially implemented a deterrence strategy that was subordinated to a more comprehensive

\textsuperscript{548} According to the literature, China disengaged its forces from U.N. forces November 6 to 26, as part of a deterrence strategy to give the U.S. time to reconsider a final drive to the Yalu River. See Robert Endicott Osgood, \textit{Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy}, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, p 172, Spanier, \textit{The Truman-MacArthur Controversy}, p 129

\textsuperscript{549} -Telegram, Mao to Stalin, ‘On Our Decision to Dispatch Troops to Fight in Korea,’ Christensen, ‘Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace,’ p 151

\textsuperscript{550} Christensen, ‘Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace,’ p 138

\textsuperscript{551} The logic of control and coercion is discussed in Freedman, \textit{Deterrence}, p 26
strategy of intervention in Korea. With the benefit of hindsight, however, even if China had *appreciated* its knowledge of hostile U.S. goals in Korea, it might not have taken any of the three choices regarding deterrence highlighted at the beginning of this section. For example, to manage a deterrence posture carefully to avoid undue escalation and subsequent deterrence failure, China could have stationed its troops at the Sino-Korean border and sought to deter an American advance northward toward the border. This was suggested by CCP leader Lin Biao and subsequently rejected by Mao, who argued that it would open China to future attacks from two fronts – Taiwan and Korea.\(^{552}\) Such an option might have been construed as weakness by the Americans who could have ignored China’s deterrence warning not to head northward toward the Sino-Korean border. In sum, this discussion on China’s deterrence posture in Korea highlights that the model of various types of ‘reasonableness’ cannot explain *all* deterrence attempts. The conceptualisation of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ however, suggests that with strategic interaction and the eradication of some misconceptions over time (for example, China’s incorrect image of U.S. hostility), *appreciation* can increase and lead to better decisions regarding the use of deterrence.

### 5.5 Learning and Adaptation

The deterrence failures suffered by the U.S. and China led to a process of learning and adaptation which lasted beyond the Korean War. As detailed in Chapter 4, with each successive deterrence encounter between two parties, a level of learning and adaptation can lead to the formation of shared norms or lessons learnt. These norms and lessons serve as *bases of appreciation* in subsequent encounters between the two parties. In short, deterrence failures send electric shocks to the system of misperceptions and misconceptions had led to lack of *appreciation* in the first place. Increased *appreciation* serves as a form of ‘electrical insulation’ against possible deterrence failure when potential deterriers question or evaluate critically the knowledge they have about their opponent’s goals. This leads them to make better choices regarding the use of deterrence.

During the Korean War, both the Chinese and Americans achieved some measure of learning centered on the creation of shared norms. In the *Strategy of Conflict*, Schelling details how subjects involved in an experiment where no norms

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552 Zhang, *Mao’s Military Romanticism*, pp 80-81
existed created their own. The existence of different individual norms and the process converge into a common norm in a group setting. Applied to the Korean War, both the Americans and Chinese entered the conflict without a conception of what the existent norms were; in a sense, the game was ‘indeterminate’. But both parties – through a shared and interactive process – created bilateral norms as a result of their deterrence failures.

5.5.1 Shared Norm: Hostilities Ceased Around the 38th Parallel

The fundamental problem in a bargaining process, argues Schelling, is the coordination of participants’ expectation to achieve an ‘ultimate agreement,’ or as we have discussed, some norm. He adds that rivers or other landmarks of human invention represent ‘limits to war’, even without overt negotiation. The 38th Parallel, for example, provided a ‘powerful focus for a stalemate,’ in that it had a ‘if not here, where?’ kind of quality. This is linked to Schelling’s general concept of interdependent decision; an example he cites is the ‘tacit coordination’ involved in a process where a man and his wife find each other in a department store by looking for an ‘obvious place’ to meet. The logic here is the interdependence of decision – each party does not simply predict where the other would go; rather, one predicts where the other would go based on what the other thinks one would go, and in turn the other predicts where one would go based on what one thinks the other would go, and so on. Ayson coins this the ‘I expect he expects I expect …’ series.

Drawing on the literature, however, Ayson argues that the record is ‘mixed’ regarding the convergent quality provided by the 38th Parallel during the Korean War. As part of the negotiations for a cease-fire in 1951, Chinese negotiators proposed drawing the demarcation line along the 38th Parallel, but this was rejected by the United Command, which insisted on a line at which the opposing armies had fought to a standstill. The United Command’s position prevailed and the result was a postwar

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553 Cited in Ayson, Thomas Schelling and the Nuclear Age, p 169
554 Schelling, Strategy of Conflict, pp 69-70
555 Schelling, Strategy of Conflict, p 75
556 Schelling, Strategy of Conflict, p 76
557 Schelling, Arms and Influence, p 159
558 Schelling, Strategy of Conflict, p 54
559 Ayson, Thomas Schelling and the Nuclear Age, p 89
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Korea divided at a line running north of the 38th Parallel for most of its distance.\(^{560}\) Ayson’s point is validated by the historical record. At the end of World War II, the Americans used the 38th Parallel as a basis for division into two zones of military occupation – one for the Americans and one for the Soviet Union.\(^{561}\) Pushing the North Koreans back behind the Parallel was also the goal articulated in the U.N. Security Council Resolution of 25 June, 1950.\(^{562}\) By September-October 1950, however, the 38th Parallel had been rejected as a line of division by the Americans in their drive north toward the Yalu to liberate all of Korea. In 1950, the Chinese used the crossing of the 38th Parallel as a *casus belli* for intervention.\(^{563}\) After intervention, however, they drove south in a bid to expel all foreign forces from the Korean peninsula. At the Panmunjon true talks in October 1951, however, they sought to persuade the United Nations Command to adopt the Parallel as a demarcation line.\(^{564}\)

Although the 38th Parallel was not the final line of division for postwar Korea, it provided the *critical focal point* that led to the line of division finally adopted in 1953. At the end of the Korean War, the U.S. and China *shared a norm: the cessation of hostilities in and around the 38th Parallel*. This is convergent with Schelling’s concept of the ‘intrinsic magnetism of particular outcomes, especially those that enjoy prominence, uniqueness, simplicity, precedent or some rationale that makes them qualitatively differentiable from the continuum of possible alternatives.’\(^{565}\) In effect, the 38th Parallel became the first and final point of the three-year war, or ‘bargaining’ process between the U.S. and China. What started the war – a North Korean invasion across the Parallel – led in turn to an American drive north across the Parallel toward the Yalu in September 1950. Subsequently, the Chinese drove U.S.-led forces back across the Parallel in November 1950, this followed by a two-year stalemate on the battlefield. Armistice talks started since 1951 concluded – ironically – with a final line of division centred *around* the 38th Parallel in 1953. Such a shared norm – that conflict

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\(^{560}\) Ayson, *Thomas Schelling and the Nuclear Age*, p 92  
\(^{562}\) Matray, *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War*, p 499  
\(^{563}\) Foot, *The Wrong War*, p 68  
\(^{564}\) Matray, *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War*, p 457  
\(^{565}\) Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, p 70
was restricted to a physical limit — led to increased appreciation during the Vietnam War and helped the U.S. and China restrict the scope of their conflict.

5.5.2 Lesson Learnt: Future Intervention

The biggest lesson that the Americans and Chinese took from the Korean conflict was the consideration of the possibility that the other could intervene in future conflicts. The Americans were more confident than the Chinese in the effectiveness of their respective deterrence strategies in 1950. But the subsequent deterrence failures both sides suffered pushed them into ‘a convergence of expectations,’ (again, a term borrowed from Schelling) whereby both were ready to accept the fact that future deterrence postures adopted against the other could be fragile. This is largely apparent in the American position adopted against the Chinese in Vietnam in the 1960s. During the Vietnam War, the Johnson Administration drew lessons from the Korean War and strictly controlled bombing operations in North Vietnam so as not to threaten the Chinese. In all, the Americans replaced deterrence with reassurance in a bid to prevent Chinese intervention in Vietnam. Likewise, the Chinese practiced deterrence with a light touch — not acting upon their deterrence threats following some deterrence failures — in a bid not to trigger unwarranted escalation. This will be examined at length in Chapter 6.

5.6 Conclusion

This first case study shows that successful deterrence strategies require deterrers’ ability to appreciate their knowledge of their opponent’s goals. While he does not employ the logic of deterrence explicitly, Ivan Arreguin Toft uses the anecdote to illustrate a similar phenomenon:

No one had given Muhammad Ali a chance against George Foreman in the World Heavyweight Championship fight of October 30, 1974. Foreman, none of whose opponents had lasted more than three rounds in the ring, was the strongest, hardest hitting boxer of his generation. Ali, though not as powerful as Foreman, had a slightly faster punch and was lighter on his feet. In the weeks leading up to the fight, however, Foreman had practiced against nimble sparring partners. He was ready.

566 In Chapter 4, it was argued that lessons can be learnt by a single party or both parties in a long-term deterrence relationship. Lessons are different from shared norms, in that the latter involve a ‘bargain’ across a range of outcomes.

567 Christensen, ‘Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace,’ p 125, Yuen-Foong Khong, Analogies At War, Chapter 5
But when the bell rang just after 4:00 a.m. in Kinshasa, something completely unexpected happened. In round two, instead of moving into the ring to meet Foreman, Ali appeared to cower against the ropes. Foreman, now confident of victory, pounded him again and again, while Ali whispered hoarse taunts: "George, you're not hittin'," "George, you disappoint me." Foreman lost his temper, and his punches became a furious blur. To spectators, unaware that the elastic ring ropes were absorbing much of the force of Foreman's blows, it looked as if Ali would surely fall. By the fifth round, however, Foreman was worn out. And in round eight, as stunned commentators and a delirious crowd looked on, Muhammad Ali knocked George Foreman to the canvas, and the fight was over. 568

Toft uses the above to outline a theory of how weak actors can defeat stronger opponents. The same could be said about the U.S. and China in the Korean War. Like Foreman, the U.S. in 1950 had confronted the Chinese Communists on the Korean peninsula for the first time. Going into the boxing ring, Foreman clung on to his knowledge that Ali would come out swinging at him. When this did not occur, George did not appreciate his knowledge of Ali’s goals. Similarly, American knowledge of Chinese goals in 1950 suggested that the Chinese would not intervene in Korea. Even with the sighting of Chinese forces in Korea in early October 1950, American officials failed to appreciate their knowledge about Chinese goals in Korea.

China’s deterrence attempt in Korea is more quixotic. Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggested that the U.S. would attack China on three fronts – Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam. Like the Americans, they did not appreciate this knowledge. But even without appreciation, the Chinese were largely correct in their recognition of America’s ‘unreasonableness’ – while the Americans were ‘unreasonable’ enough to defeat China’s deterrence attempt to keep them behind the 38th Parallel. In all, the Chinese deterrence attempt in Korea suggests that the conceptualisation of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ in this thesis is not a perfect predictor of what potential deterrers will do with regard to the use of deterrence if they see their opponents as ‘unreasonable.’

At this point, it is useful to summarise the processes leading to the deterrence failures in 1950, and the processes that resulted from such failures. The American deterrence attempt is a clear-cut case of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness.’ A major misconception plagued American decision-making in 1950 – their knowledge of Sino-

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American amity and knowledge that the Chinese would not intervene. Such a misconception led to a failure of appreciation – a failure to evaluate critically knowledge of an opponent’s goals. This led the Americans to suffer two failures in deterring the Chinese. The Chinese also suffered deterrence failures in Korea, but this was not an instance of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ but instead a less-than-perfect instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ Nonetheless, the deterrence failures suffered by China and the U.S. in Korea facilitated processes of learning and adaptation that led to the formation of shared norms and lessons learnt. In the Sino-American confrontation over Vietnam ten years later, the norm and lesson formed in Korea – limiting conflict to a physical boundary and fear of future intervention by the other party respectively – enhanced appreciation. This led to better choices in the use of deterrence strategies in future deterrence encounters.

As shown in the previous chapter, the eradication of misconceptions and misperceptions – the root causes behind the lack of appreciation – is difficult. Misconceptions form an essential part of policymakers’ cognitive structures – which encompass prior learning, experience and a mental mapping of themselves and their world. Eradication can only be achieved with a retooling or relearning of such cognitive structures which are resistant to change. The logic is somewhat tautological – strategic misconceptions, after being validated over a certain period, hold on to a constant image, or continuity, in the of an opponent; as a result, a strategic surprise or deterrence failure stems precisely from discontinuities or events that do not fall in line with such misconceptions. The Israeli misconception of 1973 was that the Egyptians would not attack. Such a misconception had passed the test in previous false alarms in the 1970s. Likewise, since their implementation of the Open Door policy in 1899 and the image of Sino-American friendship thereafter, the U.S. was not confronted with the possibility that anti-American hostility among Chinese policymakers existed.

While strategic misconceptions are hard to eradicate, deterrence failures present an opportunity for learning and adaptation that lead to the formation of norms and lessons learnt. In turn, such norms tend to foster an enhanced appreciation of how deterrence strategies in future could fail due to opposing goals. The biggest lesson that

Washington took from the Korean conflict was the realisation that there was a distinct possibility that Beijing would challenge it in other parts of Asia in subsequent confrontations. In effect, Washington became more willing to appreciate its knowledge of Chinese goals. It abandoned the deductive logic that China would not confront the U.S. due to America’s conventional military superiority; instead, it looked for inductive clues about Chinese resolve after Korea in subsequent confrontations in the 1950s and 1960s.

The most basic method for eradicating misperceptions and increasing appreciation is the intensification of high-level political and diplomatic exchanges. In the late 1960s, the Warsaw talks between the Chinese and U.S. Ambassadors to Poland helped to clarify each other’s goals and interests in Vietnam, leading to a tacit bargain (i.e. norm) that, so long as American forces did not invade North Vietnam or attack China, China would not directly enter the war in Vietnam. The grand bargain in Vietnam helped serve as a focal point at which divergent interests between the U.S. and China found convergence. Such bargains do not mean that two parties with divergent interests will always converge upon agreed outcomes. However, the initial bargains made in Korea were part of a process that led to other similar agreed outcomes, narrowing the chasm in goals and interests over time. It could be said that a series of bilateral confrontations – Korea, the various crisis over Taiwan in the late 1950s, and then Vietnam in the 1960s – served to enhance appreciation and, as a result, led to better choices regarding the use of various deterrence strategies.

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570 John W. Garver, ‘The Chinese Threat In The Vietnam War,’ Parameters 22(1), Spring 1992, p 78
CHAPTER 6: CASE STUDY 2
DETERRENCE CHOICES IN THE VIETNAM WAR, 1964-1968

The strategic interaction between China and the United States in Vietnam between 1964 and 1968 was the first since a series of confrontations in the 1950s – the Korean War in 1950-53, the two Taiwan Strait crises (1954 and 1958) and the 1954 Indochina crisis. Apart from the Korean War in the early 1950s, the gravity of the Vietnam encounter was unprecedented. This has been observed by many scholars, who agree that potential escalation in Vietnam by either China or the United States could have led to a repeat of the Korean War – where American escalation against an ally of China was challenged by Beijing in the form of a massive military intervention.571

During the Korean War, both the U.S. and China chose deterrence strategies to prevent certain actions on the part of their opponent.572 By contrast, both countries made different choices with regard to deterrence during the Vietnam War. The U.S. substituted strategic reassurance for deterrence, and sought to limit the possibility of armed Chinese intervention in Vietnam similar to the one experienced in Korea. The Chinese adopted what could be termed a ‘deterrence-lite’ that sought to limit U.S. escalatory moves against Hanoi. Beijing suffered several deterrence failures without executing the threats contingent with such strategies, and was willing to do so as long as the U.S. did not challenge its ultimate deterrence threat by launching a direct invasion of China. Its deterrence posture against the United States, however, was a ‘partial success’ in that it helped determine the pace and limits of American escalatory moves in North Vietnam, and possibly China.573

Chapter 4 has showed that in instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ a deterrer recognises that his deterree is ‘unreasonable’ because of two factors – knowledge of the opponent’s goals and appreciation. The Sino-American interaction in Vietnam represents instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ Between 1964 and 1968, China’s knowledge suggested that the U.S. would escalate its military operations in Vietnam, a development that could threaten North Vietnam and possibly China.

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572 In Chapter 5, it was argued that the U.S. executed a deterrence strategy, albeit a weak and implicit one

573 Whiting, The Chinese Calculus, p 181
itself. But Chinese leaders also *appreciated* this knowledge. Beijing was not certain as to the pace and extent of American escalation. Such *appreciation* led China to implement two major policies in Vietnam. Firstly, the Chinese chose a strategy of deterrence and reassurance to prevent U.S. escalation. They calibrated their deterrence posture with the ultimate goal of avoiding a repeat of the Korean War, where a series of missteps by the U.S. and China led to a wider war following the crossing of the Yalu River by American troops. To achieve a balance between credible deterrence and ‘lock-in escalation’, the Chinese were willing to suffer deterrence failures at the lower-end of the escalatory ladder, but they calibrated their responses so that their most significant deterrence threat – which sought to prevent an American invasion of North Vietnam, and possibly China – would not be challenged. Secondly, Beijing implemented measures to prevent inadvertent escalation that could lead to another Sino-American war. In essence, China’s *appreciation* of its knowledge about the goals of America’s conceptual framework was an instance of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ Chinese leaders recognised that the Americans were unreasonable; although they were not certain how unreasonable they were.

American leaders’ *knowledge* suggested that Beijing might intervene in Vietnam. In contrast to the Korean War era, however, U.S. leaders *appreciated* this knowledge. While American leaders’ *knowledge* suggested that the Chinese might well intervene in Vietnam, they were not certain exactly how, when and where the Chinese might decide to do so. This process of *appreciation* led them to do two things. Firstly, the U.S. replaced their strategy of deterrence posture towards China with a policy of reassurance. The U.S. restricted bombing close to the Sino-Vietnam border, for example, to allay Chinese fears of American encroachment upon Chinese territorial sovereignty. Secondly, the U.S. also took extensive measures to prevent inadvertent escalation. Helped by this process of *appreciation*, the Americans recognised Chinese leaders as ‘unreasonable.’ Influenced by *appreciation*, the U.S. came to the conclusion that the gulf in U.S. and Chinese goals in Vietnam might be too wide so as to render a deterrence strategy untenable.

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574 This term is taken from Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus*, p 186
575 As described in Chapter 5, strategies of deterrence essentially encompass two critical elements — credibility of threat and reassurance
Case Study 2: Deterrence Choices in The Vietnam War, 1964-1968

The process of appreciation during the Vietnam War was the result of lessons learnt and norms formed after the Korean War. After the Korean War, both China and the U.S. learnt a vital lesson – that the other side could actually intervene in future conflicts between them. Both sides subscribed to a shared norm – that of limiting hostilities along a physical boundary (i.e. the 38th Parallel). These lessons and norms – and their resultant impact on appreciation – helped the U.S. and China to make distinct choices with regard to deterrence which were markedly different from the choices made during the Korean War. The Vietnam experience also led to a further process of learning and adaptation which encouraged the formation of a shared norm and a lesson. The shared norm was an ‘unspoken agreement’ or tacit understanding between the two sides to limit actions that might have led to an all-out conflict. Both the U.S. and China also learnt that the other side was not as hostile as initially conceived, paving the way for historic rapprochement in the early 1970s. As tensions in the Sino-American relationship eased in the late 1960s, both sides’ appreciation also increased significantly.

6.1 Background of the Sino-American Relationship: The 1950s

Following the Korean War, the American and Chinese practices of deterrence strategies changed significantly. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss at some length the choices which they made pertaining to the use and implementation of deterrence strategies during the Vietnam War. The bilateral deterrence failures suffered by the U.S. and China in 1950 could be said to have arisen from an abundance of hubris – an insensitivity to the values, interests and goals of the other. As detailed in Chapter 4, the U.S. was so confident in the efficacy of its deterrence-reassurance posture vis-à-vis China that it gave scant regard to the signals from the Chinese indicating that Beijing would carry out a massive intervention in Korea. American leaders discounted Beijing’s deterrence signals, seeing them as part of a strategy of bluff. Underlying such hubris on the part of the Americans was the failure to appreciate their knowledge of the goals within China’s conceptual framework – that Beijing would intervene directly in Korea to counter what it perceived to be the threat posed by the movement of American troops north toward the Yalu. After the Korean War, however, strategic interactions between China and the U.S. became more nuanced. As Kalicki notes, the mid-1950s – with the two crises in the Taiwan Strait in 1954 and 1958 as well as the 1954 Indochina crisis – were marked by a ‘relatively sophisticated’ level of interaction between Beijing.
and Washington; messages, signals and threats were exchanged with less exaggerated responses. The mid-late 1950s marked a period where the ability of both the U.S. and China to handle crises became increasingly sophisticated.576

Kalicki’s thesis demonstrates that the lessons of the Korean War helped both sides to achieve a higher level of understanding about each other’s conceptual framework.577 However, Kalicki fails to show how this increased appreciation led to different choices regarding the use of deterrence. In various Sino-American confrontations in the mid-late 1950s, deterrence strategies were either not practised; or when they were implemented, they were carried out with a keen awareness and sensitivity as to how they might fail. On occasion, military moves and verbal signals were made to dampen the tensions that could heighten the possibility of deterrence failure – this ensured that deterrence strategies did not even have to arrive at a point where they could suffer a challenge. In the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis, for example, the U.S. got Chiang Kai Shek to withdraw his military forces from the Jinmen (Quemoy) and Mazu (Matsu) islands, knowing that their continued presence could invite an all-out assault by the Chinese Communists578 – an act that would mean a failure of U.S. deterrence. Mutual appreciation, however, did not mean that China and U.S. enjoyed an unbroken string of deterrence successes in various 1950s crises. While the 1950s marked a mixed record of deterrence successes and failures, it was nevertheless a significant change from the bilateral deterrence disasters in Korea. Growing mutual understanding between China and the U.S., as well as a more nuanced appreciation of how differing goals could put their deterrence strategies under strain, led to a more refined system of crisis management.

6.1.1 Indochina Crisis, 1954
The first ‘test’ following the Korean War was the Indochina crisis in 1954. In the spring of that year, Communist Viet Minh forces were preparing an all-out assault against the French at Dien Bien Phu. Washington sought to deter the Chinese from armed intervention to assist the Viet Minh. The attempt was largely successful, but this was due as much to the considerations that restrained Beijing’s leaders – the need for

576 Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises, pp 211-217
577 In Chapter 4, Payne’s conceptualization of ‘understanding’ was broken down into two components – ‘knowledge’ of an opponent’s goals and appreciation or critical evaluation of such knowledge
578 Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, p 261
domestic reconstruction, the lack of Soviet support for the Viet Minh and the opprobrium from the world community if the Chinese executed an armed intervention in Indochina.\textsuperscript{579} Similarly, the Chinese sought to deter the Americans from armed intervention in Indochina to assist the beleaguered French forces. Again, this was a qualified deterrence success. The Eisenhower Administration resisted the temptation to intervene in Indochina, due less to the presence of a Chinese deterrence threat than the fact that American public opinion would not support such an explicit commitment only a year after the cessation of the Korean War.\textsuperscript{580}

The 1954 Indochina case is significant with regard to the theme of \textit{appreciation}. Washington should have \textit{appreciated} its \textit{knowledge} of Chinese goals—intervention to help the Viet Minh—and concluded that the implementation of a deterrence strategy presented some risk of failure. In their classic 1974 work, George and Smoke argue that the Indochina conflict was a ‘nondeterrable phenomenon’.\textsuperscript{581} They state that the American application of a deterrence strategy in Indochina was problematic—in particular, it would have been difficult to deter Communist China from giving military and economic assistance to the Viet Minh. Washington’s threat of Massive Retaliation to deter a major Chinese military intervention was largely successful, but this did not prevent Beijing from supplying the Viet Minh with aid. If anything, the deterrence threat offered Beijing an ‘indirect assurance’ that it was safe to do so insofar as it restrained itself from direct military intervention.\textsuperscript{582} In essence, George and Smoke are arguing that in 1954, the U.S. should have \textit{appreciated} its knowledge of Chinese goals, so as to come to a decision \textit{not to apply a deterrence strategy}. Beijing needed to continue to supply the Viet Minh with aid to ensure the latter’s victory over the French. Such a victory would have ensured that China would not be threatened by another colonial power on its periphery.

