

Points of Reference for the Conduct of 21st Century Deterrence and Assurance Research

Deterrence and *Assurance* are abstract political-military concepts. They are also conditions attained in the minds of *deterrees* and *assurees*, achieved only at their respective discretion, and only in nuanced context of their unique decision spaces. Activities undertaken to achieve deterrence and assurance goals comprise planning and execution of a *strategy*, an equally abstract concept requiring similar research consideration. Simply stated, research involves gaining understanding of both the nature of a given deterrence and assurance problem, and how to address it.

With these themes in mind, new thinking in deterrence and assurance is *not* exclusively adversary and/or military in scope. It calls for research into topics that go beyond consideration of adversary military capabilities and attendant U.S./Allied means to countervail them. Topics include (but are not limited to) local, regional, and international political and economic factors; socio-cultural and decision-making dynamics; as well as psychological lines of inquiry, all of which are geared toward informing policies pursuant to tailored deterrence and allied assurance objectives.

While better understanding into how objectives *might* be achieved vis-à-vis a given deterrence and assurance problem set remains a central focus, equally as pertinent is appreciating the mechanics of how objectives *are* to be achieved. Such research involves understanding the political, fiscal, and bureaucratic aspects of marshalling limited national resources into coherent deterrence and assurance strategies. Underlying all of this is the need to understand the nature of the term *strategy* itself.

While not exhaustive, researchers are encouraged to consider the following alphabetized list of references selected with each of these themes in mind as they pursue efforts to add to the literature.

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