The 1954 case, however, does not constitute a \textit{total} lack of appreciation as per the Korean War. Due to some \textit{appreciation}, both China and the U.S. were aware of the risks involved in implementing their deterrence strategies. Chapter 4 showed that

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\item \textsuperscript{579} Zhang, \textit{Deterrence and Strategic Culture}, p 188
\item \textsuperscript{581} George and Smoke, \textit{Deterrence in American Foreign Policy}, p 259
\item \textsuperscript{582} George and Smoke, \textit{Deterrence in American Foreign Policy}, pp 259-262
\end{itemize}
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appreciation requires the ability to evaluate critically one’s knowledge of an opponent’s goals based on past experience. In 1954, the ghost of Korea cast a long shadow over the Indochina crisis – the fear of another Korean War, which neither side could afford, deterred both from overt armed intervention.\footnote{Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, p 188}

**6.1.2 Taiwan Crisis, 1954-55**

The first Taiwan Strait crisis had its origins in December 1953, when the Republic of China (Taiwan), under informal U.S. protection since the Korean War, presented Washington with the draft of a mutual defense treaty. Worried about committing American forces to defend Taiwan’s offshore islands, the U.S. State Department sought to revise the draft treaty.\footnote{Thomas E. Stolper, China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands: Together With Some Implications For Outer Mongolia And Sino-Soviet Relations, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1985, p 23} At the same time, Taiwanese and Chinese air and naval forces began skirmishing near the Dachen Islands, off the coast of Zhejiang province. Beijing issued a series of deterrence threats. In July 1954, the *People’s Daily* warned of ‘protracted grave consequences’ if the pact was signed.\footnote{Stolper, China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands, p 26} In response, President Eisenhower countered with a deterrence threat when he told reporters in August 1954 that ‘any invasion of Formosa would have to run over the 7th Fleet.’\footnote{Robert Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy Toward Taiwan, 1950-1955, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p 154} In September, the Chinese Communists launched an artillery bombardment of Jinmen, an offshore island under Chinese Nationalist control. The American response included the alerting of the Pacific Fleet and despite the State Department’s initial attempts to revise the treaty text, the mutual defence treaty with Taiwan was signed on December 5.\footnote{Abram N. Shulsky, Chinese Behaviour and Deterrence Theory, Santa Monica: RAND Corp, 2000, p 61}

The American deterrence attempt has been recorded as a partial success as the Chinese did not launch all-out attacks on Jinmen and Mazu. The islands also remained in KMT hands.\footnote{George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, pp 266-267} While the Chinese were deterred from an invasion, this success was achieved at considerable cost. Despite the obvious difficulties of trying to protect an isolated outpost, the Eisenhower Administration proceeded to enter into a commitment to islands that lay near to the Chinese mainland and were within range of direct range
of artillery fire from Chinese Communist batteries. The Chinese, on the other hand, suffered a deterrence failure – they failed to deter the Americans from signing a mutual defence treaty with Chiang Kai Shek.

The 1954 Taiwan crisis represents incomplete appreciation. There were intrinsic problems associated with the implementation of these respective deterrence strategies in 1954. At the level of goals, the Chinese sought to prevent the U.S. from forging a closer relationship to the island. China sought to specifically deter an action – the signing of the U.S.-Taiwan defence treaty. Had the Chinese appreciated their knowledge of American goals – signing a defence pact with Taiwan – they would have been more circumspect in implementing their deterrence strategy. The interests of China and American also contrasted sharply during the crisis. George and Smoke argue that Washington’s application of a deterrence strategy to contain Communist China during the early 1950s was ‘more problematical and risky than it was against the Soviet Union in Europe.’ Applying containment against Moscow was relatively easier, since Moscow was, in a sense, willing to be contained. Moreover, Moscow – having acquired control of countries in Eastern Europe – had no unsatisfied irredentist claims. By contrast, Communist China was not a satisfied power. For Beijing, accepting containment by the Americans would mean the abandonment of its vital interests.

On the other hand, the inherent difficulties associated with using deterrence strategies in 1954 led to a degree of appreciation. Chapter 4 showed how the end of Korean War led to an important lesson learnt by the U.S. and China – an increased sensitivity to future intervention by the other party. Applying the lessons of the Korean War in 1954, both the U.S. and China took concrete steps to ensure that their deterrence strategies would not suffer failure. While the U.S. largely succeeded in deterring a Chinese invasion of Jinmen, it sought to manage its deterrence posture by reducing the inherent risks of an all-out war – in other words, it appreciated its knowledge of Chinese goals – a potential invasion of Formosa – and sought to ameliorate the risks of deterrence failure. Zhang argues that the U.S. sought to deter the Chinese via the show

589 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, pp 266-267
590 Shulsky, Chinese Behaviour and Deterrence Theory, p 61
591 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, pp 273-276
592 George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, p 275
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of force – and a political willingness to use that force – rather than actually taking any action that could lead to deterrence failure.\(^{593}\)

Both Eisenhower and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles talked about the ‘horrible dilemma’ if the offshore islands were lost, leading to a reduction in Taiwan’s morale and in American prestige; but they also questioned whether such considerations were worth a general war with China that could involve nuclear weapons.\(^{594}\) In a major review of U.S. policy toward East Asia in late 1954, the NSC called for sustained pressure toward Communist China, but with a more carefully calibrated approach towards the use of military force. While Washington would defend its national interests if necessary, it would seek to avoid provoking war with Beijing and left open the option of a negotiated settlement with the Chinese. The review also mandated that the U.S. ‘refrain from assisting or encouraging offensive actions against Communist China, and restrain the Chinese Nationalists from such actions, except in response to Chinese Communist provocation judged in each case by the President.’\(^{595}\) When it became clearer later on in the crisis that deterrence could fail – i.e. the Chinese could invade the islands in force – Washington realised that its deterrence posture could lead to an all-out Sino-American War. American officials then recommended a withdrawal combined with a naval blockade. When Chiang refused to entertain the notion of reducing his forces on the islands, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter Robertson told the Generalissimo that he would have to defend the island on his own, without American help.\(^{596}\) In essence, American officials had assessed that defending the offshore islands – and the accompanying deterrence strategy associated with their defence – could in the long run draw the U.S. into a larger conflict with China. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson explicitly objected to American participation in Chiang’s war. He asserted that defending the islands would involve attacking the

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593 Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, p 223
594 Accinelli, Crisis and Commitment, pp 160-163
596 John Lewis Gaddis, The Long Peace, pp 138-139
Chinese mainland; hence, he opposed a war with Communist China over these ‘doggoned little islands.’

Similarly, the Chinese Communists also applied the lessons of the Korean War as they challenged the U.S. during the crisis. Mao recognized the superiority of American technology and the martial spirit of American soldiers during the Korean War. This made him more cautious during the crises over the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s and Vietnam in the 1960s. Although Mao was reckless at times, he generally tried to avoid direct confrontation with American troops. In 1954, the Chinese appreciated their knowledge that had suggested the U.S. could sign a mutual defence treaty with Formosa. As a result, the Chinese considered the risks of deterrence failure. After the signing of the treaty in December 1954 (i.e. China’s failure to deter the U.S. from doing so), the Chinese continued to assess the risks associated with pitching Chinese Communist forces against the overwhelmingly superior American military – in short, Mao would have to assess the costs/benefits of another Korea-type campaign against the Americans. Instead of seeking to capture Jinmen, Mao ordered the capture of the smaller and less significant Dachen islands because he assessed that the taking of these islands would not trigger large-scale American military intervention. During the capture of the Dachens, Mao also sought to restrain the People’s Liberation Army from engaging American forces. Before the battle began, Mao stressed repeatedly that the PLA should avoid military conflict with U.S. troops.

6.1.3 Taiwan Crisis, 1958

The key feature of the second Taiwan Strait crisis in 1958 is similar to other crises in the mid- to late-1950s – the mutual appreciation of knowledge of each other’s goals and subsequent recognition of the risks of deterrence failure. In August 1958, the Chinese Communists began a heavy bombardment of the Jinmen and Mazu islands, which subsequently developed into a blockade – by artillery fire – of the resupply of the Chinese Nationalist-held islands. The primary goal was to push the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) Army off the offshore islands. While China and the U.S.

597 Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture, p 209
598 Di, ‘The Most Respected Enemy: Mao Zedong’s Perception of the United States,’ p 150
implemented deterrence strategies, both sought to temper and regulate them lest escalatory moves break out into an all-out war. As in the first Taiwan Strait crisis, the 1958 crisis is regarded as a partial success and a partial failure of deterrence for the United States. Deterrence failed in that it did not dissuade the Chinese Communists from initiating the heavy artillery shelling, but it was a success in that it dissuaded Beijing from launching an all-out attack against Jinmen.\(^\text{601}\) Beijing sought to deter the U.S. from carrying out three actions – American military intervention in the Strait, American encroachment upon China’s 12-nautical mile territorial waters and the U.S. Navy escorting Kuomintang naval vessels to Jinmen.\(^\text{602}\) It failed to deter the Americans from sending naval escorts for the resupply of Jinmen, but it did manage to deter the Americans from breaching its territorial waters.

Again, the biggest lesson to emerge from deterrence failures during the Korean War – sensitivity to future intervention by the other party – led China and the U.S. to appreciate their knowledge of the other’s goals and as a result recognise that their deterrence strategies could fail. The Chinese implemented their deterrence threats against the U.S. with a light touch – a situation that served as a forerunner to their practice of deterrence in the Vietnam War. Such a deterrence strategy supported two key goals – first, to compel the KMT Army out of the islands and second, to obtain an ‘exact understanding’ of the American policy in the Strait, or specifically, to find out at what point the U.S. would engage in direct military intervention.\(^\text{603}\) However, Chinese leaders realised that their deterrence strategy could compromise their overall objective of compelling the KMT Army off the island if an all-out war with the American erupted. This meant that Beijing had to calibrate its deterrence strategy carefully. This fact became evident after Secretary of State John Foster announced on September 4 that the U.S. would intervene if Jinmen were invaded, and that such intervention might involve the use of nuclear weapons.\(^\text{604}\) Faced with potential deterrence failure, Chinese leaders ordered their troops not to directly engage American troops or conduct any military action that might lead to the direct involvement of U.S. troops.\(^\text{605}\) On September 6, Zhou En Lai publicly agreed to hold ambassadorial talks with the U.S. in

\(^{601}\) George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, p 370

\(^{602}\) Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, p 251

\(^{603}\) Jin, ‘Chinese Decision Making in the Taiwan Strait,’ pp 312-313

\(^{604}\) George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, p 364

\(^{605}\) Niu Jin, ‘Chinese Decision Making in the Taiwan Strait,’ p 313
Warsaw – the first direct discussions between the two governments in several months. During the meetings that began on September 15, American leaders also became convinced that China was not attempting to take the islands by force. Beijing was clearly taking measures both diplomatically and militarily to avoid escalating the conflict. Christensen argues that Mao used the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis – and tensions with the U.S. – to mobilise the labour and capital required for China’s industrial and atomic programmes. Mao did not want war with the U.S.; he wanted tensions short of war. A conflict short of war would guarantee popular consensus for Mao’s broad economic strategy without wasting the mobilised resources on actual war fighting.

In seeking to deter the Chinese, the Americans also took measures to prevent an escalation of the crisis. American officials sought to restrict any military activities that might be too provocative, such as U.S. naval convoys up to China’s territorial limit. U.S. naval officials opposed Generalissimo Chiang’s plan to attack the mainland in retaliation for the shelling of two islands near Jinmen. Following a meeting with Eisenhower on September 4, Dulles issued a deterrence threat; that the ‘naked use of force’ by China on the offshore islands would ‘forecast a widespread use of force in the Far East which would endanger vital free world positions and the security of the United States.’ But he concluded that the overall U.S. interest was a peaceful end to the crisis and noted that Washington had sought during the ambassadorial talks with China at Geneva to obtain agreement on a declaration of mutual renunciation of force. On September 8, American naval ships withdrew after the Communists attacked Nationalist ships. This led Mao to assert that both China and the U.S. were afraid of war, but ‘they are more afraid then we are.’ In the same month, Eisenhower concurred with Mao. The U.S. President recounted that ‘I was determined by every possible means we should avoid expanding hostilities more than absolutely necessary. I was by no means convinced that the Chinese Communists would be willing to risk war

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606 Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p 197
607 Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, pp 217-219
609 Di, ‘The Most Respected Enemy,’ p 153
with us.\textsuperscript{610} During a visit to Taipei in October, Dulles told Chiang that intermittent conflict between the Communists and the Nationalists threatened the peace. He urged Chiang to make it clear that his government would not attempt to use force to return to the mainland, to avoid commando raids, stop using offshore islands for the prosecution of the civil war, and to reduce the KMT garrison on Jinmen.\textsuperscript{611} The Americans appreciated their knowledge of Chinese goals and recognised that their deterrence strategy could fail.

6.2 The Vietnam War, 1964-1968

The cumulative effect of the 1950s crises – and the lessons learnt and shared norms formed from them – led to different choices regarding the use of deterrence during the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the U.S. eschewed the use of a deterrence strategy against China altogether. This is significant, given that America used a deterrence strategy – albeit a weak and implicit one – to prevent Chinese intervention during the Korean War. An explicit deterrence threat that sought to prevent Chinese intervention in North Vietnam would have involved nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{612} If it had been employed, a deterrence threat would have been used in conjunction with an invasion of North Vietnam. However, invasion was eventually rejected as an option due to widespread fears of another Korea-style Chinese armed intervention. On 15 December 1965, National Security Adviser William Bundy said a study of a limited invasion had ruled out an invasion for fear of not knowing ‘what limits it (an invasion) could place on its (China’s) actions.’\textsuperscript{613} As a result, Washington opted for strategic reassurance – informing Beijing, through third parties, of its limited goals\textsuperscript{614} - instead of deterrence.


\textsuperscript{611} U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, ‘Foreign Relations of the United States: Summaries of FRUS Volumes’

\textsuperscript{612} In a discussion with President Johnson in February 1965, former President Eisenhower proposed that Washington should issue a deterrence threat to deter Chinese intervention in North Vietnam. When Johnson asked about the possibility of Chinese or Soviet intervention in Vietnam, Eisenhower said the U.S. should ‘pass the word’ to them, quietly but firmly, that they should take care ‘lest dire results occur.’ This was a clear reference to the use of nuclear weapons. See Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972, p 131


\textsuperscript{614} Whiting states the U.S. also used a policy of reassurance toward China before the outbreak of the Korean War. See Whiting, ‘U.S. Crisis Management vis-à-vis China,’ in Swaine, Zhang and Cohen (eds), Managing Sino-American Crisis, p 231. One important difference between the Korean War and the Vietnam War, however, is that the U.S. used a strategy of deterrence in the former and not the latter.
Case Study 2:  
Deterrence Choices in The Vietnam War, 1964-1968

Such a choice underscored America’s enhanced understanding of China’s conceptual framework in Vietnam. Having learnt the lessons of Korea, American leaders’ knowledge suggested that Beijing would feel threatened by massive American deployments in South Vietnam and as a result decide to intervene directly in Vietnam. The appreciation of this knowledge introduced significant doubt in the minds of American policymakers as to when, how and where the Chinese would act upon this goal. Some critics argue that such appreciation undermined Washington’s entire mission to keep South Vietnam as a viable anti-Communist stronghold.615

Likewise, Chinese leaders’ knowledge of American goals suggested that the Americans would feel compelled to escalate their campaign against North Vietnam, or even directly against China, if Washington assessed that Hanoi’s campaign in the South was imposing unacceptable costs on the American campaign in Vietnam. Like the Americans, the Chinese were also uncertain as to the pace and extent of such escalation i.e. they appreciated their knowledge of U.S goals in Vietnam. As a result, the Chinese chose to strike a balance between credible deterrence and ‘lock-in’ escalation with the Americans.616 They practised deterrence with a light touch – they were willing to suffer a string of deterrence failures as long as the ultimate deterrence aim – no invasion of North Vietnam and of China itself – remained unchallenged. In three clear failures of China’s ‘light touch’ deterrence or ‘deterrence lite’ posture in Vietnam in 1964 and 1965, China failed to respond to the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam naval facilities following the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident; the three-year American bombing campaign of North Vietnam that started in February 1965, and Washington’s dispatch of 3,500 Marines to Danang in March 1965. Whiting argues that while China’s deterrence posture failed in the three instances described, its deterrence posture ultimately determined the pace and limits of U.S. escalation against North Vietnam.617 In effect, China’s ‘deterrence-lite’ strategy in Vietnam sought to address its own uncertainty (i.e. appreciation) about its own knowledge of U.S. goals in Vietnam. Such a strategy sought to reduce the level of uncertainty in China’s knowledge about

616 Whiting, The Chinese Calculus, p 186
617 Whiting, The Chinese Calculus, p 181
American goals by seeking to limit the escalatory moves that the U.S. could actually execute.

**6.3 America's Decision Not to Deter China**

Chapter 4 explained that in instances of 'recognised unreasonableness' a deterrer has some knowledge of the goals within his deterree's conceptual framework. The deterrer also appreciates this knowledge, which enables him to see how his deterrence posture could be compromised. As a result, the deterrer may abandon deterrence, couple a deterrence strategy to a strategy of reassurance, or supplement a deterrence strategy with other policy tools, such as consequence management or passive/active defences. The Sino-American confrontation in Vietnam is an excellent example of 'recognised unreasonableness.' This case study focuses on the period between 1964 – when the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred – to 1968, which marked the end of America's three-year bombing campaign against North Vietnam.

**6.3.1 American Knowledge of China's Conceptual Framework**

Between 1964 and 1968, the prevailing view among American policymakers was that China would intervene in North Vietnam if the U.S. crossed certain limits in its military escalation against North Vietnam. This could be prompted by the intensification of the U.S. bombing against Hanoi or an outright invasion of North Vietnam, possibly China itself.\(^6\) This view was largely correct, although American policymakers had overlearnt the Korean analogy and failed to recognise the limitations upon Chinese responses to American military action in Vietnam.\(^7\) The Americans should have been more aware of the limitations on Chinese responses. Nonetheless, their appreciation of their knowledge of Chinese goals still made them more circumspect in their assessments of the applicability of deterrence strategy.

Throughout 1964 and 1965, as American policymakers mulled over the possible courses of action in response to a growing North Vietnamese threat to South Vietnam, high-level discussions on potential American actions in Vietnam reflected a knowledge of how China would perceive a palpable sense of threat and intervene directly in Vietnam. As Khong summarises:

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That Lyndon Johnson and his civilian advisors were mindful of China is not controversial. In fact, one of the things about which there is a strong consensus among Johnson’s former military and civilian advisors is that this last lesson of Korea, the specter of Chinese intervention, constrained American strategy in Vietnam decisively. If the other five lessons of Korea suggested that the United States ought to intervene and win in Vietnam, this sixth lesson reminded the policymakers of the necessity of avoiding another war with China.

Fears of a massive Chinese intervention dominated policy discussions regarding an American air campaign against North Vietnam and a possible invasion of the southern part of the North. At one point, President Johnson privately professed great concern about China. He even stated that ‘if one little general in shirtsleeves can take Saigon, think about two hundred million Chinese coming down those trails. No sir, I don’t want to fight them.’ His comments were obviously overdone, but they underscore how enduring an impact the Korean War had on policymakers in the Johnson Administration.

One of the foremost advocates of an invasion of North Vietnam was Walt Rostow, the head of the National Security Council. In a memorandum to President Kennedy in June 1961, Rostow proposed – as a policy option – that the U.S. launch an air attack against Vietnam and move forces just north of the Demilitarised Zone. This would ‘induce Hanoi to end its war against South Vietnam’ by cutting off the Communist routes into South Vietnam. Rostow held on to this view throughout the war. According to Rostow, the risks of Chinese intervention would be lower if U.S. forces attacked the southern part of North Vietnam than if it had concentrated such attacks in the northern and central parts of the country. In a cable to Washington on December 15, 1965, U.S. Ambassador to Laos William Sullivan proposed that U.S. forces, with air and sea cover, land in North Vietnam near Vinh, establish a defensive line from there to the border of Laos, and remain in that position until the North Vietnamese agreed to negotiate. He wrote that by ‘seizing and holding a piece of DRV territory, by emphasizing that we are doing it in order to throttle infiltration, and

620 Yuen Foong Khong, Analogies at War, pp 136-137
moving clear that we are willing to give it back when the eventual guaranteed political settlement is reached, we should have our equivalent to [the Communist terror in South Vietnam] in spades.624

Both proposals were subsequently rejected for fear of China’s direct participation in the Vietnam War. While other officials disagreed with Rostow about the viability of an invasion of the North, they concurred with him with regard to the possibility of Chinese intervention. On December 1965, William Bundy, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, wrote in a paper that an invasion would push China to send ‘massive forces’ to support the North Vietnam regime, lest the geographical area of this ‘dependent ally fall into hostile hands.’625 Such an invasion, he said, should be avoided until the U.S. had reached the ‘conclusions that infiltration of the South must absolutely be cut off and that we are prepared for a war with Communist China.’626 Two months later, Bundy wrote that if it became evident that the U.S. was bent on destroying the North Vietnam regime, the Chinese would ‘probably fear for their own security and intervene on a massive scale.’627

6.3.2 American Appreciation of China’s Conceptual Framework

Chapter 4 defined appreciation as the ability to evaluate critically one’s knowledge. During the Vietnam War, the process of appreciation dominated the minds of U.S. policymakers. Their knowledge suggested that the Chinese could – as per the Korean War – directly intervene in Vietnam to support North Vietnam, they evaluated critically such knowledge. American officials had obviously drawn lessons from their Korean War experience. However, the impact of these lessons on Vietnam was probably over-exaggerated. Appreciation placed such unnecessary constraints upon their strategy that their goals in Vietnam were undermined.

Between 1964 and 1965, deterrence warnings issued by the Chinese to the U.S. underscored China’s resolve in defending North Vietnam. However, the ambiguity enshrined in such warnings gave the Americans grounds to appreciate their knowledge of the likelihood of Chinese intervention in Vietnam. After the U.S. staged retaliatory

625 Gibbons, The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War (Part IV), pp 194-195fn76
626 Gibbons, The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War (Part IV), p 195fn76
627 Memorandum by William B. Bundy, The Pentagon Papers (Volume 4), pp 245-246,
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air attacks on North Vietnam in August 1964, Chinese Premier Zhou En Lai warned the U.S. that China would not ‘sit idly by’ while the U.S. committed aggression against North Vietnam. Foreign Minister Chen Yi indicated that China would fight if the U.S. invaded North Vietnam. There was, however, a subtle subtext in the warnings. Beijing tended to qualify some of its more aggressive rhetoric with vague indications that a Sino-American war would only occur if the U.S. attacked China or gave Beijing good reason to believe that an attack on Chinese territory was imminent. On 13 July 1965, a People’s Daily editorial issued a deterrence warning following an alleged American violation of Yunnan airspace in the course of an attack on Lao Cai, an important rail juncture across the river:

… the same day the U.S. aircraft intruded into Hokow area in Yunnan province, Dean Rusk was saying that the concept of ‘sanctuary’ in the Vietnam war no longer existed. This is clearly meant to intimidate China … We have made a full estimation of the madness of U.S. imperialism and are well prepared with regard to its war adventure plan. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army now stands ready, in battle array. We will not attack unless we are attacked, if we are attack, we will certainly counter-attack.

This became China’s first-order principle for its campaign in Vietnam. The deterrence warning in the People’s Daily appeared to exclude any ground combat with American troops unless and until American troops crossed the Chinese border. But the warning gave no indication of exactly how, where and when Chinese intervention would eventuate – for example, whether the Chinese would counter-attack if the United States escalated its bombing of North Vietnam or staged an invasion of the North. China’s reluctance to formalise its commitment to North Vietnam in 1964 also gave the Americans reason to appreciate their knowledge of Chinese intervention. This implication was reinforced by a curious juxtaposition of remarks made on July 15 by Hoang Van Hoan, leader of a North Vietnam friendship delegation to Beijing, and Peng Chen, the mayor of Beijing and member of the Chinese Politburo. While Hoang declared that large numbers of PLA men and Chinese youth had volunteered to join the fighting in Vietnam, Peng did not announce this or any other specific means of

629 Cited in Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus*, pp 184-185
implementing his pledge ‘to give the Vietnamese people whatever support and aid they need.’

There was a subtlety in the Chinese deterrence warnings which gave the Americans reason to appreciate their knowledge that the Chinese would intervene. Chinese leaders wanted to avoid stating explicitly that an attack on the southern part of North Vietnam would not result in Chinese military action – doing so would have given the Americans an open licence to invade China’s client. However, Beijing was concerned less about a potential invasion of North Vietnam than a direct invasion of the PRC by American forces. Walton argues that China’s statements of commitment toward North Vietnam tended to be ‘somewhat tepid and reflected China’s own concern about encirclement and a possible U.S. invasion of the PRC.’

The China posture was delicately balanced – while it would not shirk from another confrontation with the U.S., it sought to do everything in its power to avoid another Sino-American confrontation. At a conference of American and Vietnamese scholars in 1988, Vietnamese scholar Luu Doan Huynh said Mao’s desire was to support North Vietnam’s war effort without risking direct conflict with the U.S. So long as the U.S. did not bomb China, the U.S. need not fear China’s entry into the fray. Luu even criticised China for telling North Vietnamese officials in June 1965 that it would be unable to provide air cover for North Vietnam. As a result, he said ‘bombs were raining on our heads.’

In the final estimation, this delicate balance and purposive ambiguity in China’s deterrence posture gave the Americans grounds for appreciation. While the Americans’ knowledge suggested that the Chinese could intervene, the ambiguities inherent in China’s deterrence warning gave them reason to appreciate this knowledge. Arguably, America’s appreciation – and its resultant decision to eschew a deterrence strategy against Beijing – forestalled Chinese intervention in the war. But the process of appreciation also restricted Washington’s milieu of options during that war, including an invasion of the North. Kissinger writes:

630 Whiting, The Chinese Calculus, p 185
Thus it was that, in two separate wars a decade and a half apart, America paid a price for not taking Chinese statements seriously: in Korea, it had ignored Chinese warnings and marched to the Yalu, triggering Chinese intervention; in Vietnam, it disregarded assurances by the Chinese that they would not intervene, causing American to reject the only strategy which might have brought victory.\textsuperscript{634}

Kissinger’s appraisal of American policymaking in Vietnam is a tad harsh. American officials’ knowledge of China’s goals suggested that the Chinese could intervene in Vietnam. The ambiguity in China’s deterrence warnings made the Americans appreciate this knowledge, giving them reasons to suspect that the probability of Chinese intervention in Vietnam might actually be lower than during the Korean War. To that end, however, the Americans’ confidence in their knowledge was not absolute; they just could not be certain that the Chinese would not intervene. This encouraged them to pursue a strategy of gradual escalation in Vietnam.

The literature presents much evidence about the uncertainty pervading American policymakers as they considered China’s options in Vietnam. Again, the Americans’ knowledge of China’s goals suggested that the Chinese could intervene, but appreciation made them question this supposition. In discussions about an air campaign, President Johnson’s advisers mentioned the ‘risk of giving the Chinese Communists an excuse for massive intervention in Vietnam’ (italics added).\textsuperscript{635} On 1 April 1965, National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy wrote in a memorandum to President Johnson that air attacks near Hanoi ‘might substantially raise the odds of Peiping coming with air’ (italics added).\textsuperscript{636} In March 1965, President Johnson described American strategy to Congressmen which, though descripтивely colourful, was equivocal in its overall assessment. Two American columnists describe Johnson’s analysis:

‘... As for Communist China, he was watching for every possible sign of reaction. Employing a vivid sexual analogy, the President explained to friends and critics one day that the slow escalation of the air war in the North and the increasing pressure on Ho Chi Minh was seduction, not rape. If China should suddenly react to slow escalation, as a women might react to attempted seduction, by threatening to retaliate (a slap in the face, to continue the metaphor), the United States would have plenty

\textsuperscript{634} Kissinger, Diplomacy, pp 660-661
\textsuperscript{635} Johnson, The Vantage Point, p 119
\textsuperscript{636} McGeorge Bundy, Memorandum, in The Pentagon Papers (Volume 3), p 346
of time to ease off the bombing. On the other hand, if the United States were to unleash an all-out, total assault on the North – rape rather than seduction – there could be no turning back, and Chinese reaction might be instant and total. [italics added] 637

Writing in December 1965, William Bundy stated that an American invasion of southern North Vietnam would present ‘unacceptable political problems and would be of little value militarily.’ 638 Like Johnson, Bundy’s knowledge of China’s goals suggested that the Chinese would intervene, but appreciation led him to couch his assessment of potential Chinese actions in less than unequivocal terms:

It seems inevitable that Communist China would have to move militarily in support of the DRV with massive forces … once China decided the die was cast it is hard to know what limits it would place on its actions. While it would presumably continue to be the Chinese hope to keep the war off its own territory, it nevertheless seems likely that the Chinese would feel free to involve Laos and perhaps launch a diversionary threat towards or into Thailand [italics added]. 639

6.3.2.1 U.S.: Appreciation and Policy Impacts in Vietnam

During the Vietnam War, the Americans were influenced by the process of appreciation. This was enhanced by the lessons learnt and shared norms formed after the Korean War.

Appreciation and Choices Regarding Deterrence

The process of appreciation made the Americans demonstrably cautious in implementing a deterrence strategy against China in Vietnam. On the surface, there were enough similarities between the Korean War and Vietnam for the U.S. to have considered implementing a deterrence strategy in the latter. As in Korea, the U.S. was opposed to a Communist-led occupation of a divided country, and opposed to concurrent Communist plans to acquire by force the country’s southern half. As in Korea, the U.S. was concerned about expanding Communist influence in Asia. However, there was no political momentum in Washington for unifying the two Vietnams and any proposals calling for an invasion of the North were rejected. In Korea, the movement of United Nations troops across the 38th Parallel was preceded by American deterrence threats issued to China to prevent Beijing’s intervention. A similar application of Washington’s Korean War-era strategy in Vietnam would have

637 The Pentagon Papers (Volume 3), p 354, quotation of column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak
638 Gibbons, The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War, p 194
639 Gibbons, The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War, pp 194-195fn76
encompassed an invasion of North Vietnam (the southern part at least) and the issuing of a deterrence threat to China to prevent Beijing’s intervention in the war. Such a deterrence threat would have been akin to former President Dwight Eisenhower’s suggestion that President Johnson warn the Chinese to take care ‘lest dire results occur.’

However, the process of appreciation led Washington to shun the use of a deterrence strategy altogether. Since the Americans were uncertain about the extent of possible Chinese intervention in Vietnam (i.e. they appreciated their knowledge of China’s goals), they certainly did not intend to provoke the very intervention itself by implementing a deterrence strategy. This led Washington to implement reassurance, seeking to communicate to China that while the American goal was the preservation of the integrity of South Vietnam, Washington had no concurrent plan of driving Americans troops northward as per Korea. Washington restricted its actions against North Vietnam so that China would not find a basis to escalate its military deployments in Vietnam as per Korea. In his memoirs, Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East Dean Rusk said that concerns about the possibility of Chinese intervention led to an American policy of gradual response, which meant that ‘at no time’ did the U.S. present Beijing and Moscow with a major change in the war that forced them to decide whether or not to intervene. Some critics have argued that gradual escalation undermined the U.S. campaign in Vietnam. A Korea-style deterrence posture in Vietnam would have preceded an invasion of the southern part of North Vietnam. This would have cut off North Vietnam’s supply routes to the south and enabled the U.S. to prosecute the war on its own terms. Summers, for example, argues that America’s fear of war with China protected North Vietnam from invasion ‘more surely than any instrument of war Hanoi could have fielded.’

640 Johnson, The Vantage Point, p 131
641 Rusk, As I Saw It, pp 456-457
643 Summers, On Strategy, pp 94-96
Moving Towards Empathy

The U.S.: Norms and Appreciation

Most of the literature on the Vietnam War paints a consistent picture that the ghost of the Korean War led the Chinese and the Americans to take discrete steps to avoid inadvertent escalation. One of the clearest enunciations of this cause-and-effect relationship comes from Secretary of State Rusk, who said that the general U.S. policy was to avoid giving the Chinese and Soviets a basis for intervention altogether:

'... gradual response helped limit the war in Vietnam. We downplayed the importance of our own military actions for the benefit of the Chinese and the Soviets, not wanting to provoke them into responding ... We watched for potential mobilization of Chinese forces, avoided bombing territory adjacent to China, and tried to avoid threatening the Chinese or leaving our own intentions unclear as had been done by General MacArthur's advance to the Yalu. The possibility of Chinese intervention directly influenced how we fought this war.'

The literature, however, fails to show how the lessons and norms formed from a process of learning and adaptation after the Korean War influenced Chinese and American behaviour. Appreciation, as we have defined, involves the ability to make critical evaluations of one's own knowledge based on past experience. During the Korean War, the Americans did not evaluate critically their knowledge of Chinese goals - that the Chinese would not intervene. At the time, the Americans had little past experience of strategic interaction with the Chinese Communists. By contrast, the Americans were clearly evaluating their knowledge of Chinese goals during the Vietnam War. While they were still unclear about the extent and scope of possible Chinese intervention, they instituted a set of measures to reduce inadvertent escalation.

A key lesson learnt from the Korean War – the possibility of future intervention by the other party – clearly enhanced Washington’s appreciation of its knowledge of China’s goals. This appreciation resulted in the curious anomaly: Washington was not certain that another war with China would eventuate; nonetheless, it took steps to quash any undue speculation about such a scenario. Washington was the sole official source to acknowledge the PLA presence in North Vietnam, with no concurrent confirmation from Beijing or Hanoi. American officials carefully couched their revelations in such a manner as to minimise attention and reaction in congressional and press circles where concern about a Sino-American war was acute. The Johnson Administration had no

Rusk, As I Saw It, pp 456-457
desire to stumble inadvertently into war with China. On 9 April 1965, Chinese MIGs were scrambled to intercept U.S. fighters over Hainan Island. According to Washington, this incident resulted in the downing of a U.S. plane by the Chinese. The engagement demonstrated China’s willingness to risk escalation in response to American overflights. This concern prompted the Joint Chiefs of Staff to issue to the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) key portions of ‘Approved JCS Rules of Engagement, Southeast Asia’ that sharply differentiated China from the rest of the area. The document stated that China’s claimed 12-mile territorial limit at sea ‘shall be observed’ and that ‘no pursuit is authorized into territorial sea or air space of Communist China,’ even though it sanctioned hot pursuit elsewhere. This sought to prevent future Hainan-type engagements, whether inadvertent or not. On 12 April 1966, Beijing announced the downing of another U.S. plane; Washington confirmed it. CINCPAC restrictions on U.S. air activities over North Vietnam underscored the Chinese problem. The JCS laid out further restrictions on American air activities: (a) air attacks were not authorized 30 nautical miles below the Sino-Vietnam border (b) no flight paths for conducting strikes were to occur less than 20 nautical miles of the border and (c) aircraft in immediate pursuit can enter restricted target areas but must stop at the Sino-Vietnam border.

The incremental pressing by U.S. forces against the Chinese border area marginally raised the risk of larger engagements, but the prohibition against hot pursuit by U.S. forces prevented the dangerous repercussions that could have resulted from a U.S. attack on Chinese bases, including the likelihood of a major expansion of the war.

A shared norm formed after the Korean War – that of limiting the fighting to physical boundaries – enhanced appreciation during the Vietnam War. Again, the U.S. critically evaluated its knowledge of Chinese goals; being uncertain of the likelihood, scope, and extent of Chinese intervention, the U.S. sought to limit the scope of hostilities itself. The compounded effect of such appreciation led American officials to

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646 JCS message to CINCPAC, 009294/170122Z April 1965, from Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, personal files of Robert McNamara on deposit with the National Security Archive, Washington D.C., cited in Whiting, ‘U.S. Crisis Management vis-à-vis China,’ p 238
648 Whiting, ‘U.S. Crisis Management vis-à-vis China,’ p 242
place explicit restrictions upon the American bombing campaign against North Vietnam. For example, American air attacks were initially limited to the 17th Parallel. This was expanded in April and May 1965 to the 20th Parallel and then the 21st Parallel.\(^4\)

During the Korean War, the boundary was the 38th Parallel. During the Vietnam War, the established boundary for ground combat was the 17th Parallel separating North Vietnam from South Vietnam. All American discussions about a potential invasion of the southern part of North Vietnam in late 1965 would have entailed the deployment of U.S. troops north across the 17th parallel which marked the border between North and South Vietnam. In December 1965, Rusk circulated Ambassador Sullivan’s proposal for such an invasion to various American embassies in several countries. According to Sullivan, the personnel at the diplomatic posts were ‘moved by our Korean experience and expressed the conviction that China would send forces into North Vietnam if U.S. forces landed in Vinh.’\(^5\) From his intelligence post in Hong Kong, Edmund Rice reported that he and his colleagues had spoken to Sullivan. Rice noted that out of the seven political officers and three military liaison officers at the meeting, all three members of the former and two of the latter thought that an invasion would invite a major Chinese military reaction.\(^6\) While the Korean analogy was not explicitly used, its influence among the officers surveyed is obvious. Edwin O. Reischauer, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan and a Far Eastern specialist on leave from Harvard, said that a landing at Vinh would entail ‘unacceptable risks.’ He wrote:

> As we learned from the Korean War, the Chinese are extremely sensitive to actions in their immediate border areas, and I believe U.S. ground operations anywhere in North Vietnam would probably trigger a Chicomm response of the sort we are trying to avoid.\(^7\)

6.4 China’s Deterrence of the U.S.

During the Vietnam War, China’s knowledge of American goals suggested that the U.S. could carry out a direct attack on Vietnam or possibly China itself. This in

\(^4\) Whiting, The Chinese Calculus, p 181
itself was not very different from China’s knowledge of American goals during the Korean War. Then, China’s knowledge of American goals suggested that the U.S. would attack it on three fronts – from Indochina, Vietnam and Taiwan. A marked difference, however, was that China was less confident about its knowledge of U.S. goals in Vietnam than in Korea (i.e. China appreciated this knowledge).

6.4.1 Knowledge of U.S. Conceptual Framework

Like their American counterparts, fear of another Korean War dominated the decision-making of Chinese leaders who were aware of the risks of a potential U.S. invasion of North Vietnam and possibly of China. While the primary literature on Chinese decision-making during the Vietnam War is relatively limited, it is clear from the secondary literature that Chinese leaders felt that the Americans were expanding their campaign in Vietnam and that it could possibly extend into China itself. In October 1964, Mao stressed that China must be ready for a large, possibly nuclear war. American escalation in Vietnam was viewed as a prelude to such a war. Mao even envisioned a joint Soviet-American attack on China. As China reeled from the deleterious effects of its Great Leap Forward campaign in that year, Mao initiated the costly ‘Third Front’ development programme, which sought to increase industrial production in the interior regions of China. The timing of the decision to begin the Third Front shows that it was triggered by the American escalation of the war in Vietnam at the time. The Third Front was a major action aimed at providing China an alternate base of production in the event of an attack on coastal urban centres. The project had a strong military orientation and was directly triggered by the U.S. escalation of the war in Vietnam. China’s knowledge of American goals suggested that the U.S. could seek to escalate its war in Vietnam and thus put China at risk of invasion and war with the U.S. was not incorrect, given American considerations at the time. As described earlier, Rostow and Sullivan tabled proposals – later rejected – that would involve air attacks and a limited invasion of North Vietnam. Writing in 1965,

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Hans Morgenthau warned that an American war with China was possible, and that the American position in Vietnam might even lead the U.S. to initiate it.\textsuperscript{656}

On the one hand, the three deterrence failures that China suffered between 1964 and 1965 contributed to China’s knowledge of American goals at the time. These failures indicated that Washington would escalate its operations in Vietnam despite clear deterrence threats issued by Beijing. All three warnings failed to deter the United States.\textsuperscript{657} In July 1964, an official Chinese statement warned the U.S. that the ‘Chinese people would not sit idly by while the United States extends its war of aggression in Vietnam and Indochina.’\textsuperscript{658} Disregarding Beijing’s warnings, President Johnson sent American bombers to attack six Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) naval bases and associated facilities on August 5. This inflicted heavy damage in what was expressly identified as a retaliatory raid in response to two separate DRV attacks on American warships in early August 1964.\textsuperscript{659} In early 1965, the Chinese issued a second deterrence threat, saying that Beijing would ‘not stand idly by’ while the DRV was attacked. Likewise, the threat failed to stop the U.S. from unleashing a three-year air bombing campaign over North Vietnam. American air forces dropped a bigger tonnage of bombs on North Vietnam than that dropped on Japan during the course of the Second World War. On 1 June 1965, a People’s Daily columnist warned that China would take ‘every additional measure’ if the U.S. continued to send large numbers of reinforcements to South Vietnam, expand its air raids in the North and threaten China’s security. This third deterrence threat, however, failed to stop the American deployment of more troops in Vietnam, which had started in March 1965. Whiting argues that

\textsuperscript{656} Hans J. Morgenthau, ‘War with China?’ \textit{Survival} 7(4), July 1965, pp 155-159

\textsuperscript{657} The details of the three deterrence failures are taken from Whiting, \textit{The Calculus of Deterrence}, pp 173-186


China’s deterrence posture in North Vietnam was a ‘prominent failure’ since it had, in particular, failed to prevent the prolonged and massive bombing of North Vietnam.

6.4.2 Chinese Appreciation of U.S. Conceptual Framework

On the other hand, while Chinese leaders’ knowledge of American goals suggested that Washington could escalate its operations in Vietnam, they appreciated this knowledge. The Chinese knew that some form of escalation by the Americans was possible – but due to appreciation of their knowledge of U.S. goals, they were not certain as to the pace, scope or extent of such escalation. Following the American bombings of North Vietnamese facilities in August 1964, the Americans discontinued bombing the North and carried out no significant escalation. This led the Chinese to adopt a less alarmist view of American fighting in Vietnam. Some leaders were even prepared to advocate serious negotiations with the Americans. However, the rejections of these and other Chinese offers by the Johnson Administration in late 1964 and early 1965 led the Chinese to adopt a new view which was later confirmed by the February 1965 bombings of the North. The question at the time became one of how far American escalation could be limited and curtailed. Chinese policymakers did anticipate a qualitative and quantitative change in American escalation, as manifested by the incremental increase in ground forces in South Vietnam in the spring of 1965. Because the U.S. did not announce clear limits to its escalation, Chinese policymakers had a valid reason for being uncertain over how fast and far Washington intended to go.

Appreciation caused the Chinese to become relatively less confident in their knowledge of U.S. goals. Given the uncertainty about this knowledge, they sought to prepare for the worst contingencies – Chinese policymakers refused to believe that an unprovoked major offensive against China was impossible. The antipathy of the U.S. towards China was assumed, and Chinese policymakers – wrongly, but not illogically – believed that Washington would act to destroy the PRC if it were given the opportunity. Walton argues that the Chinese error was to ‘misunderstand fundamentally’ the

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660 Whiting, *The Calculus of Deterrence*, p 181
661 Michael Yahuda, ‘Kremlinology and the Chinese Strategic Debate,’ *The China Quarterly* No. 49, January-March 1972, p. 51
662 Yahuda, ‘Kremlinology and the Chinese Strategic Debate,’ p 51
663 Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus*, pp 185
Moving Towards Empathy

attitudes of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and the general political culture of the U.S. The Chinese failed to perceive the level of caution within the Johnson Administration concerning escalation. But as they appreciated their knowledge of U.S. goals, they decided to 'play it safe' by assuming a worst-case scenario.

6.4.2.1 China: Appreciation and Policy Impacts in Vietnam

The process of appreciation led China to implement two key policies in the Vietnam War. Firstly, appreciation enabled the Chinese to see that America's motivation to achieve its goals in Vietnam could lead the U.S. to escalate its military operations in Vietnam. To forestall such a possibility, the Chinese implemented a combined strategy of deterrence and reassurance. Secondly, China's appreciation of its knowledge of American escalation was based on lessons and norms from the Korean War.

Appreciation and Choices Regarding Deterrence

The Chinese were unsure as to the pace and scope of such escalation in Vietnam. However, a combined strategy of deterrence-reassurance sought to ascertain the ambiguities associated with China's knowledge of U.S. goals. In this sense, China's deterrence was a 'partial success in determining both the pace and limits of escalation' against North Vietnam. Such a deterrence-reassurance strategy also served to keep the escalatory potential of American actions limited.

In Korea, China suffered failures in two deterrence attempts. In October 1950, U.N forces crossed the 38th Parallel, and in November 1950, U.S. forces led by General MacArthur headed northward towards the Yalu River. In both instances, the Chinese promptly executed their deterrence threats. In Vietnam, the Chinese suffered three deterrence failures between August 1964 and March 1965. However, they did not act upon the deterrence threats. Increased appreciation at the time caused China to be aware of the risks of inadvertent escalation. Speaking to Albanian politicians in May 1965, Zhou En Lai noted that the U.S. had not made up its mind whether to expand the war to China. Nevertheless, Zhou said the Chinese people had to be well-prepared because war had its own laws of development. Zhou's remarks indicated that he was familiar with a common pattern in warfare: how wars could erupt due to

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miscalculations rather than through deliberate planning. Overall, Beijing was willing to suffer the three deterrence failures between August 1964 and May 1965, so long as the territory of the mainland itself was not threatened.

Given its uncertainty over the pace and limits of U.S. escalation, Beijing sought to co-opt Washington into a grand bargain to proscribe American escalation. Beijing offered Washington an implicit deal – if the Americans did not expand the war in Vietnam into China, China would not intervene in Vietnam in strength. China sought to impress upon Washington that it would only act upon its ultimate deterrence threat – seeking to deter an American expansion of the war into China by intervening directly in Vietnam – if the Americans staged an invasion of China itself. According to the evidence, China left the choice to escalate in the hands of the Americans. At a Communist Party meeting in July 1964, Chinese Premier Zhou En Lai said that China’s guideline would be to ‘try as much as possible to prevent the war from escalating and at the same time, make proactive preparations for the second possibility (bombing or attacking North Vietnam).’ If the war escalated, Chinese guidance would be ‘if the United States moves, China moves; if the U.S. dispatches troops, China dispatches troops.’ In January 1965, Mao was more explicit. He expressed confidence that Washington would not expand the war to North Vietnam, based on comments of Secretary of State Rusk. From a bilateral perspective, appreciation on both sides influenced Beijing and Washington to enter into a grand bargain on Vietnam. It is widely believed that in talks between the U.S. and Chinese in Warsaw, the two sides had by November 1965 reached a tacit understanding that, so long as U.S. forces did not invade North Vietnam or attack China, China would not directly enter the war in Vietnam.

To ensure the success of this deterrence-reassurance attempt, Mao had to achieve a delicate balance between opposing objectives. On one hand, he sought to

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667 Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, p 144
670 Zhai, *China and The Vietnam Wars*, p 143
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avoid the appearance of weakness in the face of the U.S., which would create political problems within China (and, he probably assumed, encourage U.S. aggression). On the other, he wanted to avoid unduly provocative actions that would bring about a war. As in the story of Goldilocks, China sought to achieve a fine balance: its deterrence posture in Vietnam could not be too ‘hot’ so as to provoke unwanted escalation by the Americans; at the same time, the posture could not be ‘too cold’ such as to invite a challenge. It had to be ‘just right’ — such was China’s need to ‘finesse’ its deterrence posture. This led to an overarching theme that was expressed repeatedly: China would engage in hostilities with the U.S. if and only if the Americans started hostilities first — China would seek to avoid direct military confrontation with the U.S. as long as possible; but if necessary, it would not shirk from it. But Chinese leaders did not want Washington to feel free about expanding military operations into the North, let alone to bring the war to China. In messages conveyed to the U.S. through various channels, China expressed its desire to avoid a war with the U.S. on one hand and showed its readiness for war on the other. On 9 January 1965, Mao told American writer Edgar Snow:

We are not going to start the war from our side; only when the United States attacks shall we fight back. History will be our witness .... The United States may decide by itself whether to send troops to China. But I don’t think it will gain anything from fighting with us. If the United States thinks the same way, it probably won’t come. As I’ve already said, please rest assured that we won’t attack the United States.

In effect, the fine balance China sought to achieve in its deterrence-reassurance attempt transferred the burden of decision to the Americans. By doing so, the Chinese eventually reduced the uncertainty of its knowledge of U.S. goals, thanks to the tacit understanding arrived at in Warsaw in November 1965. This logic parallels Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s threat to the Americans in Berlin: ‘you (the Americans) are the ones that have to cross the frontier’ into war with the Soviet Union. In 1958, Dean Acheson argued in Power and Diplomacy that a U.S.-assisted defence of Western

675 Schelling, Arms and Influence, pp 45-46
Europe would pass the burden of decision to the Soviets. By making the decision to attack Western Europe, the Soviets would have to be determined to ‘run all risks and force matters to a final showdown, including … a nuclear attack.’

**China: Norms and Appreciation**

A lesson the Chinese learnt from the Korean War – the likelihood of intervention by the other party – led China to reduce the possibility of inadvertent escalation inherent in its military deployments. China did little to publicise the presence of its troops in North Vietnam. In early 1964, Hanoi discussed a hypothetical ‘invasion’ of the North by American ground forces and the related consequence – that the U.S. ‘would have to cope not only with North Vietnam, but also with China.’ But the Chinese omitted this key passage in their own media reports. Whiting states that China’s deployment occurred in a manner so as to appear ‘credible without appearing provocative by publicly confronting the United States.’ His comments capture the essence of Chinese deterrence strategy at the time, and are worth quoting at length:

In 1964-1965 … Chinese airfield construction, fighter movements, and joint air defense preparations with North Vietnam were all conducted outside the public spotlight and at a time when the United States had not yet decided upon, much less initiated, its full escalatory design. This minimized the chance of sensed embarrassment, challenge or provocation which would force the very response which deterrence sought to avoid. The timing and nature of the signals found the United States able and willing to adapt its policy, at least partially, to accord with PRC deterrence objectives. After the (U.S.) bombing (of North Vietnam) began, PLA reactions and Peking’s public handling of them continued to avoid too overt a challenge, while at the same time persisting in the attempt to influence the pattern of future air strikes. Washington remained willing to restrain its attacks on Hanoi, the Red River dikes, and the border zone.

A shared norm formed after the Korea War – setting limits to war along a physical boundary – also affected Chinese decision-making during the Vietnam War. By setting clear limits to its military activities in Vietnam, China sought to reduce the

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679 Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus*, pp 186, 221
uncertainty associated with its knowledge of U.S. goals. Beijing also hoped that such restrictions imposed on Chinese military activities in North Vietnam would prompt the Americans to reciprocate. In the air, Beijing drew a redline across the Sino-Vietnamese border. As described earlier, Beijing’s leaders reneged on their prior commitment to provide air cover over North Vietnam in June 1965, despite extensive preparations. This triggered howls of protests from their Vietnamese counterparts. Luu Doan Huynh said the change in Chinese policy was due to the ‘compromise’ between Beijing and Washington, whereby both sought to avoid another war. Beijing also carefully controlled air combat so as to warn against intrusion without engaging in systematic combat. The PLA Air Force varied its responses to American overflights. It engaged passive radar lock-on and noncombat sorties that allowed for U.S. pilot error, but reacted aggressively on occasion to warn against repeated entry of Chinese air space. Beijing did not publicise these engagements until after the war, when it claimed to have shot down twelve U.S. planes and damaged four more, with some 2,138 combat sorties reported in Guangxi Province alone. On the ground, China set the ‘red line’ for sending troops along the 17th Parallel. Beijing sent strong deterrence warnings when U.S. forces advanced towards the parallel. In Beijing’s view, the 17th Parallel – like the 38th Parallel during the Korean War – determined a safe distance for avoiding direct confrontation with the U.S.

### 6.5 Learning and Adaptation

The level of appreciation inherent in their strategic interaction between 1964 and 1968 led to a distinct change in the tenor of Sino-U.S. relationship. This does not mean that the subsequent rapprochement in the early 1970s was due solely to the increased level of mutual appreciation and their strategic interaction in Vietnam. Other factors were involved. By the late 1960s, Sino-Soviet relations had deteriorated to such a low point as to prompt an outright border clash; Chinese society faced the risk of civil war and economic collapse after the Cultural Revolution. In addition, the U.S. started to appraise the merits behind recognising the regime in Beijing.

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680 Cited in Whiting, ‘China’s Role in the Vietnam War,’ pp 73
681 Whiting, ‘China’s Use of Force,’ pp 116
682 Zhang, ‘China’s Role in the Korean and Vietnam Wars,’ pp 208
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Deterrence Choices in The Vietnam War, 1964-1968

This examination of Sino-American interaction during the Vietnam War suggests that the lesson and norm formed after the Korean War – fear of future intervention and limitation of hostilities along physical boundaries respectively – enhanced appreciation on both sides during the Vietnam War. In turn, this increased appreciation led to the formation of another lesson and norm during the Vietnam War. Both sides learnt to refashion their image of the other, leading to eventual rapprochement in the 1970s. The shared norm involved a joint attempt to limit the scope of potential conflict in Vietnam. As in Korea, the lesson and norm formed after the Vietnam War improved appreciation between China and the U.S in the 1970s and 1980s.

6.5.1 Shared Norm: Limiting Scope of Potential Conflict

By 1968, both the U.S. and China had reached a point where they both agreed to limit the scope of the conflict. This shared norm was an evolution from a shared norm formed during the Korean War – limitation of conflict along a physical boundary. In turn, the shared norm formed during the Vietnam War established the basis for higher levels of appreciation of the knowledge of each other's goals.

In Vietnam, the limitation of conflict was less a process of open declaration than an unspoken _quid pro quo_ that eventually ensued. The basis for this was already set in 1965-66. When major American ground deployments raised the possibility of an invasion of North Vietnam, Chinese restraint in revealing its counterdeployment in North Vietnam allowed Washington to 'keep silent' or to define the situation in any way it chose rather than respond to a direct open challenge. Some scholars note how signs of such a _quid pro quo_ had grown even stronger by the late 1960s. Walton argues that an 'unspoken agreement' regarding U.S. activity in Indochina was developed between Washington and Beijing. Nixon eventually went beyond these limits, but by that time there was a relatively high degree of trust between the two countries and the U.S. withdrawal from Indochina was clearly imminent. A Defense Intelligence Agency document published in 1972 notes that by 1968, China had begun to perceive that the U.S. had imposed strict limitations on the conduct of its war in Vietnam:

683 Whiting, The Chinese Calculus, pp 221
Of special importance, however, was the knowledge that at no time during the period before the bombing of North Vietnam ended in 1968, had the U.S. made any threat to attack China. While this would not mean that the Chinese could totally discount a U.S. threat and more particularly a nuclear attack, they certainly must have perceived that the U.S. had explicitly sought to avoid a direct confrontation with the PRC. It is, therefore, possible to deduce that the Chinese could, with some sense of relief, turn their attention to the developing threat along the Sino-Soviet border.  

Similarly, Zhang states that both China and the U.S. were able – through their military postures – to arrive at a ‘tacit understanding’ regarding their intentions. This in itself was a circumstance forced upon both parties through the lessons of both the Korean War and Vietnam War. He writes:

‘... because of the experiences during the Korean War and in the process of the escalation of the Vietnam War, both sides exchanged information effectively by means of public declarations, private messages and battlefield postures. Both sides learned to distinguish bluff from realistic threats, and each understood the range and limits of operations of the opponent. China knew to what extent the United States was involved in the war, and the United States was also aware of how much aid China would provide to Vietnam. One could say that the two sides established initial trust during the confrontation.’

6.5.2 Lesson Learnt: Changed Images and a Basis for Cooperation

Between 1964 and 1968, the process of appreciation enabled the U.S. and China to evaluate critically their knowledge of each other’s goals. By the late 1960s, this led to a lesson learnt – both sides refashioned the image of the other that eventually paved the way for rapprochement. This mutual lesson was itself an evolution from a lesson learnt during the Korean War – fear of intervention by the other party.

As early as 1966, increased appreciation enabled the U.S. to change its image of China significantly. The lessened risk of Chinese intervention in Vietnam and the subsequent reduction in Sino-American tensions led to the assessment in Washington that China was somewhat pragmatic and cautious. William Bundy said in February 1966 that Chinese leaders had not sought ‘a confrontation of military power with us, and in any situation that would be likely to lead to a wider conflict they are tactically


686 Zhang Baijia, ‘China’s Role in the Korean and Vietnam Wars,’ pp 205-207
This prepared the ground for President Johnson’s announcement a few months later of a set of concrete conciliatory gestures towards China. The policy of ‘containment without isolation’ was beginning to take shape. Foot argues that an important shift in U.S. perceptions of China then took place, despite the inauspicious circumstances of the Cultural Revolution and the prosecution of the Vietnam War. By 1967, the Johnson Administration, in particular Secretary of State Dean Rusk, was seeking a policy that sought to contain China but at the same time draw it into the community of nations. In October 1967, Rusk told a New York Times correspondent that ‘within the next decade or two, there will be a billion Chinese on the mainland, armed with nuclear weapons, with no certainty about what their attitude towards the rest of Asia would be.’ In his last major statement on China in January 1968, however, Rusk admitted that China was not the ‘real enemy’ in Vietnam, but that it still mattered that China was an advocate of the violent overthrow of constituted governments. A few months earlier, Richard Nixon – then a presidential candidate – had written in Foreign Affairs that the U.S. could not ‘afford to leave China outside the family of nations.’ Nixon said Washington could play a leading role in reintegrating China as a ‘great and progressing nation.’ The January Tet Offensive in 1968 only served to support the nuanced change in American perceptions of China. The subsequent decision by the Pentagon to achieve war aims that were less ambitious in their overall design meant that the Chinese dimension in Vietnam was given less prominence. Mao himself provided corroborating signals by stressing that the Tet Offensive underscored the effectiveness of a ‘people’s war’ and that ‘international socialist intervention.’ This meant that Chinese intervention in Vietnam had become largely unnecessary.

Foot, The Practice of Power, pp 160-161
Foot, The Practice of Power, pp 160-161
Edmund Stillman. ‘The Political Issues: Facts and Fantasies,’ in Frank E. Armbruster, Herman Kahn, et al., Can We Win in Vietnam?, London: Pall Mall Press, 1968, p 130, cited in Foot, The Practice of Power, p 161. In his memoirs, Rusk said a somewhat different quote on China got him into trouble with the press, which alluded to his comment on China as being racist: ‘One, we face the prospect of a billion Chinese, two, they’ll be armed with nuclear weapons, and three, no one knows what their policy is going to be twenty years from now,’ See Rusk, Rusk, As I Saw It, p 290
By the late 1960s and early 1970s, increased appreciation enabled China to change significantly its images of the United States. In late 1968, Beijing’s top leaders, such as Mao and Zhou En Lai in particular, began to reconsider the role that the U.S. could play in China’s security needs, particularly as China perceived the Soviet Union – and not the U.S. – to be China’s greatest enemy.\(^{692}\) The group of Chinese policymakers led by Zhou En Lai which took control of foreign policy around that time favoured rapprochement with the U.S. This group of ‘moderates’ believed that Soviet socialist imperialism posed a great and increasing danger to China. Conversely, Chinese images of America went through a sea-change – U.S. imperialism was seen as rapidly declining and posing little threat to China. They concluded that China should substantially improve its relations with the United States in order to help counter Soviet socialist imperialism and to prevent a possible joint Soviet-U.S. encirclement of China.\(^{693}\) The subsequent actions that China took in Vietnam even led to North Vietnamese allegations that China had ‘betrayed’ Hanoi. For its part, the U.S. sought Chinese assistance in a bid to get Hanoi to make concessions in talks to end the war in Vietnam.\(^{694}\) While China refused to play a direct role in assisting Washington, it tacitly allowed the U.S. to pressure Hanoi. In February 1972, Zhou told visiting American leaders that China would no longer intervene militarily in Vietnam.\(^{695}\) While this was too late to affect American policy in Vietnam, it did indicate Beijing’s tacit acknowledgement of American attempts to coerce Hanoi into accepting a compromise settlement of the Vietnam conflict. In that year, Beijing also made a subdued response to America’s vigorous reaction to Hanoi’s spring offensive (the U.S. mined Haiphong harbour and bombed North Vietnam). Beijing’s improved working relationship with the U.S. stemmed from its changed image of the U.S. – a situation that was facilitated by the changing geopolitical landscape but also by the mutual appreciation that both parties had experienced during the Vietnam War.

### 6.6 Conclusion

Most of the literature on the Korean War examines deterrence failures through the lens of misperception. By comparison, the literature on the Sino-American...
interaction in Vietnam largely focuses on how China and the U.S. sought to avoid provoking a repeat of the Korean War. This chapter provides new insight into the existing literature on both wars through the lens of appreciation in a bilateral relationship, leading to different choices with regard to deterrence over time.

It is well-chronicled in the literature on the Korean War that a slew of misperceptions on both sides led to deterrence failure. As this thesis suggests, knowledge of the goals within an opponent's conceptual frameworks, accompanied by the lack of appreciation (i.e. the ability to evaluate critically such knowledge) led to deterrence failures. This explanation for deterrence failure during the Korean War\(^6\) is relatively straightforward once the logic of appreciation is applied. The ability to evaluate critically one's knowledge is also based on learning from past experience. In the run-up to the Korean War in 1950, the U.S. and China simply did not have any prior learning about their opponent, nor any norms formed in previous encounters, that could serve as bases for appreciation. The U.S. and China had not confronted each other in a previous encounter, much less a setting which involved choices involving deterrence. According to the model of appreciation presented in this thesis, the failures suffered in the Korean War led to the lessons learnt and the formation of norms – fear of future intervention and limitation of conflict to a physical boundary respectively. This enhanced appreciation during the Vietnam War. By then, both China and the U.S. had begun to appreciate their knowledge of their opponent’s goals, such that they were able to take different choices with regard to deterrence in Vietnam.

China's appreciation during the Vietnam War – its critical evaluation of its knowledge of American goals – can be examined using Schelling's interpretation of the adage 'burning bridges' or what he has termed the gambit of 'relinquishing the initiative.' In his classic *Arms and Influence*, Schelling alludes to the 'old business' of burning bridges, whereby a defender burns bridges so that he cannot retreat in the face of an enemy's pursuit. The onus of action is passed from the defender to the enemy, who has to consider what the defender would do if he were 'incapable of anything but

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\(^6\) Chapter 5 argued that the lack of appreciation – and its association with 'unrecognised unreasonableness' – applied more to America's use of deterrence strategy during the Korean War. China's use of a deterrence strategy during that war did not hew to this study's conceptualisation of 'unrecognised unreasonableness.' Instead, China's use of a deterrence strategy was a better – albeit poor - fit to this thesis' conceptualisation of 'recognised unreasonableness.'
resisting’ the enemy. During the Sino–American confrontation in Vietnam, China passed the onus of action to the Americans. In effect, China’s message to the U.S. could be summarised as such: ‘I know that you (U.S) might escalate. I have critically evaluated such knowledge, and as a result am not fully certain or sure about it. I’m passing the buck to you. You decide whether you want to escalate.’ For the Americans, a similar logic applied; while they knew that the Chinese could intervene in Vietnam as they had in the Korean War of 1950, they were not fully certain about such an eventuality. By employing reassurance over deterrence, the Americans – like the Chinese – passed the burden of decision to the Chinese and retained their options with an eye on limiting the chances of provoking the Chinese into a situation of lock-in escalation. At no time did the Americans seek to present the Chinese with a basis for direct intervention in Vietnam.

At this juncture, it is important for the purposes of this study to highlight the progression from states of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ during the Korean War to states of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ seen during the Vietnam War. Essentially, the two wars presented China and the U.S. with the same problem – whether to use deterrence strategies to prevent an opponent from achieving their goals. The key difference in the movement from ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ to ‘recognised unreasonableness’ involves a greater appreciation of one’s knowledge of opposing goals, and a subsequent assessment how such the achievement of such goals cannot be prevented through deterrence strategies, or the use of deterrence strategies alone. In the next case study on the Sino-American confrontation over Taiwan in 1995-96, instances of ‘recognised reasonableness’ – how the process of empathy coupled with appreciation led to a high level of confidence in implementing particular deterrence strategies – will be examined.

697 Schelling, Arms and Influence, p 43
698 Again, this applies more to the U.S. experience than the Chinese one, since Chapter 5 argued that China’s use of a deterrence strategy during the Korean War represented a better – albeit poor – fit to the conceptualisation of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’
The Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-1996 constituted the most significant strategic interaction between the United States and China since their confrontations in the 1950s and 1960s. At the height of the crisis in March 1996, the U.S. deployed the biggest show of naval force since the Vietnam War. This was after China staged a series of naval and air exercises aimed at intimidating Taiwan into backing down from what Beijing perceived to be moves towards independence.\textsuperscript{699} While the current literature on the crisis largely concurs that the U.S. and China used strategies of coercion to achieve their respective goals during the crisis,\textsuperscript{700} none of these studies has highlighted how a confluence in strategic-level interests and goals between the U.S. and China shaped the outcome of the confrontation. In the 1970s, Washington and Beijing normalised relations with the shared - and strategic - interest of containing the Soviet Union. Domestic political concerns in the U.S. and China about Taiwan were subjugated to this strategic interest. After the Soviet Union imploded in the early 1990s, shared strategic interests were centred on the intensification of Sino-American economic relations and more importantly, regional stability. Beginning the 1990s, shared goals (as derived from shared interests) – the ‘One China’ principle and peaceful reunification – did not change from their original conception in the 1970s. This strategic context set the backdrop for the 1995-1996 crisis over Taiwan, which was caused by implicit differences in the Sino-American relationship.

As outlined in Chapter 4, in instances of ‘recognised reasonableness,’ three processes are present: ‘knowledge’ of an opponent’s goals, ‘appreciation’ of such knowledge and ‘empathy.’ Empathy involves a potential deterrer being able to ‘take’ the perspective of his deterree, conveying such understanding to the deterree and coordination, which involves enabling the deterree to come to terms with an outcome


or goal desired by the deterrer. In this case study of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, it will be argued that all three processes were present. America’s knowledge was that China did not plan to escalate military exercises into the use of force against Taiwan. However, Washington was not certain of this prospect – it had appreciated this knowledge and as a result decided to conduct deterrence diplomacy to prevent China from escalating its military activity beyond unacceptable levels. To this end, empathy on the part of the Americans enabled them to take the perspective of the Chinese and fashion a deterrence strategy that was largely successful.

The same three processes apply to the Chinese use of coercive diplomacy, and in particular, compellence, during the crisis. China’s knowledge was that the U.S. upheld the essence of a series of bilateral communiqués on Taiwan signed in the 1970s. However, the Chinese appreciated such knowledge; to that end, they were not certain that the Americans would uphold the communiqués during the crisis. As a result, they decided to implement compellence to prevent the Americans from moving too far away from the spirit of the 1970s communiqués (essentially, that Taiwan was part of ‘One China’ and would have peaceful reunification with the mainland eventually). Empathy on the part of the Chinese – taking the perspective of the Americans – also helped them to design a coercive strategy that was successful. Chapter 4 also made the distinction between incomplete empathy and total empathy. When incomplete empathy is present, both sides have shared goals, but there are some implicit and unsettled differences. During a crisis, these differences amplify the effects of opposing goals, which necessitate the use of coercive strategies. The existence of the shared goals, however, lightens the burden placed on deterrence strategies and enhances the possibility of success. During the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, the burdens placed on China and the U.S.’ respective coercive strategies were not onerous because they had two shared goals (albeit with implicit differences): ‘One China’ and ‘peaceful reunification’.

This third case study is structured as follows: the first section will detail the shared strategic interests that led to Sino-American rapprochement in the 1970s. The second section will describe the three processes that led both sides to recognise the other as ‘reasonable’ (i.e. recognised reasonableness) – knowledge, appreciation and empathy. The third section discusses the shared norm that eventuated after the crisis – deterring Taiwan independence. The conclusion argues that the future stability of the
Sino-American relationship vis-à-vis Taiwan should be interpreted with regard to the growing empathy between the two countries on the issue.

7.1 Background to the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis: 1970s to Early 1990s

The desire to envision their relationship in broad and strategic terms has marked Sino-American relations since the rapprochement of the 1970s: This became more apparent during the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crises. Suettinger describes how Kissinger advised President Clinton in July 1995 about the importance of basing Sino-American relations on strategic terms:

Kissinger provided a channel for private communications, as he had in the past. He met Clinton and repeated his public criticisms of allowing domestic political concerns to overwhelm strategic considerations in developing China policy. He advised strongly that the president should engage with the Chinese in 'strategic' terms. ‘Even if you don’t believe in it,’ he advised Clinton, ‘you should speak to them in the language of strategic dialogue. They expect it.’

Kissinger was alluding to the confluence in the strategic interests of the U.S. and China that led to strategic-level rapprochement in the early 1970s. Both Washington and Beijing perceived a common need for a Sino-American front against the common threat of the Soviet Union. In addition, the U.S. wanted China to help end the war in Vietnam, thereby creating ‘peace and stability in Asia’ that would allow American withdrawal from Vietnam to occur. Plagued by years of internal turmoil during the Cultural Revolution, China also wanted to diminish its role as midwife to international revolution; likewise, the U.S. wanted to curb its involvement in counter-revolution. Such strategic considerations enabled the U.S. and China to stomach various concessions with regard to the settlement of the Taiwan issue in the early 1970s – be it Washington’s recognition of the overarching ‘One China’ principle, or Beijing permitting Washington to reaffirm its desire for a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. For the next 20 years, there were persistent tensions between such strategic interests and domestic political concerns. Nonetheless, the strategic considerations set in place by U.S. President Richard Nixon, his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and their Chinese counterparts Mao Zedong and Zhou En Lai held firm.

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701 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 231
703 Garson, The United States and China Since 1949, p 123
Successive U.S. administrations built upon the China edifice that Nixon and Kissinger had built and rarely challenged the fundamentals of that policy or re-evaluated its underlying assumptions. Nixon and Kissinger’s new method of balancing relations with the Soviet Union and China became a new dogma, replacing the old one that had guided America’s conduct towards China in the 1950s and 1960s.

Kissinger had a sophisticated understanding of the association between rapprochement with China and containment of the Soviet Union. While Kissinger sought containment as a goal, his chief objective was a ‘global equilibrium,’ by which he meant a stable balance of power involving the three major powers. Kissinger based this on what he called the ‘geopolitical’ tradition that ‘pays attention to the requirements of equilibrium.’ Under Kissinger’s interpretation of what he termed ‘triangular politics,’ improved Sino-American relations would give Moscow a stake in better relations with the U.S. Moreover, historical experience suggested that it would be more advantageous to align oneself with the weaker of two antagonistic partners to restrain the stronger. As Bull notes:

The supreme application of the ‘geopolitical’ perspective was the so-called ‘triangular diplomacy’ which, by providing the United States with closer links with the Soviet Union and China than the two Communist powers had with one another, augmented Washington’s strategic position in the world even at a time when, in terms of intrinsic strength and will, it appeared to be in decline.

Paradoxically, it was through this global equilibrium, and the process of giving each Communist power a stake in better relations with Washington, that Kissinger pursued containment. Global equilibrium would lead to détente, and sustain both American power and containment of the Soviet Union. Paradoxically, détente and containment of the Soviet Union, in turn, were based on a ‘foundation of Cold War

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706 Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp 55, 914
707 Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp 177-179, 191-192
mistrust' towards the Soviet Union that would simultaneously draw Nixon and Kissinger toward Beijing. Following the Nixon Administration's first contact with the Chinese leadership in July 1971, the next two decades were marked by the fact that 'important international decisions' made in Moscow, Beijing and Washington would have to factor in the consequences of the decision on all three.

Kissinger's view was bolstered by the fact that in the early 1970s, the U.S. faced various international challenges. There were extensive fears that Soviet advances in intercontinental ballistic missiles would erode the survivability of U.S. land-based missiles. In Indochina, Washington was worried not only about losing the war but also about dwindling support at home. Also troubling were Soviet attempts to secure advantages elsewhere in the Third World. Chinese leaders also came to view the normalisation of diplomatic relations with the U.S. through the same strategic prism as that of Kissinger and Nixon. Zhou believed that deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union necessitated an alignment with the U.S., since Beijing could not afford to be pressed on two fronts. To Chinese leaders like Zhou, the Soviet threat was more immediate. The Brezhnev Doctrine had undergirded the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This triggered fears in Beijing that it would be the next victim of such 'socialist-imperialism.' In the following year, China and the Soviet Union fought in several border skirmishes, while the Chinese also noted that Moscow was undermining Beijing's influence by supporting India in the Sino-India conflict. In addition, Chinese leaders were concerned that in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the U.S. would no longer contain Soviet power in Asia. They suspected that in order to guarantee stability in Europe, the U.S. would reach an understanding with the Soviet Union such that it would be content to 'push the ill waters of the Soviet Union ... eastward.'

Although the strategic basis for the Sino-U.S. relationship had changed by the early 1990s, mutual commitment to disallow domestic political concerns from affecting

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710 Burr (ed.), The Kissinger Transcripts, p 27
712 Ross, Negotiating Cooperation, p 15-21
713 Garson, The United States and China, p 120-122
714 Ross, Negotiating Cooperation, p 25
their respective public stances on the Taiwan issue remained steadfast in the run-up to crisis in 1995-1996. Any differences on the Taiwan question, though long-standing and driven by strong domestic political constituencies, were subjugated by precisely these strategic considerations.\textsuperscript{715} In the U.S., domestic political concerns in the 1970s about the ‘selling out’ of a Taiwan that was on the road to becoming a free-market, liberal democracy were generally put aside in favour of strategic relations with China. Prior to his first meeting with Zhou in February 1972, Nixon wrote in his private notes that Taiwan and Vietnam were ‘irritants’ – a turn of phase that indicated his realpolitik considerations. Likewise, Chinese leaders were also drawn to the same new strategic rationale for rapprochement – this despite a nearly visceral and vocal need expressed by the policy-making elite, in particular People’s Liberation Army (PLA) generals, to liberate Taiwan as part of a grand plan to redeem part of China’s chequered history. To Mao, the issue of Taiwan was ‘small,’ since the ‘big issue is the world.’\textsuperscript{716}

The establishment of their rapprochement in strategic terms helped the U.S. and China to make concessions on the Taiwan issue. Intrinsic to this process was incomplete empathy – while China and the U.S. had a complex of shared interests and shared goals there was some disagreement in a series of communiqués signed in the 1970s that would later present problems in their relationship. In other words, there was not enough empathy to prevent completely a future crisis involving Chinese and American goals over Taiwan. This paradox laid the grounds for the Taiwan crisis in 1995 and 1996. In their historic Shanghai Communiqué of February 1972, the U.S. backed down from its long-established principle that the legal status of Taiwan remained ‘undetermined.’\textsuperscript{717} As a result, the U.S. stated in the Communiqué that it would ‘not challenge’ – although not explicitly accept – the proposition that ‘all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.’\textsuperscript{718} The U.S. also affirmed that its ‘ultimate objective’ was the

\textsuperscript{715} Ding Xinghao, ‘The United States and China since 1969,’ in Roberts (ed.), Sino-American Relations Since 1900, p 487


\textsuperscript{717} Harry Harding, A Fragile Relationship: the U.S. and China Since 1972, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1992, p 43. The U.S. stance that Taiwan’s legal status was ‘undetermined’ was held since 1950. See Danny Shiu-Lam Paau, ‘The Case of Taiwan,’ in Roberts (ed.), Sino-American Relations Since 1900, pp 453-454

\textsuperscript{718} See original text of Communiqué in Shirley A. Kan, ‘China/Taiwan: Evolution of the “One China”
withdrawal of American forces and military installations from Taiwan. However, it placed the onus of this withdrawal on China, given that it would be contingent on the reduction of ‘tensions in the area.’ This involved a concession from China, which had previously insisted that the wording in the communiqué be that the U.S. would ‘hope’ for a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question, instead of letting the Americans ‘reaffirm’ their ‘interest’ in a peaceful settlement in the final draft of the 1972 Communiqué. In addition, the U.S. also managed to get China to exclude from the communiqué any demand for the termination of the mutual defense treaty between the U.S. and Taiwan. Washington also won Chinese consent for a reaffirmation of the treaty during a press conference in Shanghai at the conclusion of Nixon’s presidential visit.

The concessions, however, led to a significant amount of ambiguity in the Sino-American quid pro quo on Taiwan. While there was enough empathy to produce formal communiqués in 1972, 1979 and 1982, there were also enough implicit and unwritten differences to create subsequent tensions in their bilateral relationship, particularly on the issue of Taiwan. According to John Holdridge, a staff member for East Asia at the National Security Council under Kissinger, the wording ‘all Chinese’ in the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué was originally formulated as ‘all people.’ However, the State Department had objected to the phrase, because some of the people in Taiwan regarded themselves as ‘Taiwanese’ and did not agree that Taiwan was a part of China. This overly clever sleight of hand was Washington’s tacit acknowledgement of a growing independence-minded political movement in Taiwan – a fact capitalised on by Taiwan President Lee Teng Hui more than 20 years later in 1995.

More importantly, in private discussions with Chinese leaders, Nixon assured Chinese leaders that he accepted the fact that Taiwan was part of China and that he

Policy -- Key Statements from Washington, Beijing, and Taipei,' *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, 9 July 2007, pp. 33-34

Kan, ‘China/ Taiwan: Evolution of the ‘One China Policy,’ pp 34

Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, p 47

Harding, *A Fragile Relationship*, p 44. The treaty was replaced by the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. See Department of State (U.S.), ‘Taiwan Relations Act: Public Law 96-8 96th Congress,’ at [http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive_Index/Taiwan_Relations_Act.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive_Index/Taiwan_Relations_Act.html) [accessed 20 April 2008] (hereafter referred to as Taiwan Relations Act 1979)

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would not support Taiwan independence. These assurances were repeated by successive administrations and by President Bill Clinton in a confidential letter passed to Chinese President Jiang Zemin in August 1995.\(^2\) Again, implicit differences in their shared goals (i.e. incomplete empathy) led to the use of coercive and deterrence strategies by China and the U.S. respectively in 1995 and 1996. Domestic legislation in the U.S. in the form of the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act – which laid the basis for unofficial ties with Taiwan after Washington normalised relations with Beijing – carried the implicit understanding that the U.S. would use force to defend Taiwan. The 1979 Act stated that the U.S. would view with ‘grave concern’ any non-peaceful means to determine Taiwan’s future.\(^3\) This was the legal basis for the U.S.’ use of deterrence diplomacy in early 1996. Such a provision was challenged by the Chinese, who argued that the TRA was unilateral legislation that violated the superior bilateral agreements reached in the run-up to Sino-U.S. normalisation in 1979.\(^4\)

Another nagging difference that was glossed over in the 1970s was that China never renounced its right to use force against Taiwan. While the Chinese allowed the U.S. to affirm its ‘interest’ in the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue in its December 1978 statement on normalising relations with China, Beijing never ruled out the use of force. In its own December 1978 statement accompanying the January 1979 Normalization Communiqué, Beijing stressed that integrating Taiwan with the mainland was ‘entirely China’s internal affair.’\(^5\) It was this context – significant differences in opinion between China and the U.S. on the issue of the use of force against Taiwan – that gave China the legal grounds to issue hawkish statements against Taiwan in the years preceding the 1995-1996 crisis. In December 1992 and March 1993, PRC President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng began to warn of using ‘drastic’ or ‘resolute’ measures to prevent Taiwan independence.\(^6\) In summary, there was incomplete empathy – there was enough empathy on the issue of Taiwan to forge a historical rapprochement, but also significant differences in their views on Taiwan which in 1995-1996 would require the use of strategies of deterrence and coercion.

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\(^2\) Mann, About Face, p 300, Ross, ‘The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,’ p 96
\(^3\) See Taiwan Relations Act 1979
\(^4\) John W. Garver, ‘Arms Sales, the Taiwan Question, and Sino-U.S. Relations,’ Orbis, Winter 1983, pp. 999-1035
\(^5\) John W. Garver, ‘Arms Sales, the Taiwan Question, and Sino-U.S. Relations,’ Orbis, Winter 1983, pp. 999-1035
\(^7\) Kan, ‘China/ Taiwan: Evolution of the One ‘One China Policy,’ p 19
Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the basis for Sino-U.S. relations moved increasingly to the economics realm – a less compelling but more controversial issue.\textsuperscript{728} Trade and commercial relations alone, however, could not provide the glue to cement strategic Sino-American relations. As Shambaugh notes, the Soviet Union presented a target for Sino-American collaboration to work against; without it, both parties lacked a common strategic purpose.\textsuperscript{729} The massacre at Tiananmen Square in June 1989 also stymied relations for several years, leading to a curtailment of strategic dialogue. By the mid-1990s, however, a more important shared interest – regional stability – emerged.\textsuperscript{730} Several years after the collapse of the Soviet leg of Kissinger’s ‘strategic triangle,’ a bipolar structure in East Asia emerged, comprising the U.S. as a maritime power and China as the continental power. According to Ross, such a geographical structure contributed to regional stability and order because it shaped the \textit{a priori} causes of conflict: capabilities, interests, and the security dilemma.\textsuperscript{731} Notwithstanding different views as to how to achieve regional stability, both the U.S. and China shared a common desire for peace and stability in the Asia Pacific.\textsuperscript{732} Chapter 4 showed how goals are derived from countries’ interests. Chinese and American shared interests in economics and regional stability supported two shared goals – the ‘One China’ principle and ‘peaceful reunification’ of Taiwan and the mainland. As stated earlier, such empathy, though strong, was incomplete. This was the main reason behind the outbreak of the Taiwan crisis in 1995.

\textbf{7.2 Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1995-96}

In May 1995, the Clinton Administration approved a visa for Taiwanese president Lee Teng Hui to visit the United States in early June to attend his graduate school reunion at Cornell University. The decision reversed more than 25 years of U.S. diplomatic precedent and challenged Clinton administration public policy statements

\textsuperscript{728} China adhered to a neomercantilist form of economic development, encompassing protection of local markets, an undervalued currency and export incentives, as opposed to American-style laissez-faire economics and free trade. See Harding, \textit{A Fragile Relationship}, pp 13-16, 311

\textsuperscript{729} David Shambaugh, ‘Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors,’ \textit{Survival} 42(1), Spring 2000, p 97


\textsuperscript{732} Shambaugh, ‘Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors’ p 101
and private reassurances to Chinese leaders that such a visit was contrary to U.S. policy. The decision followed a three-year evolution of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. In 1992 the Bush administration, in violation of its pledge in a 1982 U.S.-China arms sales communique to reduce the quantity of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, sold Taiwan 150 F-16 warplanes. In 1994, the Clinton Administration revised upward the protocol rules regarding U.S. 'unofficial' treatment of Taiwan diplomats. These rules had for the most part been in effect since 1981. In 1995, the Administration allowed Lee Teng Hui to visit the United States. From China's perspective, Washington appeared determined to continue revising its Taiwan policy, thus encouraging Taiwan's leaders to move closer toward a declaration of sovereignty from mainland China. Given China's credible forty-five-year commitment to use force in retaliation against Taiwan independence, such a declaration would likely lead to war. During the ten months following Lee's visit to Cornell, the United States and China reopened their difficult negotiations over U.S. policy toward Taiwan. The negotiations reached a climax in March 1996, when China displayed a dramatic show of force consisting of military exercises and missile tests targetted near Taiwan, and the United States responded with an equally dramatic deployment of two carrier battle groups (CBGs).  

Some commentators have argued that the Americans created a bad situation that they could have avoided from the onset. Ross argues that the Sino-American confrontation was 'unnecessary and avoidable,' given that Beijing and Washington essentially restored the 'status quo' that existed before Mr Lee's visit to the U.S. On one hand, there was not enough empathy (that is, the crisis underscored incomplete empathy, in that implicit differences in their shared goals amplified the effects of their opposing goals concerning Taiwan), leading to the outbreak of the crisis. On the other hand, there was enough empathy for both China and the U.S. to attain a mutually acceptable outcome.

It will be argued that the crisis was an instance of 'recognised reasonableness' in which three processes were present — knowledge, appreciation and empathy. In particular, empathy helped both the U.S. and China to take the perspective of the other

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733 This account of the run-up to the 1995-96 crisis borrows heavily from Ross, 'The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,' p 87

734 Niu Jin, 'Chinese Decision Making in the Taiwan Strait,' p 308

735 Ross, 'The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,' p 90
party and fashion a coercive strategy to attain a shared outcome or goal (a return to the status quo on the issue of Taiwan). *Empathy* helped reduce the burden attached to using coercive strategies. In short, both countries’ coercive strategies were both necessary and unnecessary. The crisis had to be used (i.e. necessary) during the crisis because implicit differences in their shared goals – ‘One China’ and ‘peaceful reunification’ – led China and the U.S. to pursue different short-term goals. Beijing wanted to compel America into withdrawing further support for Taiwan’s independence, while the U.S. wanted to deter China from escalating its military exercises against the island. Due to *empathy*, however, such strategies were successful, and as a result their deployment became unnecessary towards the end of the crisis. The presence of *empathy* reduced the burden attached to using the respective coercive strategies.

### 7.3 American Deterrence of China: ‘Recognised Reasonableness’

This section will discuss America’s *knowledge* of China’s goals during the crisis, followed by its *appreciation* of such knowledge. A similar treatment for China’s *knowledge* and *appreciation* will also be offered. In both cases, it will be argued that *appreciation* helped the U.S. and China realise that use of deterrence and compellence strategies were necessary. The next section will discuss American and Chinese *empathy* during the crisis. *Empathy* – defined as ability to take the perspective of an opponent, conveying such understanding to him and coordination – helped them achieve success in their respective coercive strategies.

#### 7.3.1 American Knowledge of China’s Conceptual Framework

Through its communications with the Chinese through the media and various official channels, the Clinton Administration knew that China did not plan any overt use of military force such as a direct invasion of Taiwan, the firing of ballistic missiles at targets on the island or the commencement of direct military confrontation with Taipei. As Scobell notes, Chinese leaders were ‘hawkish’ in that they favoured *displays* of military force and *threats* as core elements of a policy toward Taiwan. But they were not ‘bellicose’ or ‘belligerent.’

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736 Scobell defines a ‘bellicose’ person as someone warlike in mindset-and predisposed to resort to war in most situations. A ‘belligerent’ person has crossed a mental threshold in a particular instance and is ready and eager for battle. See Scobell, ‘Show of Force,’ p 228
The American leaders’ knowledge suggested that the Chinese were predisposed to using such displays and threats of force but that China was likely to stop short of outright war. They had valid reasons to subscribe to such a view – their Chinese counterparts had through various channels assured the U.S. that China did not intend to invade Taiwan. Nonetheless, China had criticised America’s deployment of Nimitz and Independence carrier battle groups in the Strait in March 1996, saying it would ‘bury’ the Americans if conflict broke out. The tough talk, however, was tempered by assurances that China did not want war with Taiwan. General Zhang Wannian, commander of the operation, insisted during the March exercises that the PLA strongly desired peaceful unification over military conquest.\(^{37}\) Writes Scobell:

PLA leaders did not want to fight a war they knew they could not or might not win. Therefore, the generals did not want to attack Taiwan if it could be avoided. No Chinese leader, civil or military, wanted to see a war with Taiwan. This is underlined by signs of substantial flexibility at a high-level meeting on the subject of Taiwan policy attended by all members of the Politburo Standing Committee in Beijing in May 1998; then the first crossstrait summit in five years was held in Beijing in October 1998.\(^{38}\)

Senior Chinese officials told staffers at the American Embassy in Beijing that China would not invade Taiwan. Similarly, senior advisers to the Communist Party leadership made similar assurances in newspaper interviews in March 1996.\(^{39}\) Mr Wang Jisi, a senior policy adviser on China’s relations with the U.S. at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the New York Times that the ‘Chinese Government is being very cautious in applying military means and I don’t think our Government is going to launch a war and try to conquer Taiwan – that is unthinkable.’\(^{40}\) The assurances were repeated as China commenced live ammunition exercises off Taiwan in March 1996. The assurances worked – American officials were convinced that the Chinese military manoeuvres and missile tests were provocative but clearly aimed only


\(^{38}\) Scobell, China’s Use of Military Force, p 183

\(^{39}\) Patrick E. Tyler, ‘China Signaling U.S. That It Will Not Invade Taiwan,’ New York Times, 13 March 1996

\(^{40}\) Tyler, ‘China Signaling U.S. That It Will Not Invade Taiwan’
at intimidating Taiwan. It was a political exercise in coercing Taiwan’s independence movement (and also to get the U.S. to retract support for such a movement).

7.3.2 American Appreciation of China’s Conceptual Framework

In Chapter 4, appreciation was defined as the critical evaluation of one’s knowledge about an opponent’s goals. During the Taiwan Strait crisis, the Americans’ knowledge was that the Chinese did not plan any overt use of force against Taiwan. However, using appreciation of this knowledge, they were not fully certain of the range of Chinese actions below the overt use of force. While the Americans’ knowledge was that the Chinese would try to coerce Taiwan through the threat or display of force, they were not fully certain as to where China would end up in the escalation ladder against Taiwan. Chapter 4 also defined appreciation as the ability to see differences in goals. In their interactions with the Chinese, the Americans also perceived that the Chinese were highly motivated to achieve their goals – preventing Taiwan from declaring de facto independence, and stopping the U.S. from supporting such moves. This motivation could conceivably have led China to use overt force against the Taiwanese, and formed the context that prompted the U.S. to use deterrence diplomacy to prevent the Chinese from escalating their military manoeuvres to levels that could provoke a war. A show of American resolve would help limit the actions that China would have taken up the escalation ladder.

7.3.2.1 Asymmetry of Chinese Motivation over Taiwan

American officials – both bureaucrats and senior political leaders – grasped the importance that Beijing attached to any perceived American tilt away from the quid pro quo on Taiwan. This was what made them appreciate their knowledge that the Chinese would not employ the use of force against the island. Appreciation helped them realise that Chinese moves involving the actual use of force could not be discounted altogether.

As a result, the U.S. deterrence posture had to be handled carefully. According to Suettinger, American contacts in Beijing reinforced the strong view of Chinese anxieties about a Lee Teng Hui visit to the United States, even a private one to his alma

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mater at Cornell University. American officials were aware of opposition in the Chinese government to a Lee visit across all levels of the PRC government. But arguments made by such contacts in Beijing, about how ordinary Americans did not support keeping Mr Lee out of the U.S., and that allowing the visit would not change the fundamentals of the Sino-U.S. relationship, fell on deaf ears in Beijing. The strength of Chinese motivations regarding Taiwan became more evident in May 1995, when Beijing retaliated against the visa decision by suspending talks with the U.S. on the control of missile technology and cooperation on nuclear energy. Beijing also announced that Defence Minister Chi Haotian would not travel to the United States for a mid-June 1995 visit. It also cut short its air force commander's visit to the United States.

The stern tenor of the Chinese message got through to American officials, who in turn responded with ‘conspicuous silence’ when China executed a series of military manoeuvres explicitly aimed at resisting the ‘splittist’ activities of Taiwan’s pro-independence forces in November 1995. The response by American officials was low-key because they realised that the U.S. had contributed to the confrontation with China by failing to keep its previous pledges regarding Taiwan (i.e. not granting President Lee a visa). They did not want to aggravate the situation further by overreacting to China’s subsequent attempts to flex its muscles. They also believed that as the ‘offended party,’ China needed to vent its anger. At a high-level meeting between Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu and American officials in March 1996, Mr Liu told the Americans that the U.S. had ‘hurt the feelings of the Chinese people’ by allowing Mr Lee to visit Cornell. Liu added that the Taiwan problem ‘brooks no foreign interference’ and that the situation was dangerous and could be ‘explosive’ if not handled properly. He rejected American concerns about the military exercises, saying

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742 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, pp 214-215
743 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 215
745 Ross, ‘The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,’ p 104
746 Ross, ‘The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,’ p 104
747 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 253
they were ‘routine exercises.’ Secretary of State Warren Christopher, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and Secretary of Defence William Perry greeted Mr Liu’s ‘routine exercise’ statement with disbelief. Their reaction was not unwarranted; to them, such ‘routine’ exercises were attempts at coercion involving the display and threat of force against Taiwan. Moreover, they were uncertain as to the limits of these exercises.

The asymmetry of motivation between China and the U.S. and American uncertainty over China’s range of actions became starkly clear when Chinese officials warned Charles Freeman – a former Assistant Secretary of Defense – about the possibility of a nuclear exchange between China and the U.S. if the situation in Taiwan was to spin out of control. This was issued at a meeting in Beijing in late 1995, after China announced its decision to execute the March 1996 exercises. It followed an American warning issued by Assistant Secretary of Defence Joseph Nye in mid-November 1995 that the use of force against Taiwan would be a ‘serious mistake.’ In the later meeting with Freeman, Chinese military intelligence officers said that China was planning more missile tests, including maritime closure zones just off Kaoshiung and Keelung – Taiwan’s principal ports. When Freeman said that the test would compel the U.S. to react militarily, the Chinese officers said that the U.S. military would be averse to causalities and would not respond in kind to China’s action in the Strait. More importantly, an unnamed ‘Chinese official’ said that China would act militarily against Taiwan without fear of U.S. intervention because American leaders ‘care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan.’ The statement was interpreted by Freeman as an indirect threat to use nuclear weapons against the U.S. Speaking to participants at a White House meeting chaired by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake in January 1996, Freeman asserted that ‘some in Beijing may be prepared to engage in nuclear blackmail against the U.S. to insure that Americans do not obstruct’ efforts by the People’s Liberation Army ‘to defend the principles of Chinese

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750 *Kyodo News*, “U.S. Warns Against ‘Serious Mistake’ Over Taiwan,” 18 November 1995
751 Interview with Charles Freeman, cited in Suettinger p 246
752 Tyler, ‘As China Threatens Taiwan, It Makes Sure U.S. Listens’
soverignty over Taiwan and Chinese national unity.' The ‘Chinese official’ was presumed to be Xiong Guangkai, a deputy chief of the PLA General Staff, head of China’s military intelligence and a member of the Central Committee Leadership Small Group on Taiwan – a person authoritative enough to make such a threat. The cumulative effect of such Chinese statements led the Americans to appreciate their knowledge about the possible range of Chinese vis-a-vis Taiwan.

7.4 China’s Coercive Diplomacy: ‘Recognised Reasonableness’

Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggested that the U.S. would uphold the communiqués on Taiwan, but appreciation of this knowledge made them less certain about the range of actions that the U.S. might take during the crisis.

7.4.1 China’s Knowledge of U.S. Conceptual Framework

Throughout their interactions during 1995 and 1996, Chinese leaders’ knowledge suggested that the Americans had a strong interest in the agreed status quo in the Taiwan Strait – this was a central principle embedded in their three communiqués signed between 1972 and 1982. Early on in the crisis, the Americans had sought to affirm to the Chinese their desire to maintain the status quo. At an August 1995 meeting in Brunei, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher presented Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen with a confidential letter from President Clinton indicating that the U.S. would resist efforts by Taiwan to gain independence; would not support the creation of ‘two Chinas,’ or one China and a separate Taiwan; and did not support Taiwan’s admission to the United Nations. These were basically the same assurances that American presidents had made since President Nixon visited China in 1972. However, Clinton’s pledges – which were later termed the ‘three noes’ – were deemed more important by China because they had never before been packaged in such fashion. In addition, these assurances were made at a time when Taiwan was about to hold its first presidential election, and in an era where the possibility of Taiwan declaring independence seemed far less remote that it had been in the early 1970s. Clinton’s pledge to oppose Taiwan’s independence seemed to go beyond what had been said previously. Previous administrations had simply said the Washington did not support Taiwan independence, which was a more passive

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753 Tyler, ‘As China Threatens Taiwan, It Makes Sure U.S. Listens’
754 Mann, About Face, p 330
755 Mann, About Face, p 330
The Clinton letter reassured the Chinese that Washington would adhere to the spirit of their communiqués – the ‘one China’ principle and the desire for peaceful reunification.

At that point, the Chinese were still not convinced about American intentions and insisted that Washington honour its words ‘in deeds.’ But the Clinton Administration continued to reassure the Chinese of America’s desire for a peaceful outcome during the crisis. On 14 March 1996 – as China conducted another live ammunition exercise near Taiwan – Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord told a Congressional committee that it was in Washington’s fundamental interest that ‘peace and stability be maintained and that the PRC and Taiwan work out their differences peacefully.’

7.4.2 Chinese Appreciation of U.S. Conceptual Framework

While seeking to reassure the Chinese about their ‘one China’ principle, American officials also sought to warn Beijing about the fragility of the peace in the Taiwan Strait. When queried by the Chinese about possible American actions, however, American officials stuck to their preferred stance of strategic ambiguity – not making it too clear as to what actions America might take over Taiwan in various contingencies – to encourage China’s circumspection. In high-level consultations in Beijing in November 1995, Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye was probed by Chinese officials repeatedly about what the American reaction would be if hostilities were to break out. In the extensive closed-door meeting, Chinese officials signalled their intention to resort to military coercion. PLA officers made it clear to Nye that the PLA was reviving military plans and operational contingencies toward Taiwan that had not been considered since the 1950s. However, Nye and his group refused to discuss ‘contingency planning’, saying only, ‘we stand for peaceful resolution of

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756 Garver, *Face Off*, pp 79-80. In later statements, the word ‘oppose’ was changed to the more neutral stance of ‘not supporting’ Taiwanese independence. See Kan, ‘China/Taiwan: Evolution of the “One China”’, p 56, fn 132


758 Department of State (U.S.), Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Testimony before the House International Relations Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, March 14, 1996, cited in Kan, ‘China/Taiwan: Evolution of the “One China”’, p 56

759 According to Garver, Chinese leaders signalled their intention to employ coercion by probing the possibility of U.S. intervention during the crisis. See Garver, *Face Off*, p 85

760 Garver, *Face Off*, pp 85-86
disputes across the Strait’. Any use of force against Taiwan, Nye announced at a press conference in Beijing, ‘would be a serious mistake’.\(^{761}\) When pressed further about potential American actions, Nye couched his reply in the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act – he told Chinese leaders that ‘we don’t know and you don’t know’ exactly how the U.S. would respond to action against Taiwan.\(^{762}\)

7.4.2.1 The U.S. Had Options on Taiwan

Nye’s measured response led the Chinese to appreciate their knowledge about American goals – that the U.S. upheld the spirit of the 1970s communiqués. Nye’s response constituted what some American officials have termed deliberate ambiguity – an effort to keep either China or Taiwan from taking provocative actions.\(^{763}\) Nye’s comments constituted a close parallel to the TRA, which stated that ‘any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means’ would be considered a ‘grave concern’ to the U.S.\(^{764}\) Three months later in February 1996, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry gave the same answer when asked how the U.S. would react, saying only that the response would ‘depend on the circumstances.’ Said Perry: ‘At this point at least, with the present level of concern but no imminent danger, I don’t believe we will make a statement more definite than that.’\(^{765}\) The Americans’ somewhat ambiguous response made the Chinese appreciate their knowledge about U.S., and as a result made them uncertain about the range of actions that Washington could eventually take in the Taiwan Strait.

7.5 Empathy

The presence of empathy enabled both the U.S. and China to conduct their coercive strategies with a high level of confidence in their success. Chapter 4 defined empathy as a strategic concept with three main factors. First, empathy is the ability of a deterrer to take the perspective of the deterree. Second, empathy involves the conveyance of such understanding to the latter. Third, empathy involves coordination of expectations – in particular, a deterrer can design a goal for the deterree that is


\(^{762}\) R. Jeffrey Smith, ‘China Plans Maneuvers Off Taiwan; Big Military Exercise Is Meant to Intimidate, U.S. Officials,’ 5 February 1996, Washington Post, p A03

\(^{763}\) Smith, ‘China Plans Maneuvers Off Taiwan’

\(^{764}\) See Taiwan Relations Act 1979

\(^{765}\) Associated Press, ‘Perry Voices Concern for Taiwan,’ 7 February 1996
acceptable to both (i.e. a shared goal). As defined in Chapter 4, in instances of incomplete empathy, both deterrer and deterree have over time developed some measure of shared interests and goals. But the empathy is not total or absolute because there are implicit differences in their shared goals. In times of crisis, such implicit differences amplify the effect of opposing goals. As a result, this necessitates the use of coercive strategies. Due to the considerable extent of their empathy, however, coercive strategies have a high probability of success.

During the Taiwan crisis, a situation of incomplete empathy existed. The empathy which existed was based on three factors. Firstly, China and the U.S. had developed a shared norm and lesson after the Vietnam War – the limitation of general hostilities and changed images that led to their historic rapprochement in the 1970s respectively. Secondly, the U.S. and China had, since the 1970s, developed shared goals on the issue of Taiwan – the ‘One China’ principle and peaceful reunification. Lastly, Washington and Beijing had shared interests in regional stability and economic relations. The implicit differences in their shared goals, however, brought unique and different goals into the mix – the U.S. wanted to deter further Chinese escalation against Taiwan, and China wanted to compel the U.S. to stop supporting Taiwanese moves towards independence. Given their broad agreement in terms of goals and interests, the burdens placed on such strategies were not onerous. Moreover, both countries had the ability to take the perspective of the other and convey such understanding to each other. With empathy, both parties could also map out a goal acceptable to their opponent. In the end, the two goals pursued by the U.S. and China were not mutually exclusive. The U.S. managed to deter the Chinese from escalating their military exercises against Taiwan; similarly, the Chinese managed to compel the U.S. to stop showing further support to the island’s moves towards independence. Effectively, the outcome was a shared goal – a return to the status quo based on the principles of ‘One China’ and peaceful reunification.

7.5.1 The Stabilising Value of Empathy

Montaperto and Zhang sum up the intrinsic tension between consensus and confrontation during the crisis:

... both the PRC and the U.S. agree to the One China principle and both worry about the consequences of Taiwan's independence. Both the U.S. and PRC advocate a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question. In
short, there is potential confrontation between the two great powers, but
the potential does not wipe out their mutual intentions of cooperation
and reconciliation.\textsuperscript{66}

Ross argues that there was a ‘firm triangle of military dissuasion at work’
between China, the U.S. and Taiwan that fostered stability in the Taiwan Strait. He
writes:

China is deterred from the use of force against Taiwan so long as
American power and interests are engaged and Taiwan does not declare
independence; Taiwan is deterred from declaring independence due to
credible Chinese threats to use limited but politically significant force in
the face of any such declaration; and the United States is – or ought to
be – dissuaded from tampering with this situation because it enables
Washington to defend Taiwan, deal with China as necessary and prudent
on a range of issues, and minimize the possibility of war through
miscalculation.\textsuperscript{67}

He adds that effective deterrence and mutual interests in stability which both
characterise this triangle are conditions bound to ‘last well into the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century.’\textsuperscript{68}

These comments suggest that there is a complex of shared interests and goals between
China and the U.S. that serve to foster stability in the Taiwan Strait. However, if any
corner of the triangle is compromised – for example, China is not deterred from using
force or Taiwan declares independence – the possibility of confrontation increases. To
sum up, incomplete empathy during the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crises involved
competing forces of dissuasion and dissension. On one hand, forces of dissuasion
involved two shared goals between China and the U.S. – the ‘One China’ principle and
‘peaceful reunification.’ These shared goals enhanced the effects of a norm and lesson
formed after the Vietnam War – limiting the level of general hostilities, and changed
images of the other that led to rapprochement in the 1970s, respectively. \textit{The
cumulative effect of such shared goals, norms and lessons was that empathy was
increased, but not complete.}\textsuperscript{69} On the other, forces of dissension involved opposing
goals: America’s attempt to deter China from further escalation against Taiwan and

\textsuperscript{66} Ronald Montaperto and Ming Zhang, ‘The Taiwan issue: A Test of Sino-U.S. relations,’ \textit{Journal of
Contemporary China} 4(9), 1995, p 10
\textsuperscript{67} Robert S Ross, ‘The Stability of Deterrence in The Taiwan Strait,’ pp 68-69
\textsuperscript{68} Ross, ‘The Stability of Deterrence in The Taiwan Strait,’ p 69
\textsuperscript{69} See Section 6.5, which discussed the formation of norms and lessons learnt after the Sino-American
confrontation in Vietnam in the late 1960s
China’s attempt to compel the U.S. to stop supporting Taiwanese moves towards independence.

7.5.1.1 Shared Goal: One China

From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, Sino-American rapprochement was built on the shared goal based on the ‘One China’ principle – that ‘there is one China and that Taiwan is part of China.’ This represented a major policy change for the Americans in their attempt to forge relations with Beijing at the expense of Moscow. Since 1949, when the People’s Republic of China had been established (and with the Kuomintang Party forming the Republic of China government on Taiwan) Washington has regarded the status of Taiwan as ‘undetermined.’ This ‘legalistic’ stand rejected the Chinese ‘moralist’ attitude that Taiwan was a land rightfully recovered from Japan, a former aggressor. Instead, the U.S. assumed that Taiwan formed part of the ‘war spoils’ that the Allies took from Japan after World War Two, whose disposition remained ‘undetermined’ until the conquering powers and Japan reached a legal settlement. On the eve of the Nixon Administration’s contacts with Chinese leaders in Beijing, the State Department testified to various Congressional committees in 1969 and 1970 that the status of Taiwan remained undetermined. It also wrote that:

In neither [the Japanese Peace Treaty of 1951 nor the Treaty of Peace between the Republic of China and Japan of 1952] did Japan cede this area [of Formosa and the Pescadores] to any particular entity. As Taiwan and the Pescadores are not covered by any existing international disposition, sovereignty over the area is an unsettled question subject to future international resolution. Both the Republic of China and the Chinese Communists disagree with this conclusion and consider that Taiwan and the Pescadores are part of the sovereign state of China. The United States recognizes the Government of the Republic of China as legitimately occupying and exercising jurisdiction over Taiwan and the Pescadores.

In President Nixon’s secret talks with Chinese Premier Zhou, however, the American leader made private concessions to China on the question of Taiwan that reportedly went beyond the public communiqué signed in 1972. According to Mann –

770 Danny Shiu-Lam Paau, ‘The Case of Taiwan,’ in Roberts (ed.), Sino-American Relations Since 1900, pp 453-454

who cites Nixon’s private notes written down in preparation before his historical China visit – Nixon assured the Chinese that the legal status of Taiwan was ‘determined.’ Nixon wrote that U.S. policy held that there was ‘one China’ and that Taiwan was ‘part of China’ and that Washington would not support Taiwan’s independence. A set of declassified memoranda released in December 2003 detailed the secret talks between Nixon and Zhou. According to Kan, these documents confirmed that Nixon stated, as the first of Five Principles, that ‘there is one China, and Taiwan is a part of China. There will be no more statements made – if I can control our bureaucracy – to the effect that the status of Taiwan is undetermined.’ By the time the 1982 Communique was issued, Washington had appeared to move even closer to China’s position on ‘one China’. In the 1972 Communique, the Nixon Administration had ‘acknowledged’ that ‘all Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is one China and Taiwan is part of China.’ In the 1979 and 1982 communiqués, Washington again ‘acknowledged the Chinese position’ on one China and that Taiwan is part of China. The language of both communiqués used the operative word ‘acknowledge’ – which does not amount to ‘agree.’ But some American senators argued that the tenor of America’s ‘One China’ policy had effectively shifted from an acknowledgement that the ‘one China’ principle was upheld by both the Chinese and the Taiwanese, to a more direct acknowledgement of China’s position. Senator John Glenn, in a criticism of the Carter and Reagan Administrations, noted that in President Ronald Reagan’s 1982 letter to Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hu Yaobang had stated that America’s policy will ‘continue to be based on the principle that there is but one China.’ Wrote Senator Glenn:

‘... in 1972, we acknowledged that the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait maintained that there was but one China. Today it is U.S. policy that there is but one China. Despite this remarkable shift over time, the State Department, at each juncture, has assured us that our policy remained essentially unchanged.’

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772 Mann, About Face, p 46

773 Kan, ‘China/ Taiwan: Evolution of the ‘One China Policy,’ p 8

Essentially, the exchanges between China and the U.S. on the issue of Taiwan underscored their empathy as defined in this thesis: the ability to perspective take, the conveyance of such understanding to the other, and coordination of expectations.

7.5.1.2 Shared Goal: Peaceful Reunification

Both China and the U.S. stressed the need for a ‘peaceful settlement’ of the Taiwan question. The extent of empathy on this issue is so significant, that commentators said during the crisis that it was ‘ironical’ that the U.S. might be seen to be ‘ultimately siding with China’ as both preferred a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan problem.775 However, the precise meaning on paper of the term ‘peaceful reunification’ – and more importantly, its implementation in practice – remained a point of contention between Beijing and Washington right up to the Taiwan crisis. Once again, we have a case of a incomplete empathy. In the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, the U.S. secured a major concession from the Chinese by being able to reaffirm its ‘interest in a peaceful settlement.’ In a December 1978 statement on the opening of diplomatic relations with China, Washington again stressed its ‘interest in the peaceful resolution’ of the Taiwan issue. Subsequently, the two sides clarified the issue further – a development that highlighted their converging goals. In January 1979, rather than merely acknowledging Washington’s interest in a peaceful settlement, China stated in a message to the people of Taiwan that it had a ‘fundamental policy’ of ‘striving for peaceful reunification.’ This moved China closer to the U.S. on the Taiwan issue. In their 1982 communique, the U.S. said it ‘understands and appreciates’ the Chinese policy of working toward a ‘peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question.’776

Incomplete empathy or implicit differences over their shared goal of ‘peaceful reunification’ enabled certain ambiguities to exist between Washington and Beijing. This gave either considerable room to move away from that very goal – in practice – if

there were considerable grounds to do so. Washington's Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 (TRA) granted Taiwan 'unofficial' relations with the U.S., and more importantly, an implicit guarantee for the defence of Taiwan. The wording of the 1979 TRA meant that the coercive diplomacy practised by China in 1995 and 1996 could trigger the TRA since it constituted non-peaceful acts that would be of 'grave concern' to the U.S. – diplomatic code for military intervention.777 China opposed the Act, in general for its implicit support for Taiwan, and more specifically, a clause that defined 'peaceful' to exclude various sorts of non-bloody coercion, such as 'any resort to force or other forms of coercion.'778 In early 1982, the Chinese reacted furiously to President Reagan's decision to sell advanced F-5Es jet fighters to Taiwan. While the F-5Es were not as sophisticated, or as controversial, as the FX fighters that Reagan initially wanted to sell to Taipei, the Chinese said the deal could lead to a breakdown in Sino-American relations.779

In a secret memorandum explaining the August 17, 1982 Communiqué signed with Beijing – where the U.S. said it 'appreciates and understands' China's policy seeking a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question – Reagan clarified the American position. While the U.S. had stated that it would 'reduce gradually' the sales of arms to Taiwan, Reagan wrote in his secret memo that this would be 'conditional absolutely' on the 'continued commitment' of China to the peaceful solution of the Taiwan-PRC differences. Reagan wrote that 'both in quantitative and qualitative terms, Taiwan's defence capability relative to that of the PRC will be maintained.'780 This meant that Washington's interest in a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question was predicated on selling enough arms to the Taiwanese to maintain a rough military balance across the Strait. For their part, the Chinese never renounced the use of force despite their purported policy of 'peaceful reunification.' In the early 1990s, the PRC purchased more advanced arms from Moscow. It also built up its theatre missile force – a clear

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777 See Kan, "China/Taiwan: Evolution of the ‘One China’ Policy,' pp 31-45. See also Garver, Face Off, p 77
778 Section 2b, Point 6 of Taiwan Relations Act 1979
779 Tyler, Six Presidents and China, pp 321-322
780 Reagan's Secret Memorandum on the 1982 Communiqué was first disclosed in public by Mann, About Face, p 127. Another version of the text, as provided by an unnamed former U.S. official, was published in Robert Kaiser, 'What We Said, What They Said, What's Unsaid,' Washington Post, 15 April, 2001, p B01

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show of intent towards Taiwan. As stated earlier, President Jiang and Premier Li also began to warn of draconian measures to prevent Taiwan independence in the early 1990s.

7.5.1.3 Unique Goals: American Deterrence and Chinese Coercion

Incomplete empathy led the U.S. and China to pursue their respective coercive strategies during Taiwan. On one hand, there was considerable empathy inherent on the two shared goals – the principles of ‘One China’ and peaceful reunification. On the other hand, implicit differences over the two shared goals led China and the U.S. to pursue different and unique goals during the crisis. China wanted to compel the U.S. to stop their tacit support of Taiwan’s moves toward independence. The Americans wanted to deter the Chinese from escalating their military manoeuvres against Taiwan. In effect, there was an unwieldy juxtaposition between the two shared goals on one hand and a concurrent pursuit of unique goals on the other. Given that empathy has been defined as a deterrer’s ability to ‘take the perspective’ of his deterrer, convey such an understanding and map out a goal that would be taken by the latter, its presence during the crisis helped both sides coordinate their expectations and achieve success in their respective coercive strategies.

7.5.2 U.S. Conduct of Deterrence Diplomacy

The execution of coercive strategies during the crisis had an almost telepathic quality – through the execution of such strategies, both sides sought to demonstrate that they understood the perspective of the other. During the conduct of its deterrence diplomacy during the crisis, the U.S. sought to communicate to Beijing that Washington had ‘taken’ the perspective of the Chinese. In essence, there was a process of the ‘I think you think I think’ series described in Chapter 4. During the crisis, the U.S. sought to tell China: ‘I see how you see the situation on Taiwan (that you do not want the U.S. to support Taiwan’s move towards independence). I am showing you that I see as you see.’ The U.S. sought to convey its taking of China’s perspective by limiting the escalatory potential inherent in its CBG deployments in the Strait. This addressed China’s unique and immediate goal during the crisis – to compel the U.S. to stop supporting Taiwan’s move towards independence. The U.S. also mapped out a

goal that the Chinese could accept – do not escalate China’s military manoeuvres against Taiwan.

During their March 1996 meeting with Liu Huaqiu, American officials sought to address China’s concerns. Liu told Lake, Perry and Christopher that the U.S. should focus on the consequences of selling arms to Taiwan, in particular a fleet of F-16s that were to be delivered in a year’s time. In response, Christopher spelt out the tenets of the ‘One China’ policy. He said the policy had been honoured by all six presidents since Nixon, and that the U.S. would continue to honour its end of the agreement by recognising that there was ‘only one China and that Taiwan was a part of China.’

The statements were consistently repeated by other State Department officials during the crisis. When Washington announced its carrier battle group (CBG) deployments later that month, it carefully couched the rationale for the deployment in terms of regional security, and was careful to add that it was not meant to support Taiwan’s moves towards independence. Perry, for example, said the deployment was to show American commitment to regional stability:

The signal that these ships are sending is one of precaution and reassurance: precaution because we want to make sure that there is no miscalculation on the part of Beijing as to our very firm interest in that region of the world; reassuring because we want our friends in the area to know that we have a large stake in the stability and the peace in that region.

When pressed by reporters as to whether the deployments represented a willingness to defend Taiwan in the event of an attack, Perry replied that the U.S. wanted to make sure there was ‘no miscalculation’ on the part of China about

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782 Carter and Perry, Preventative Defense, p 96
American interests in the region. The State Department reiterated that the U.S. wanted a ‘peaceful outcome’ to the differences between China and Taiwan.

When a deterrer possesses empathy, he has ‘taken’ the perspective of the deterree. He can also design a goal for the deterree that is acceptable to both (i.e. a shared goal). The measured application of American military power during the Taiwan Strait crisis had this quality about it. The U.S. mapped out a goal that both China and the U.S. could arrive at – no escalation by Beijing against Taiwan. Perry stressed that the U.S. was a ‘powerful military power’ with the wherewithal to carry out its national interests. At the same time, the measured application of American power in the region conveyed to China that the U.S. had taken China’s perspective. The U.S. sought a balance between achieving U.S. goals (i.e. deterring further Chinese escalation in the Strait) and avoiding unwarranted provocation. On 9 March 1996, Perry consulted with Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili and proposed that the U.S. send two carrier battle groups, not into the area where the Chinese were conducting their military exercises, but off the coast of Taiwan. The U.S.S Independence, which was already in the vicinity, would be deployed off the east coast of the island, while the U.S.S Nimitz, which would be moved from the Persian Gulf, would proceed to the area and deploy west of the Philippines.

Perry said that the deployments would send a message of ‘capability and firmness, without undue provocation.’ The Chinese had to be deterred from doing ‘something stupid,’ but the U.S. would not seek to aggravate the situation. The symbolism of the CBG deployments had to be strong enough to deter escalation and non-threatening enough to keep things from boiling over. The deployments did not assert freedom of navigation in the Strait. The deployment of Nimitz had the ‘I think you think I think’ quality about it. The carrier was ordered to sail at a deliberate pace, never reaching the vicinity of Taiwan, but remaining close to the Philippines. Most importantly, Chinese leaders were aware of the Nimitz’s deliberate pace.

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785 Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 11 March 1996
786 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 255
787 Carter and Perry, Preventative Defense, p 98, Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 255
788 Tyler, A Great Wall, p 34
789 Ross, ‘The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,’ p 111 fn80
7.5.3 Chinese Conduct of Coercive Diplomacy: Crisis as Opera

During the crisis, the United States sought to convey that it had taken China’s perspective through public reassurances of the One China principle. By contrast, China’s verbal pronouncements during the height of the crisis in March 1996 appeared to display little empathy. On 11 March 1996, for example Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told reporters that the American deployments were ‘reckless.’ Ten days later, a Communist Party-controlled newspaper cited a military observer saying that China would ‘bury invading enemies in a sea of fire.’

Through its military exercises, however, China sought to indicate to the Americans that it had taken America’s perspective – that Washington wanted China to limit its escalatory potential. With empathy at hand, China took the perspective of the U.S and mapped out a goal that they could both arrive at – no more displays of American support for the Taiwanese. In the final analysis, China’s manipulation of potential force during the Taiwan Strait crisis was largely for political effect aimed at changing the of its target audiences – Taiwan and the United States. The objective of such brinkmanship was to compel Taiwan and the U.S. to change their behaviour short of war. You Ji argues that China’s brinkmanship attempt was supported by a three-pronged deterrence logic: (1) China would have to wage a war against Taiwan if it declares independence; so (2) military threats would reduce the likelihood of such a declaration; and (3) military threats would make war less likely.

You Ji’s logic – political theatre short of war – draws considerable support from other scholars, who argue that China’s militant rhetoric during the crisis did not presage any harmful violence, but was purely there for coercive purposes. The military exercises, missile tests and blustery rhetoric were primarily for political effect, with the express aim of changing the behaviour of the U.S. and Taiwan. McVadon argues that

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792 You Ji, ‘Making Sense of War Games in the Taiwan Strait,’ pp 300-301

when Taiwan ‘annoys China’s leaders, Beijing beats the war drums and the PLA exercises.’ He argues that this Chinese style of political coercion was evident during his years as a U.S. defence and naval attaché in Beijing in the early 1990s. Each time Taiwan ‘stepped out of line,’ China threatened or conducted PLA exercises in areas facing or near Taiwan. In two works chronicling the Chinese use of force, Scobell encapsulates this ‘crisis as opera’ argument beautifully. He notes that the July 1995 exercises, although carefully planned, were so speedily arranged and implemented that not much advance notice was given to Taiwan or the United States. By contrast, preparations for the exercises of March 1996 were undertaken many months before, and advance warnings were communicated that more sabre-rattling could be expected. The missiles launched by Beijing in March 1996 hit sea lanes 30 miles off Taiwan’s northern port of Keelung and 47 miles from the southern port city of Kaohsiung. The missiles were a clear demonstration that Beijing’s threats were credible – China had the will to use force and the capability to strike Taiwan – but they promised little chance of escalation. The most venomous barrage of threats and condemnations came in March 1996, after the PLA had had months to prepare for both the exercises and coordinate and carefully script the blasts of rhetoric. Scobell writes that this ‘suggests that the barrage of militant military rhetoric was less an emotional diatribe expressing gut feelings but more a sequence of deliberate and well-rehearsed sound bites.’ The tough talk by Chinese military figures was tempered by assurances that they did not want war with Taiwan.

The paradoxical components of Beijing’s threat and display of force on one hand, and the refusal to use it for either an invasion or an attack on Taiwan on the other, parallel China’s cultural tradition. After examining eleven wars in which China was involved from 1840 to 1980, Adelman believes that for the Chinese, wars are not for obtaining territory, defeating the enemy or acquiring power but for expressing strong will, embarrassing the enemy, and for punishment or self-defence in absolutely

794 McVadon, ‘PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics Toward Taiwan,’ p 270, fn1
795 Scobell, China’s Use of Military Force, pp 181-184, Scobell, ‘Show of Force, pp 236-238
796 Scobell, ‘Show of Force,’ p 238
797 Scobell, ‘Show of Force,’ p 238
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traditional Chinese norms. The paradox fits in well with Marxist dialectics so frequently espoused by Mao Zedong and the latter generations of leaders who replaced him – the use or threat of force to enforce peace. At the height of the crisis in 1996, a Hong Kong paper cited Beijing military sources saying that the missile tests and military exercises were considered as ‘resorting to force to press for peace.’

China’s display of force also conveyed its understanding of the American perspective. It mapped out a goal which both parties could accept – no escalation by the Chinese military against Taiwan, in return for no more show of American support for the Taiwanese. It is noteworthy that both the Taiwanese and Americans understood that China’s military exercises were attempts at political theatre to enforce peace short of war. In interviews conducted in China and Taiwan, Scobell concludes that leaders on both sides of the Strait recognised that Beijing’s exercises were a ‘major theatrical event with each person playing a clearly defined role.’ Once the opera was over, the situation went back to normal. Likewise, Clinton administration officials believed that the PLA was not preparing to attack Taiwan directly. While they were not certain about the extent of possible Chinese actions, they believed that Beijing was trying to influence Taiwan’s upcoming presidential election and independence movement. On 3 March 1996, a State Department official said that China’s military exercises were ‘unfortunate.’ But he told reporters that China was ‘really motivated by political concerns, and we don’t believe they presage any broader military effort or action.’ Eleven days later, another State Department official said that the U.S. did not believe that China had any aggressive intentions toward Taiwan. General Shalikashvili told reporters that the Chinese military exercises were a ‘dry run’ to intimidate Taiwanese voters, but he stressed that he did not expect serious conflict.


800 Scobell, ‘Show of Force,’ p 233

801 Albeit with a small measure of uncertainty, as discussed earlier in the section on America’s appreciation of China’s conceptual framework

802 Ross, ‘The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,’ p 108


804 Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 14 March 1996

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Chinese actions during the exercises, he said, was 'most probably designed to be just an exercise.' Likewise, Taiwanese reporters on Nimitz reported on the readiness of American flight crews but were told quite clearly by officers on Nimitz that the carrier was off the east coast of Taiwan and did not expect combat.

The best illustration of how the Chinese had through their military exercises conveyed their understanding of Washington's perspective is given by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell. Referring to the March 1996 Chinese exercises, Campbell said both the U.S. and China should seek a long-term goal of peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question:

PRC activity, though highly provocative, and clearly aimed at intimidation, is expected to remain at the exercise level. We believe the greatest danger to peace in the Taiwan Strait does not come from a PRC attack on Taiwan, or indeed any other direct military action – this remains remote. The greatest danger comes from the potential for an accident or miscalculation. In short, although the PRC has undertaken a very risky course of action, it is imperative that all sides remember the longer term goal of peaceful resolution of the dispute. It remains important for all sides to take a sober and sensible approach and to manage the situation prudently. All parties should refrain from responding in a manner which could escalate tensions.

In other words, Campbell's comment was a sure sign that the Americans were taking the choice presented by the Chinese – no more show of support to the Taiwanese, in return for the Chinese not expanding the scope of its military exercises.

7.5.4 Empathy: Both Sought To Reduce Risk of Hostilities

In Chapter 4, it was proposed that for empathy to 'work,' a long-term relationship was required where both parties have had considerable strategic interaction and a history of communicating to each other their values, interests and goals. Specifically, norms or lessons learnt from previous encounters with the same opponent contribute to empathy. During the Taiwan Strait crisis, both the U.S. and China sought to reduce the escalatory risks inherent in their coercive strategies. The U.S. and China

806 Ed Offley, 'U.S. Navy Takes on a Delicate Role near Taiwan,' Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 14 March 1996, p A2
807 Campbell, 'Campbell 3/14 Remarks to House Panel on China/Taiwan' By stating that the 'greatest danger' arose from 'accident and miscalculation,' Campbell meant that China and the U.S. could have encountered frictional forces while seeking to pursue different and unique goals using compellence and deterrence strategies respectively. Such friction could have led to open conflict
were influenced by the norm formed after their Vietnam confrontation – that of limiting the scope of their conflict.

During the crisis, both China and the U.S. sought to convey to the other that they had taken their opponent’s perspective. At the same time, they sought to map out a goal that the other could accept. According to Pollack, the March 1996 events in the Taiwan Strait ranked ‘among the more choreographed of international crises, with all three major parties seeing their principal needs met without tensions escalating into overt hostilities.’\(^{808}\) Indeed, both the U.S. and China demonstrated remarkable restraint as they executed their respective strategies of deterrence and coercive diplomacy, such that one gets the impression that the relatively muted outcome of the crisis – no declaration of independence and no war in the Strait – was stage-managed. During the crisis, clear rules of engagement were transmitted by the U.S. government to American ships and aircraft operating in the region, with specific instructions not to enter the Taiwan Strait itself or to interfere with PLA exercises in any way.\(^{809}\) The overriding logic behind these measures was to respect the boundaries of China’s exclusion zones reserved for naval, air and missile exercises, so as long these did not target Taiwan. Said President Clinton as he signed off on the American deployments: ‘We’ve got to do everything we can to make sure none of this (war in the Strait) happens.’\(^{810}\) During the crisis, two retired U.S. admirals said that officials from the U.S., China and Taiwan needed to open unofficial communications with one another to establish an ‘airspace management’ plan and other understandings to minimize the chance of armed encounters.\(^{811}\)

As for the Chinese, their military movements during the crisis were also carefully nonprovocative. Pains were taken to ensure no direct contact with the Americans, since actual hostilities were not desired.\(^{812}\) The PLA did not fill the skies with air-superiority fighters. It did not simulate massed strikes by swarms of precision attack aircraft against targets that resembled Taiwan. The PLA did not mass a large

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\(^{810}\) Tyler, \textit{Six Presidents and China}, p 35

\(^{811}\) Offley, ‘U.S. Navy Takes on a Delicate Role near Taiwan’

\(^{812}\) Scobell, ‘Show of Force,’ p 237
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An armada of warships and civilian vessels needed to control the Strait or assemble an imposing task force for an assault on Taiwan. Its ships and planes did not cover the approaches to Taiwan or approach U.S. ships in the area. The PLA seldom adopted electronic countermeasures (ECM) or electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM) to deter surveillance or intelligence gathering activities by Taipei, Washington, and other neighboring countries.

A careful examination of the missile firings showed that shipping lanes were not really impeded, since no PLA vessels were expected to be operating in so-called 'closure zones' near the Taiwanese port cities of Keelung and Kaohsiung. According to McVadon, the PLA naval activity was moderate, a 'showy display of fire and smoke from guns, considerable sound and fury but well short of titanic.' The cumulative effect of the risk management measures taken by the Chinese and Americans was that no hostilities broke out. Theoretically at least, any miscalculation on either side could have led to inadvertent escalation. Consistent with its past military deployments in the Strait, China could have easily planned to disrupt the activities of the American carrier battle groups deployed in the area. In October 1994, a Chinese attack submarine had tracked the carrier U.S.S Kitty Hawk - even after the carrier used its anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft to track the Chinese submarine. Despite a two-day standoff, the Chinese submarine continued to dog the American battle group and received support from two Chinese F-7 fighters. After the 1995-96 crisis, American defence officials said the confrontation had been 'tense' as the Chinese intensified their public rhetoric against the Americans, including vows to 'bury' the Americans if it actually came to a fight. Later, U.S. Admiral Joseph Prueher visited Lt-Gen Zhang Wannian, senior vice-chairman of China's Central Military Commission. When asked by Zhang what he

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813 Eric McVadon, 'PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics Toward Taiwan,' p. 269-270
815 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 251
816 McVadon, 'PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics Toward Taiwan,' pp 269-270. As discussed earlier in footnote 879, the process of appreciation on the part of the U.S. and China caused uncertainty about their opponent’s potential range of options. This led to their employing deterrence and compellence strategies respectively. The irony here is that while such strategies sought to reduce uncertainty, their implementation could actually have led to open conflict due to friction (i.e. accidents and miscalculation.
817 Garver, Face Off, p 109
818 Gellman, 'U.S. and China Nearly Came To Blows in '96,' p A01

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had been thinking during the crisis, Admiral Prueher replied: ‘I remember wishing I had your telephone number.’ Despite the inherent risks, however, no further Chinese exercises were scheduled. The U.S. aircraft carriers returned to normal duty stations shortly after the election, and the crisis came quietly to a close. In hindsight, there was no imminent danger. The norm from the Vietnam War – limiting the scope of conflict – had contributed to empathy during the Taiwan Strait crisis, enabling China and the U.S. to become more sensitive of each other’s views and as a result prevent any outbreak of conflict.

**7.5.5 Empathy: Confidence Building**

The analysis in Chapter 4 shows that norms developed from prior encounters can contribute to empathy. The confidence building measures instituted by both China and the U.S. were influenced by a lesson learnt after the Vietnam War, where both sides refashioned the image of the other that eventually paved the way for rapprochement. During the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, the lesson of Vietnam – as well as strategic dialogue – helped build confidence. Suettinger notes that compared to previous crises in the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s, strategic communications between China and the U.S. were ‘of a completely different order’ by the time of the 1995-96 crisis. Full diplomatic contacts were maintained throughout the period. Frank and candid exchange of views may not have occurred at all times, but there was no shortage of opportunities to engage each other’s officials to explore possible intentions. Meetings were held at all levels, including a summit between President Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin, a meeting between President Jiang and Vice President Al Gore, and several meetings at the under secretary and assistant secretary levels. There was a consistent repetition of respective views on Taiwan as both sides sought to manage the crisis, but inevitably, there was also hard bargaining on both sides. The Chinese, for example, urged the Americans to issue a fourth communique that would address the issue of further visits by Taiwanese leaders and a public commitment opposing Taiwanese independence – a request rejected by the Americans.
The growing familiarity between American officials and their Chinese counterparts helped to foster confidence building. On the basis of strategic interactions stemming from two decades of officials relations, both American and Chinese officials had by 1996 developed firm acquaintances – if not friendships. Defence Secretary Perry, for example, had come to know some of China’s top military leaders during his prior stint at Stanford. He referred to Liu Huaqing, China’s top-ranking soldier and a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, as ‘my old friend.’ During one of his trips for Stanford, Perry also got to know some of China’s leading politicians, including President Jiang. According to one report, Mr Liu Huaqiu, the Chinese counterpart to National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, had also given moon cakes to the wife of Mr Winston Lord, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia.

Confidence building measures and high-level contacts served to convey that each side had taken the other party’s perspective (i.e. empathy). This helped to de-escalate tensions during the Taiwan crisis. According to Yang, the intensified dialogue provided an opportunity for confidence-building in terms of understanding each other’s intentions and tolerance limits. The March 1996 meeting between Lake, Perry, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Mr Liu was particularly useful. Frank exchanges that night and the next day established the boundaries of anticipated movement by both sides. Unlike previous PLA actions that directly or indirectly involved the United States, such high-level communication minimised misunderstanding between Washington and Beijing. More importantly, this process could be repeated should another crisis happen in future. Following the conclusion of the crisis, the Lake-Liu channel of communications – which cemented bilateral communications at high levels on both sides – became the primary vehicle for restoring the Sino-American relationship back to the status quo. The Lake-Liu channel helped to arrange a series of summit meetings between President Clinton and President Jiang in 1997 and 1998.

824 Carter and Perry, Preventative Defense, pp 92-95, Mann, About Face, p 331
826 Yang, ‘Crisis, What Crisis?’ p 151
827 Whiting, ‘China’s Use of Force,’ p 123
828 Yang, ‘Crisis, what crisis?’ p 151
During the crisis, there was a near-telepathic understanding between China and the United States. An excellent example of this was the release of Harry Wu in August 1995. Wu was a Chinese-American human rights activist who had emigrated to the U.S. in 1986 after spending 19 years in China’s version of the gulag. In the early 1990s, he made an Emmy Award-winning documentary of China’s prison camps. He was subsequently arrested in June 1995 after entering China and charged with espionage – providing secrets to ‘foreign organisations and institutions’ including the Columbia Broadcasting System and the British Broadcasting Corporation. Suettinger notes that while there was ‘no deal’ hammered out between Beijing and Washington over Wu’s release, there was an unspoken agreement that accompanied Wu’s eventual release. On the American side, there was speculation that a bargain had been struck after White House press secretary Mike McCurry speculated publicly – two days before Wu’s trial – that ‘they (the Chinese) will most likely put him on trial and convict him of something – from what we hear, short of espionage. Then the issue will be, what do they … propose, then, to do about it?’ The U.S. position had always been Wu should be released for the sake of the Sino-American relationship, but that Washington would not interfere in China’s legal processes. The Chinese position mirrored the American one: that ‘China’s legal processes must be respected, and we understand the importance of the Wu issue.’

It was something of a ‘diplomatic gavotte’, with both sides moving carefully and slowly because they were blindfolded. Neither side wanted to court criticism from powerful domestic forces in order to reach a formal agreement. So there were understandings that were never articulated, common expectations that were never formalized. But no deal.

There was no official confirmation from either Beijing or Washington as to whether there was a ‘deal’ over Wu. What is apparent is that Wu’s release – without any explicit coordination – formed part of Chinese and American efforts at damage repair following China’s first set of missile tests in July 1995. Despite Washington’s refusal to concede to China’s demand that it not permit further visits to the U.S. by Taiwan’s president, Beijing announced in August 1995 that its ambassador would

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831 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 237
832 Suettinger, Beyond Tiananmen, p 237
return to Washington, and that General Li Xilin would represent Defence Minister Chi Haotian at ceremonies in September commemorating the end of the World War II. In late September, Beijing approved the appointment of Jim Sasser as the new U.S. Ambassador to China.\textsuperscript{833} The U.S. responded in a low-key manner to the July missile tests (‘not helpful’ for stability), the arrest and expulsion of two U.S. Air Force attaches caught ‘spying’ on China’s military exercises in early August (the State Department faulted the Pentagon) and China’s underground nuclear test on August 17 (not enough to justify new sanctions).\textsuperscript{834}

Behind this diplomatic ‘gavotte’ was an overriding – and shared – interest that became more pertinent during the Taiwan crisis – both sides did not allow the Taiwan issue to undermine the regional stability that was the basis of their two shared goals on Taiwan. In 1994, just a year before the crisis, Perry highlighted the growing empathy between China and the U.S. when he said that both the U.S. and China needed to achieve ‘stability’ – a word he used 17 times and one that Chinese leaders had used repeatedly and could appreciate. Acting upon Kissinger’s advice to Clinton about ‘talking strategically’ to the Chinese, Perry said that the ‘United States and China share a special obligation to secure the present and future stability in the West Pacific.’ Such stability, he proposed, would be built through bilateral exchanges of information on their overall defense strategies and holding regular meetings on a number of military issues.\textsuperscript{835}

7.6 Learning and Adaptation

Chapter 4 showed that continual interaction between two players across time can lead to increased appreciation and empathy in their relationship centred on norms and lessons learnt. The Taiwan Strait crisis resulted in a formation of norms that further increased the level of empathy in the Sino-American relationship. This did not mean that empathy became total across all fronts, but empathy, though not total, had increased. Following the conclusion of the crisis, both the U.S. and China recognised the danger of implicit differences over their shared goals and the intensified risk of military confrontation that could result from them. As a result, they went into damage

\textsuperscript{833} Garver, \textit{Face Off}, p 82

\textsuperscript{834} Suettinger, \textit{Beyond Tiananmen}, p 236

\textsuperscript{835} Steven Mufson, ‘Perry Emphasizes Pacific Stability; Secretary Addresses Chinese Officers, Is Blasted by U.S. Businessmen,’ \textit{Washington Post}, 19 October 1994, p A34
repair mode to re-establish and strengthen the norms inherent in their relationship since the 1970s.

7.6.1 Shared Norm: Both U.S. and China Sought To Deter Taiwan

The Korean War saw the development of one norm – limiting war along a physical boundary. After the Vietnam War, this norm had evolved into a more comprehensive one, where both sides sought to limit the general level of hostilities. The Korean and Vietnam War norms reflected a shared desire to control the potential of escalation after the U.S. and China had already engaged each other in conflict. After the Taiwan Strait crisis, a new norm evolved, whereby both China and the U.S. sought to deter Taiwan from declaring independence. Arguably, this norm was already implicit in their rapprochement in the 1970s and subsequent interaction in the 1980s and 1990s. But the new norm was also a more proactive measure aimed ostensibly at preventing the possibility of a conflict between them.

The joint attempt to deter Taiwanese independence was helped by mutual efforts to place the Sino-American relationship back on a firm strategic basis. In a May 1996 speech on China policy to the Asia Society, Secretary of State Christopher said that the Sino-American relationship should be placed within a ‘larger, comprehensive framework.’ In the case of Taiwan, Christopher urged both China and Taiwan to weigh carefully the ‘importance of avoiding provocative actions or unilateral measures that would alter the status quo or pose a threat to peaceful resolution of outstanding issues.’ He underscored the ‘enduring value’ of the ‘One China’ policy and the collective responsibility of both China and the U.S. to uphold that policy.836 One practical outcome of this ‘strategic partnership’ was that both sides vowed to work at preventing the controversial Taiwan issue and other pressing questions such as human rights, trade and nuclear proliferation from affecting their bilateral relationship (in other words, it was business as usual; the Clinton Administration termed this ‘comprehensive engagement’). Despite ongoing disputes over such issues, Sino-U.S. relations are ‘the best they have been since 1989,’ an unnamed Chinese official told an American

Case Study 3: The Sino-U.S. Confrontation Over The Taiwan Strait, 1995-1996

Later in 1996, President Clinton and President Jiang issued a joint declaration stating that they would exchange state visits in 1997 and 1998. The visits would be the first since the Tiananmen massacre in Beijing in June 1989. While Beijing and Washington still contended with difficult issues, both governments seemed to recognise that they had a shared stake in upholding a ‘modicum of civility’ in bilateral relations, especially when the issues involved entailed ‘particular sensitivities’ to one or both sides.838

Both the U.S. and China – almost in a coordinated fashion – conducted near-identical attempts to deter Taiwan and issued joint declarations to that effect. This actually led to the undermining of Taiwan’s drive for international status (at least for a time).839 Following the confrontation, the U.S. exercised more caution in its relations with Taiwan. Although it did not automatically deny visas to Taiwan officials, it issued only transit visas and limited the time and activities of Taiwanese leaders’ visit to the United States. When Washington issued a transit visa for Taiwan Vice President Lien Chan in January 1997, it was conditional upon Lien not making any public speeches or attending any public gatherings in deference to China’s sensitivity surrounding Taiwan’s diplomatic ambitions.840 When Lee Teng Hui requested a transit visa in September 1997, he was permitted to transit through Hawaii, but he was told not to schedule appointments with Hawaiian state officials or attend any public events.841

During his confirmation hearings before the Foreign Relations Committee in July 1997, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Stanley Roth acknowledged, for the first time, that the U.S. decision to grant President Lee a visa in 1995 was a ‘serious mistake.’842 The comment is remarkable, since it was Clinton’s issuing of the visa to Lee that had triggered the intensified risk of military confrontation

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841 Associated Press Newswires, ‘Taiwan President In Hawaii For Overnight Visit,’ 5 September 1997
between the U.S. and China associated with their military deployments during the Taiwan Strait crisis. During a visit to China in 1998, President Clinton said that the U.S. did not support Taiwan’s independence. While the statement largely paralleled the secret ‘three noes’ memo issued to China in 1995, it was the first time that an American president had publicly stated that he did not support Taiwan’s independence.\textsuperscript{843} In 1999, Washington pressured President Lee to modify his position after the latter described the mainland-Taiwan relationship as a ‘special state-to-state’ relationship. The State Department indicated that it had sought a clarification from President Lee and pressured Taiwan to make ‘necessary policies and statements that are necessary’ for the resumption of the suspended cross-Strait dialogue.\textsuperscript{844} Mindful of the tensions between Taiwan and China, the President stated in July 1999 that he would cancel a planned visit to Taiwan by Pentagon officials out of concern that it could heighten tensions between Taiwan and China. President Clinton said it was not the ‘best time to do something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative.'\textsuperscript{845} At a September 1999 meeting with Chinese President Jiang in Auckland, President Clinton criticised President Lee’s ‘state-to-state’ declaration – a reproach which pleased the Chinese immensely. According to his national security adviser Samuel R. Berger, Clinton told Jiang that Lee ‘had made things more difficult for both China and the United States’ with his comments.\textsuperscript{846}

By the turn of the century, China attempted to pre-empt any further Taiwanese moves towards independence by increasing the level of implicit threat attached to such moves. This was enunciated in its Second White Paper on Taiwan, which laid out three conditions under which Beijing would use force against Taiwan: (a) if a ‘grave turn of events’ led to the separation of Taiwan from China; (b) if there was a foreign invasion or occupation of Taiwan; and (c) if Taipei ‘indefinitely’ refused to resolve peacefully


\textsuperscript{846} David E. Sanger, ‘Clinton and Jiang Heal Rift and Set New Trade Course,’ \textit{New York Times}, 12 September 1999, p 1
the unification problem through negotiations. This was followed up by Beijing’s Anti-Secessionist Law issued on March 2005, which detailed similar conditions across the Taiwan Strait that could force Beijing to ‘adopt non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity.’ More significantly, U.S. President George W. Bush eventually hewed even more closely to the Clinton Administration’s quid pro quo on Taiwan with Beijing in a series of meetings with top Chinese leaders. In February 2002, President Bush said at a joint press conference with President Jiang that Washington upheld the ‘One China’ principle and would abide by the three Sino-American communiqués on Taiwan, adding that the position of his government on Taiwan had ‘not changed over the years.’ Bush’s announcement was a marked change from the cold shoulder he had given China when he first entered the White House in 2001.

Bush’s statement also demonstrated the enduring quality of the ‘One China’ complex of shared goals and interests fashioned by Nixon, Kissinger, Mao and Zhou in the early 1970s. The Sino-American empathy on ‘One China’ was underscored in 2003. In another meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao in France, Bush said the U.S. would uphold the three communiqués and not support Taiwan independence – a reaffirmation of the statement first made public by Clinton in 1998. According to President Hu’s interpretation of Bush’s remarks, the U.S. government would ‘oppose Taiwan independence.’ Hu added that this (American) policy ‘has not changed and will not change.’ During a photo opportunity at the White House in December 2003, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao underscored his appreciation to the U.S. commitment to

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850 In April 2001, Bush caused much consternation in Beijing when he said that the U.S. would do ‘whatever it takes’ to help Taiwan defend itself. See Michael D. Swaine, ‘Trouble in Taiwan,’ Foreign Affairs 83(2), March/April 2004, p 39


the three Sino-American communiqués, the One China principle and Washington’s opposition to Taiwan’s independence. The strength of the empathy established between Washington and Beijing on Taiwan was underscored by Wen’s usage of the word ‘appreciation’ three times during his remarks:

President Bush has reiterated the U.S. commitment to the three Sino-U.S. Joint Communiqués, the one-China principle, and opposition to Taiwan independence. We appreciate that. In particular, we very much appreciate the position adopted by President Bush toward the latest moves and developments in Taiwan – that is, the attempt to resort to referendum of various kinds as excuse to pursue Taiwan independence. We appreciate the position of the U.S. government.\(^553\)

Wen’s use of the word ‘appreciation’ is probably closer to the word ‘welcome’ rather than the meaning adopted in this study. Essentially, however, his comments underscored the increased empathy between China and the U.S. on the question of Taiwan following the 1995-96 crisis.

### 7.7 Conclusion

At the cusp of the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1995, the Sino-American relationship was marked by incomplete empathy, where there were implicit differences in their shared goals: ‘One China’ and ‘peaceful reunification.’ But empathy was also enhanced by a norm and lesson formed after the Vietnam War – the limitation of general hostilities and changed images that led to their historic rapprochement respectively. The implicit differences in their shared goals amplified the effects of opposing goals China and American brought into the Taiwan Strait crisis, making necessary the implementation of their respective coercive strategies. But the considerable extent of empathy involved meant that the burdens placed on China and America’s respective compellence/deterrence strategies were not excessive. In the 1970s and 1980s, the shared interests constituted a need to contain the Soviet Union; by the late 1980s and 1990s this had evolved into shared interests in economic relations and regional stability. During this period, shared goals remained the same – the ‘One China’ principle and peaceful reunification.\(^554\)


\(^554\) In Chapter 4, it was argued that goals are derived from interests, which are in turn derived from values
To sum up, the shared interests built up over the 1970s to the early 1990s supported the two shared goals of ‘One China’ and ‘peaceful reunification.’ By the 2000s, these two shared goals were based on additional, more broad-based shared interests – combating terrorism, curbing North Korea’s nuclear ambitions and managing global warming. Within such a broad milieu of shared interests, however, the shared goals of ‘One China’ and ‘peaceful reunification’ have been adhered to by both parties, and will shape and influence the responses of both China and the U.S. to any future Taiwanese moves towards independence.

The strength of this empathy was demonstrated in 2007, when both China and the U.S. reinforced their efforts at curbing Taiwan’s bid for a referendum on entry into the United Nations planned for March 2008. Both sides sought to show that they had taken the perspective of the other (i.e. empathy) and could map out an outcome acceptable to both parties. In August 2007, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte told a Hong Kong television station that Washington ‘oppose(s) the notion of that kind of a referendum because we see that as a step towards the declaration – towards a declaration of independence of Taiwan, towards an alteration of the status quo.’ In their meetings in Australia in September 2007, Chinese President Hu and President Bush explored options to stop Taiwan from holding the referendum. In the following month, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Thomas J. Christensen called the referendum ‘ill conceived and potentially quite harmful’ and said such a step ignored Taiwan’s national security interests for short-term political gain. Christensen added that such ‘needlessly provocative actions by Taipei strengthen Beijing’s hand in limiting Taiwan’s diplomatic space and scare away potential friends who might help Taiwan.’ These comments by American officials were clearly directed at alleviating Chinese concerns. Expressing their approval of the American opposition to the planned

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856 Kathrin Hille, ‘US Hits at Planned Taiwan Vote,’ Financial Times, 28 August 2007

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referendum, Chinese officials said they ‘appreciated’ the U.S. reiteration of its opposition to Taiwan's referendum.859

The explicit coordination between Washington and Beijing was not altogether new, given their historic rapprochement in the 1970s. According to Kissinger, the flurry of covert diplomatic activity that accompanied President Nixon’s historic 1972 visit to Beijing was a ‘delicate minuet between us and the Chinese so delicately arranged that both sides could always maintain they were not in contact, so stylized that neither side needed to bear the onus of an initiative, so elliptical that existing relationships on both sides were not jeopardised.’860 More than thirty years later, this ‘delicate minuet’ has come out of the shadows, with both sides clearly acknowledging their shared goals, including the ‘One China’ principle, such that it has became a coordinated and deliberated minuet in fostering stability in strategic Sino-American relations at the expense of Taiwan’s diplomatic space. With explicit coordination, both China and the U.S. have across time managed to take each other’s perspective and design outcomes that are amicable to both. Any future crisis in the Taiwan Strait must at the very onset be interpreted against this fundamental rubric.

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859 Reuters News, ‘China Welcomes U.S. Opposition to Taiwan UN bid,’ 29 August 2007
860 Kissinger, White House Years, p 187
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has sought to examine how deterrers probe the inner world of their respective deterrees, so as to facilitate the decision-making and planning of various options towards them. As the famous American political commentator Walter Lippman has observed:

If we cannot fully understand the acts of other people, until we know what they think they know, then in order do justice we have to appraise not only the information which has been at their disposal, but the minds through which they have filtered it.\(^{861}\)

Lippman’s axiom sounds straightforward, but its implications are sweeping. During the Cold War, appraising the ‘mind’ of a potential deterree was seen to be secondary to the overarching logic of mutual assured destruction. Specifically, the U.S. presumed that the Soviet Union would be rational and reasonable enough not to start a full-fledged nuclear war. To that end, optimistic prognostications of Soviet behavior were not challenged. Deterrence did not come under severe pressure for much of the Cold War, nor was it seen to have failed (notwithstanding the fact that a clear-cut failure must involve a potential deterree having considered breaching deterrence in the first place). As was noted in Chapter 2, only after the collapse of the Soviet Union did researchers realise that Soviet war plans for Europe included the early and heavy use of nuclear weapons. In other words, the Soviets in the final analysis did not always think or act according to American assessments of what was deemed to be reasonable.

As Payne has argued, knowing how a potential opponent behaves is a ‘fundamental dynamic’ behind policy. It is critical because if expectations of an opponent’s behaviour are dramatically wrong, the policies based on such expectations are likely to be wrong as well.\(^ {862}\) This thesis supports Payne’s argument. The cessation of the Cold War and the emergence of so-called ‘rogue states’ has bolstered this line of logic. The behaviour of such states led to a thorough reassessment, on the part of the successive Administrations of George H.W. Bush, William Clinton and George W. Bush, as to whether they hewed to American standards of reasonable behaviour. In August 1990, for example, very few people expected Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait or explicitly challenge the dominance of the United States. Likewise, North


\(^{862}\) Payne, *Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence*, p vii-viii
Korea’s test launch of a three-stage intercontinental ballistic missile in 1998 also came across as a surprise.

To take Payne’s arguments further, however, this thesis has sought to provide a framework to help deters understand which ‘type’ of deteree they are facing. A correct assessment of deteree reasonableness is crucial; as Payne argues, given that making the correct policy choices vis-à-vis deters is dependent on correct assessment. In this thesis, such assessments have been categorized into three major types of ‘reasonableness,’ which are in turn a refinement of Payne’s reasonableness concept: ‘unrecognised unreasonableness,’ ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and ‘recognised reasonableness.’ These three categories of reasonableness are analogous to the terms ‘unknown unknowns,’ ‘known unknowns’ and ‘known knowns’ used by U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in June 2002.863 ‘Unrecognised unreasonableness’ or ‘unknown unknowns’ occur when a deterer wrongly thinks his deteree is reasonable. ‘Recognised unreasonableness’ or ‘known unknowns’ occur when a deterer might not be reasonable, and the deterer is correct. ‘Recognised reasonableness’ occurs when a deterer correctly thinks his deteree is reasonable.

The first half of this thesis (Part A) made three distinct arguments. Firstly, it was argued that the absence of rationality per se was not sufficient to explain deterrence failure. The absence of reasonableness, a situation which occurs when a deterer does not understand or share a deteree’s values and standards, was proposed to be the other variable that contributed to deterrence failure.

Secondly, it was argued that the concept of ‘reasonableness’ as defined by Payne and Gray needs to be refined. ‘Reasonableness’ as defined by Payne and Gray has a binary nature – a deterer sees his deteree as either ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable.’ In the former case, deterrence success occurs because of a rational-and-reasonable deteree. In the latter, deterrence failure stems from rational-but-unreasonable actors. Chapter 4 sought to introduce three types of ‘reasonableness’: ‘unrecognised unreasonableness,’ ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and ‘recognised reasonableness’ and their resultant deterrence outcomes.

863 Mr Rumsfeld was addressing a question about whether Saddam has procured weapons of mass destruction and passed them to Al-Qaeda. See Department of Defense (U.S.) ‘News Briefing,’ - Secretary Rumsfeld and General (Richard) Myers,’ 12 February 2002, at http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2636 [accessed 14 December 2008]
Thirdly, it was argued that each type of reasonableness can be explained in terms of three successive components: knowledge, appreciation and empathy. ‘Unrecognised unreasonableness’ comprises only knowledge of an opponent’s goals. ‘Recognised unreasonableness’ comprises knowledge of an opponent’s goals as well as an appreciation or critical evaluation of such goals. ‘Recognised reasonableness’ comprises all three components: knowledge, appreciation and empathy (the ability to take the perspective of the deterree, convey such understanding to him and coordinate expectations). It was also argued that lessons are learnt and norms formed via a process of learning and adaptation over time, through successive deterrence episodes. Such norms and lessons enhance appreciation and empathy across time in a particular bilateral relationship.

Part B, the second half of this thesis, shows how the different types of ‘reasonableness’ are associated with different deterrence outcomes in the Sino-American relationship. The key findings of the three case studies are displayed below in Figure 5.

The left-hand column of the chart represents ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ (i.e. knowledge without appreciation) which led to the deterrence failures suffered by the U.S. in Korea in 1950. In seeking to deter the Chinese from crossing the 38th Parallel and moving toward the Yalu, American leaders failed to appreciate their knowledge of Chinese goals – that Beijing would not intervene in the Korean War. While the American deterrence attempt in Korea hewed to the conceptualization of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ in this thesis, China’s deterrence attempt was, as shown in Chapter 5, a poor fit. This means that the Sino-American relationship did not strictly adhere to a fixed and discrete pattern of movement along the three types of reasonableness i.e. movement from ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ to ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and then to ‘recognised reasonableness.’ This might be the case with other bilateral relationships involving deterrence.

The central column represents ‘recognised unreasonableness’ – where appreciation of one’s knowledge of an opponent’s goals is involved. Instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ led to varied deterrence outcomes. For example, China augmented deterrence with reassurance during the Vietnam War. It maintained a deterrence posture and concurrently sought to reassure the U.S. that China would not
enter the Vietnam War directly if the U.S. did not threaten China’s borders. The U.S. replaced deterrence with reassurance. If deterrence had been implemented, it would have been employed concurrently with an invasion of the southern part of North Vietnam (as per the Korean War). This, however, was an option that the U.S. rejected for fear of war with China. Instead, the U.S. sought to reassure China that its own operations in Vietnam were limited.

The right-hand column represents ‘recognised reasonableness,’ where knowledge, appreciation and empathy are all involved. In the mid-1990s Taiwan Strait crisis, America’s knowledge of Chinese goals suggested that China would not escalate its military operations against Taiwan, but due to an appreciation of this knowledge, Washington was not absolutely certain that China would desist from doing this. Subsequently, the U.S. decided to conduct deterrence diplomacy to prevent China from escalating its military activities in the Taiwan Strait. Empathy on the part of the Americans – taking the perspective of the Chinese, conveying this understanding to them and coordinating expectations – enabled Washington to design a deterrence strategy that was largely successful. Similarly, China’s knowledge of American goals suggested that the U.S. upheld the principles of ‘One China’ and ‘peaceful reunification’ enshrined in a series of bilateral communiqués on Taiwan from the 1970s. However, the Chinese also appreciated this knowledge. As a result, they were not absolutely certain that the Americans would uphold these communiqué commitments during the crisis. Beijing opted to implement coercive diplomacy (compellence) to prevent the Americans from departing from the spirit of their 1970s communiqués. Like the Americans, empathy on the part of the Chinese also helped them to design a coercive strategy that was successful.

The three case studies also show that appreciation and empathy grow over time (see the bold, diagonal lines in Figure 5). Each deterrence encounter typically results in a process of learning and adaptation (the boxes at the bottom of Figure 5), whereby new norms are formed and lessons learnt. Such norms and lessons result in increased appreciation in successive deterrence encounters, and increased empathy (although this is dependent on the type of ‘reasonableness’ involved in the previous deterrence encounter). After the Vietnam War, for example, China and the U.S. learnt to refashion their image of each other, leading to eventual rapprochement in the 1970s. The shared
norm involved a joint attempt (from 1968, when the combat operations in Vietnam started to taper off) to limit the scope of potential conflict in Vietnam. The lessons learnt and norms formed after the Vietnam War increased *appreciation* and *empathy*, such that by the mid-1990s Taiwan Strait crisis, China and the U.S. had moved from ‘recognised unreasonableness’ to ‘recognised reasonableness.’

We can also see how evolving norms and lessons learnt led to better decisions regarding the use of deterrence strategies in the Sino-U.S. relationship over time (see horizontal dashed arrows in Figure 5). For example, a Korean War norm – limitation of hostilities along a physical boundary – had by the end of the Vietnam War evolved into another shared norm – the limitation of general hostilities – between the U.S. and China. This norm evolved further by the end of the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996. By then, the U.S. and China had developed a shared norm – a joint attempt to deter Taiwan from declaring *de facto* independence. An interesting point here is that the norms developed after the Korean and Vietnam War sought to reduce the possibility of escalation in a conflict that had already started. By the end of the Taiwan Strait crisis, the norm was a proactive instrument aimed at reducing the possibility of war.

The summary of the Sino-American relationship over time indicates that increasing *appreciation* and *empathy* improved the management of the bilateral relationship, leading to much-needed stability. In the past decade, the Sino-American relationship has been dogged by many controversial issues, including China’s restrictions on trade, its exchange rate controls, intellectual property rights, food and product safety, Beijing’s anti-satellite test in early 2007, and more recently, Washington’s position on Tibet. Among these issues, the question of Taiwan stands out as a major ‘flash point’ in bilateral relations. This thesis, however, has shown that the Taiwan issue has a paradoxical nature: while the issue has the potential to lead to escalation and potentially a conflict between China and the U.S., there is also a modicum of stability created by the increasing level of *appreciation* and *empathy* in the

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864 Ashley Tellis, ‘China Military Space Strategy,’ *Survival* 49(3), pp 41-72
bilateral Sino-American relationship. In the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, both Beijing and Washington showed a willingness to appreciate their knowledge about the other party’s goals, and with empathy, were able to design relatively successful deterrence and compellence strategies. Appreciation and empathy were enhanced by the entrenchment of various norms and lessons formed after the Vietnam War. In short, the strategic architecture for Sino-American relations laid down by Nixon and Mao in the early 1970s – using strategic considerations based on the quid pro quo on Taiwan to override thorny issues – has been strengthened.

This analysis contributes to the literature on Sino-American relations, which argues that the relationship is largely dualistic, with elements of cooperation and conflict. The thesis supports this assessment, but adds that the bilateral relationship is likely to tilt towards the former, based on the processes of appreciation, empathy as well as learning and adaptation on the issue of Taiwan. Currently, the Sino-American quid pro quo on the issue of Taiwan can be described as an instance of 'recognised reasonableness' and perhaps even more than that. If Taiwan is ever tempted to go down the route to formal independence, the presence of appreciation and empathy in the Sino–American relationship is likely to instil much confidence in the implementation of deterrence strategies. The implementation of deterrence strategies might not even become necessary, given that both China and America have taken proactive measures to prevent Taiwan from declaring formal independence (as described in Chapter 7). In addition, both China and the U.S. have in the past decade sought to drain the swamps of antipathy in their relationship in the past decade. This general improvement in bilateral relations – marked by further appreciation and empathy – might in the future also result in a diminished need for strategic deterrence.

FIGURE 5: A MODEL OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF REASONABLENESS ACROSS TIME

**Knowledge**
- Mutual Hostility

**Appreciation**
- Fear of future intervention
- Physical and weapon limits

**Empathy**
- Limits to general hostilities
- Changed images

**Unrecognised Unreasonableness (Korean War)**
- U.S. - Deterrence Threat
- China - Deterrence Threat

**Recognised Unreasonableness (Vietnam War)**
- U.S. - Reassurance over Deterrence
- China - Deterrence with a light touch

**Recognised Reasonableness (1995-96 Taiwan Crisis)**
- U.S. - Deterrence Chosen
- China - Compellence Chosen

**U.S. - Deterrence successful**
- China - Compellence successful

**U.S. - Deterrence from declaring independence**

Shared Norms/Lessons
- Fear of future intervention
- Physical and weapon limits

**Deterrence Choices**
- Unrecognised Unreasonableness (Korean War)
- U.S. - Deterrence Failure
- China - Deterrence Failure (Represents imperfect fit to 'recognised unreasonableness')

**Deterrence Outcome**
- Recognised Unreasonableness (Vietnam War)
- U.S. - No challenges to deterrence
- China - Minor deterrence failures, major deterrence success

**Empathy**
- Limits to general hostilities
- Changed images

**APPENDIX**

**Knowledge**
- Mutual Hostility

**Appreciation**
- Fear of future intervention
- Physical and weapon limits

**Empathy**
- Limits to general hostilities
- Changed images

**Unrecognised Unreasonableness (Korean War)**
- U.S. - Deterrence Threat
- China - Deterrence Threat

**Recognised Unreasonableness (Vietnam War)**
- U.S. - Reassurance over Deterrence
- China - Deterrence with a light touch

**Recognised Reasonableness (1995-96 Taiwan Crisis)**
- U.S. - Deterrence Chosen
- China - Compellence Chosen

**U.S. - Deterrence successful**
- China - Compellence successful

Shared Norms/Lessons
- Fear of future intervention
- Physical and weapon limits

**Deterrence Choices**
- Unrecognised Unreasonableness (Korean War)
- U.S. - Deterrence Failure
- China - Deterrence Failure (Represents imperfect fit to 'recognised unreasonableness')

**Deterrence Outcome**
- Recognised Unreasonableness (Vietnam War)
- U.S. - No challenges to deterrence
- China - Minor deterrence failures, major deterrence success

**Empathy**
- Limits to general hostilities
- Changed images
8.1 Lessons For Deterrence

Having discussed the findings from the three case studies, this section will explore the practical ‘lessons’ and recommendations that can be applied to the use of American deterrence strategies in practice\textsuperscript{868} – a task made more daunting by the proliferation of non-state actors such as terrorist groups and ‘rogue states’ in the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century. These lessons and recommendations, in turn, contribute to the literature on deterrence theory and rationality.

Rationality. Discussions about a potential opponent’s rationality is passé. While a lack of rationality can undermine deterrence, its occurrence in pure form is rare. Most of the actors that the U.S. faces are rational actors (in the limited sense) but these actors can be reasonable or unreasonable. Usually, it is the lack of reasonableness that leads to deterrence failure. For example, a potential deterrer might fail to deter a rational-but-unreasonable opponent, in that the deterrer was unaware of the deteree’s value and motivations.

Types of Reasonableness. It is important for a potential deterrer like the U.S. to identify the ‘type’ of reasonableness that they are facing when assessing potential enemies like rogue states and terrorists groups. This determination shapes the type of approach that a potential deterrer might use towards a challenger. As the three case studies have indicated, ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ is associated with deterrence strategies being implemented and failing; ‘recognised unreasonableness’ with deterrence strategies being either abandoned or supplemented with other policy tools; and ‘recognised reasonableness’ with deterrence strategies being implemented successfully. Several factors help in the identification of the type of reasonableness. These include the length of strategic interaction with an opponent, the potential deterrer’s ability to question and evaluate his knowledge of his opponent’s goals or conceptual framework (i.e. appreciation), as well the ability to take the perspective of the opponent and convey such understanding (i.e. empathy). Beyond these factors, however, there is no exact science in determining which type of ‘reasonableness’ a potential deterrer is facing. A deterrer’s correct assessment of the type of reasonableness he is facing helps him to adopt the associated choices with regard to the

\textsuperscript{868} As argued previously, a focus on American perceptions is not unwarranted, given that deterrence theory is largely American-centric. Recent scholarship on ‘rationality’ and ‘reasonableness’ as proposed by Payne and Gray has focused on American perceptions.
implementation of deterrence strategies. It should be said here that even when the deterrer makes the correct judgement about which types of 'reasonableness' he is facing, the resultant deterrence outcome is dependent on the contextual situation at a particular time.

*Learning and Adaptation Across Time.* The process of learning and adaptation over time needs some elaboration here. According to the case studies in this thesis, the Sino-American relationship went from 'unrecognised unreasonableness' in 1950 (albeit only for the American deterrence attempt) to 'recognised unreasonableness' in the late 1960s and finally to 'recognised reasonableness.' This encompassed a period of nearly 50 years. By extension, this does not mean that the U.S. will potentially need the same amount of time to approach a state of 'recognised reasonableness' with rogue states and terrorist groups, or that such attainment is at all possible. As discussed in Chapter 4, increased strategic interactions between two parties do not automatically lead to increased learning. However, if the length of strategic interaction with such entities is short, it would be safer to make an initial assumption that the probability of encountering 'unrecognised unreasonableness' – and as a result, deterrence failure – is high.

**8.2 Types of Reasonableness: Theory and Practice in U.S. Policy**

The lessons and recommendations mentioned above can be applied to American policy vis-à-vis rogue states and terrorist states since the early 1990s. There have been several instances of deterrence failure and strategic surprises in U.S. policy towards the rogue states (in Chapter 4, parallels were drawn between deterrence failures and strategic surprises, in that some expectations of an opponent's were proven to be wrong). During the first Gulf War, Saddam Hussein burnt up oil wells in Kuwait despite American deterrence warnings not to do so. This constituted a deterrence failure for the U.S., since in issuing the warnings to Saddam, it had expected Saddam to be deterred. In 1998, North Korea launched a three-stage Taepodong-1 missile over Japan. The second stage of the missile fell into the Pacific Ocean about 330km east of the Japanese port city of Hachinohe, after flying approximately 1,380km from the

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The missile test took many observers by surprise and confirmed that Pyongyang’s missile capabilities had progressed beyond previous estimates. The test also had a major impact on American and Japanese assessments of the ballistic missile threat posed by North Korea in the late 1990s.

The Iraq example conforms to this thesis’ conceptualisation of instances of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ – a failure on the part of the Americans to appreciate their knowledge about Iraq’s goals led them to implement a deterrence strategy that failed. U.S. officials’ knowledge suggested that Saddam would not challenge their deterrence posture, but they were wrong. The conceptualisation of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ detailed in Chapter 4, however, does not fully explain the North Korea example. The U.S. did not implement a posture of immediate deterrence against North Korea, instead, the missile launch constituted a strategic surprise. Like the Sino-American case studies examined in Chapters 5 to 7, however, the U.S. has used successive deterrence episodes and strategic surprises precipitated by Iraq and North Korea as a basis for learning and adaptation.

8.2.1 Deterrence Towards Rogues: Recognised Unreasonableness
The conceptualisation of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ detailed in Chapter 4 can explain the evolution of American policy towards rogue states that began in the 1990s. By that time, the American recognized that such entities were less reasonable than previously conceived. The U.S. began to appreciate its knowledge that states such as Iran or North Korea would be deterred, such that American strategy involved a greater level of uncertainty regarding the use of deterrence strategies towards such ‘rogues.’ In 1996, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry warned of a growing ICBM threat from ‘undeterrable’ rogues. Consistent with the logic of how appreciation is associated with ‘recognised unreasonableness,’ Perry’s statement was tantamount to the U.S. appreciating its knowledge about the goals of the rogue states, and recognising that they might be unreasonable. This broad theme also marked the George W. Bush Administration’s refashioning of its deterrence logic at the turn of the century. The

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872 Nuclear Threat Initiative, ‘North Korea Profile: Overview and Technical Assessment’
873 William Perry, ‘Protecting the Nation Through Ballistic Missile Defence’
Administration noted that the U.S. had faced a ‘generally status quo, risk-adverse adversary’ during the Cold War, but in the same breath it assessed that deterrence had a lower chance of functioning against rogue leaders who were ‘more willing to take risks, gambling with their lives of their people and the wealth of their nations.’

Despite its concerns about the workability of deterrence against such entities, however, the U.S. has not abandoned the use of deterrence strategies, but rather it has sought to supplement them with other policy tools. In this sense, the strategies adopted by China and the U.S. during the Vietnam War (as described in Chapter 6) – deterrence applied with a light touch and replacing deterrence with reassurance respectively – provide only a rudimentary approach to instances of ‘recognised unreasonableness.’ Currently, the American approach to ‘recognised unreasonableness’ involves a more varied milieu of options. At one level, deterrence is coupled to reassurance, in that Washington commits to making a political settlement with such rogues if they adhere to certain standards of behaviour with regard to their WMD possession. The U.S., for example, has presented North Korea with a promise of talks to resolve bilateral issues and full diplomatic relations if Pyongyang dismantles its nuclear processing facilities at Yongbyon. At another level, deterrence strategies have been supplemented with other strategic tools in anticipation of potential failure. This was not seen during the Vietnam War. In other words, there is a distinct difference between the American experience during the Vietnam War and current American policy towards rogues – in the former, Washington was preparing for deterrence failure, in the latter, the U.S. has prepared for deterrence failure. Both approaches, however, stem from a fundamental assessment that a potential is ‘unreasonable.’

Deterrence strategies have been maintained, albeit with a lower confidence in their effectiveness. Such strategies have also been implemented together with other tools such as active defences (i.e. ballistic missile defences), non-proliferation, consequence management and counterforce. In the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, Washington said it would adapt to the ‘new security environment’ by evolving its deterrence strategy from a threat-based deterrence posture focused on the ‘old triad’ of submarine-launched missiles, land-based ICBMs and nuclear-capable bombers into a

\[874\] National Security Strategy 2002, p 15
\[876\] Smith, ‘Deterrence And Counterproliferation In An Age Of Weapons Of Mass Destruction,’ p 170
capabilities-based one focused on a ‘new triad’ of offensive strike systems, active and passive defences and a revitalized defence infrastructure.²⁷⁷ Such a new strategy would develop capabilities to meet ‘multiple contingencies and new threats in a changing environment.’²⁷⁸ Such a finessed strategy – coupling deterrence with other policy tools – will grow increasingly pertinent in the years to come, as weapons of mass destruction continue to proliferate to smaller and less politically stable states around the world (or are at least predicted to do so).

Current American policy towards rogue states does not appear to be conforming to this thesis’ conceptualisation of ‘recognised reasonableness.’ While the U.S. has reached a stage where it appreciates its knowledge of such rogues, it does not possess enough empathy with respect to such groups. Empathy is sorely lacking due to the dearth of strategic interaction and Washington’s lack of desire – and perhaps general abhorrence – in taking the perspective of such groups. Without empathy, U.S. policy towards rogue states remains in a situation of ‘recognised unreasonableness’ and not ‘recognised reasonableness.’ But like the Sino-American grand bargain on Taiwan, the U.S. is currently seeking grand bargains in its relations with rogue states such as North Korea and Iran. This is a process that is expected to continue, or even accelerate, under the new administration of President Barack Obama. If a crisis does erupt, the U.S. can use such grand bargains as focal points as and when immediate deterrence is employed. A deterrence strategy involving empathy will seek to coerce North Korea back to such bargains. There has been some progress here. The U.S. has laboured at the six-party talks regarding North Korea’s nuclear programme. In April 2008, the talks were mired in hard bargaining over Pyongyang’s disclosure of its nuclear programme.²⁷⁹ However, the eventual goal – North Korea’s denuclearization and Washington’s offer of economic aid and security guarantees to Pyongyang – would mark a grand bargain.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ It must be noted here that as of December 2008, the Six-Party Talks had broken down again due to differences verification of North Korea’s alleged nuclear programme. See Agence-France Presse, ‘No Progress in Six Party Talks on N. Korea: Hill,’ 10 December 2008
If a crisis erupts, the U.S. will possess some measure of empathy to implement deterrence and coerce North Korea back to this grand bargain.

In 2008, the U.S. also held talks with Iran over the future of Iraq. In April 2008, President George W. Bush said Iran had two choices: it could leave in peace with Iraq and enjoy strong economic, cultural, and religious ties. Alternatively, it could continue to arm and train and fund illegal militant groups which are terrorizing the Iraqi people and turning them against Iran. If Iran makes the ‘right choice,’ the President said Washington would encourage a ‘peaceful relationship between Iran and Iraq. If Teheran made the wrong choice, America ‘will act to protect our interests and our troops and our Iraqi partners.’

A grand bargain – if it is actually achieved – between the U.S. and Iran will reap benefits for both countries. This would be based on the mutual realization that they both have similar objectives: – preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq and preventing the civil war there from engulfing the Middle East.

More importantly, a U.S.-Iran détente would enhance the probability of deterrence success if another crisis erupts, particularly if the U.S. can use an empathy-based deterrence strategy to coerce Iran back to such a grand bargain.

8.2.2 Deterrence Policy Towards Terrorists: Recognised Unreasonableness?

The conceptualisation of ‘unrecognised unreasonableness’ and ‘recognised unreasonableness’ can also explain the evolving U.S. approach to terrorist groups to a large extent. The September 11 attacks did not constitute a deterrence failure, but they were a strategic surprise analogous to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941.

The 2001 attacks triggered a process of learning and adaptation, leading the U.S. to recognize that such groups were unreasonable and thus harder to deter. The 2002 National Security Strategy stated categorically that ‘traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction


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and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness.\textsuperscript{884}

Four years later, the U.S. assessment of the efficacy of deterrence strategies against terrorist groups became more realistic. The 2006 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism concluded that ‘a new deterrence calculus combines the need to deter terrorists and supporters from contemplating a WMD attack and, failing that, to dissuade them from actually conducting an attack.’\textsuperscript{885} The new approach is two-pronged – it still regards deterrence strategies as useful, but couples such strategies with other policy tools. In addition to seeking to deter terrorist groups from using WMD against the U.S., the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism document listed five other policy tools – determining terrorists’ plans to develop WMD, denying them the materials for the manufacture of WMD, disrupting the movement of such material, preventing and responding to potential WMD attacks and defining the source of such attacks.\textsuperscript{886} According to a March 2008 New York Times report, Bush Administration officials have become more optimistic about the use of deterrence strategies against terrorist groups. Counter-terrorism officials had adapted the Cold War-era concept of deterrence for use against such groups. One outcome of this new strategy included preventing terrorist attacks by persuading terrorist support networks to refuse any kind of assistance to agents of extremism. Another method would be to make those who supply arms or components to terrorists just as accountable as those who ordered and carried out attacks on the U.S. – a system of ‘attribution as deterrence.’\textsuperscript{887} Notes Michael Vickers, the Pentagon’s top policy maker for special operations:

Obviously, hard-core terrorists will be the hardest to deter ... but if we can deter the support network – recruiters, financial supporters, local security providers and states who provide sanctuary – then we can start achieving a deterrent effect on the whole terrorist network and constrain

\textsuperscript{884} National Security Strategy 2002, p 15


\textsuperscript{886} National Security Council (U.S.), National Strategy for Combating Terror, pp 14-15. Michael Levi attacks conventional wisdom that defences against terrorist attacks must succeed every time and that terrorists need only to succeed once. For terrorists to carry out a specific plot, they have to be successful at each and every step involved in bringing the plot to fruition. Levi argues that terrorists must succeed at every stage, but the defense only needs to succeed only once. See Levi, On Nuclear Terrorism, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008, p 7

terrorists' ability to operate. We have not deterred terrorists from their intention to do us great harm ... but by constraining their means and taking away various tools, we approach the overall deterrent effect we want.\footnote{Schmitt and Shanker, 'U.S. Adapts Cold-War Idea to Fight Terrorists,' p 1}

If desperation is the father of innovation, the U.S. has been relatively adept at devising new approaches to confronting the threat posed by terrorist groups. In its 2008 National Defense Strategy, U.S. military planners called for ‘tailored deterrence’ to fit particular actors, situations and forms of warfare. The U.S., the document argued, had a greater variety of ‘capability and methods’ to deter such groups. It should, for example, enhance the ability to withstand an attack on the U.S. and improve resiliency beyond such an attack.\footnote{Department of Defense (U.S.), \textit{National Defense Strategy}, June 2008, Washington: Department of Defense, p 12} As the U.S. prepared for the incoming administration of President-elect Barack Obama, Defense Secretary Robert Gates wrote in \textit{Foreign Affairs} that the current deterrence efforts against terrorist groups should be supplemented by sustained efforts to drain the swamps that fuels terrorism:

Where possible, what the military calls kinetic operations should be subordinated to measures aimed at promoting better governance, economic programs that spur development, and efforts to address the grievances among the discontented, from whom the terrorists recruit. It will take the patient accumulation of quiet successes over a long time to discredit and defeat extremist movements and their ideologies.\footnote{Robert Gates, 'A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age,' \textit{Foreign Affairs} 88(1), January/February 2009, pp 28-41}

\subsection*{8.3 U.S. Deterrence: The Way Forward}

On balance, a grand bargain between the U.S. and the two rogue states (Iran and North Korea) looks more achievable than one between Washington and terrorist groups. Currently, it does not appear that the U.S. has even the desire – much less the ability – to empathise or take the perspective of terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda. The U.S. has not sought to arrive at some grand bargain with such entities. Empathy as defined in this thesis is not altruistic; rather it is cognitive (the ability to objectively take another party’s perspective) and behavioural (the ability to convey such understanding to the other party). Strategic interaction with such groups remains limited; moreover, the notion of taking the perspective of terrorist groups sounds undesirable, if not abhorrent.
Writing on September 1, 1939 – the day Nazi Germany invaded Poland – American general Dwight Eisenhower wrote that Adolf Hitler was a ‘power drunk egocentric’ and ‘criminally insane.’ He added, somewhat dispassionately, that unless Hitler was successful in conquering the whole world by ‘brute force,’ Germany itself must be ‘dismembered and destroyed.’

Eisenhower’s approach towards Nazi Germany is a distinctive blend of coercion and control. He recognised that Nazi Germany was ‘unreasonable’ and that once deterrence vis-a-vis Berlin had failed, only force would suffice. The point of this thesis is not to make comparisons between today’s adversaries and Adolf Hitler’s Germany. However, U.S. perspectives in terms of the types of reasonableness seem similar. This means that deterrence need not be abandoned, but it could be coupled to force (such as the U.S. policy on counterforce), as well as other approaches discussed above. Without the attainment of empathy with such entities, the U.S. will have to continue to mix a blend of coercion and control. In the long term, empathy with rogue states – and as a result, successful deterrence – might be possible. Empathy with terrorist groups does appear to be far-fetched, unless there is a basis – inconceivable as it might sound – for some shared goals as described in the discussion of Sino-American interaction during the mid-1990s Taiwan Strait crisis. If shared goals and other requisite conditions such as a history of strategic interaction and the ability to take the perspective of its opponents are attainable, an instance of ‘recognised reasonableness’ might conceivably emerge. In the meantime, the U.S. – stuck as it is in ‘recognised unreasonableness’ with rogue states and terrorist groups – will have to continue to employ ‘creative thinking’ with regard to the use of deterrence strategies, as well as keep all options open.

If the eventual conditions are right, empathy – and successful deterrence – might soon be within Washington’s reach.


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