



**RESEARCH PAPER
No. 122**

JULY

2008

UNDERSTANDING DISSUASION

Dr Glen M. Segell

**(Director of the Institute of Security Policy,
Editor of the London Security Policy Study)**

**RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES
(RIEAS)**

**# 1, Kalavryton Street, Ano-Kalamaki, Athens, 17456, Greece
RIEAS [URL:http://www.rieas.gr](http://www.rieas.gr)**

RIEAS MISSION STATEMENT

Objective

The objective of the Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS) is to promote the understanding of international affairs. Special attention is devoted to transatlantic relations, intelligence studies and terrorism, European integration, international security, Balkan and Mediterranean studies, Russian foreign policy as well as policy making on national and international markets.

Activities

The Research Institute for European and American Studies seeks to achieve this objective through research, by publishing its research papers on international politics and intelligence studies, organizing seminars, as well as providing analyses via its web site. The Institute maintains a library and documentation center. RIEAS is an institute with an international focus. Young analysts, journalists, military personnel as well as academicians are frequently invited to give lectures and to take part in seminars. RIEAS maintains regular contact with other major research institutes throughout Europe and the United States and, together with similar institutes in Western Europe, Middle East, Russia and Southeast Asia.

Status

The Research Institute for European and American Studies is a non-profit research institute established under Greek law. RIEAS's budget is generated by membership subscriptions, donations from individuals and foundations, as well as from various research projects. The Institute is autonomous organization. Its activities and views are independent of any public or private bodies, and the Institute is not allied to any political party, denominational group or ideological movement.

Dr. John M. Nomikos
Director

**RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES
(RIEAS)**

Postal Address:

1, Kalavryton Street
Ano-Kalamaki
Athens, 17456
Greece
Tel/Fax: + 30 210 9911214

E-mail: rieas@otenet.gr

Administrative Board

Dr. John M. Nomikos, Director
Mr. Charles Rault, Senior Advisor
Dr. Darko Trifunovic, Senior Advisor
Dr. Andrei Korobkov, Senior Advisor

Research Team

Andrew Liaropoulos, Senior Analyst
Maria Alvanou, Senior Analyst
Panos Kostakos, Senior Analyst
Ioannis Michaletos, Junior Analyst
Andreas Banoutsos, Junior Analyst
Aya Burweila, Junior Analyst

International Advisors

Mr. Richard R. Valcourt, Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence
Dr. Shlomo Shpiro, Bar Illan University
Prof. Siegfried Beer, Director, Austrian Centre for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies
Mr. James Bilotto, CBRN Chief Operating Officer
Mr. Chris Kuehl, Armada Corporate Intelligence Review
Prof. Vasilis Botopoulos, Chancellor, University of Indianapolis (Athens Campus)
Prof. Marco Lombardi, Director, Italian Team for Security and Managing Emergencies, Catholic University
Dr. Zweiri Mahjoob, Centre for Strategic Studies, Jordan University

Research Associates

Mr. Ioannis Moutsos, Independent Investigative Journalist

Mr. Konstantopoulos Ioannis, Intelligence Studies

Mr. Nadim Hasbani, Lebanon-Syria and North Africa Studies

Mr. Nikos Lalazisis, European Intelligence Cooperation

Mr. Naveed Ahmad, South & Central Asia and Muslim world

**RESEARCH PAPER
No. 122**

JULY

2008

UNDERSTANDING DISSUASION

Dr Glen M. Segell

**((Director of the Institute of Security Policy,
Editor of the London Security Policy Study)**

ABSTRACT

The gravity of asymmetric threats to international stability and global security has led American policy makers to follow a path of dissuasion to complement defense/offense and deterrence. Dissuasion necessitates challenging the Westphalian international system and possibly the United Nations Charter through intervention in the internal affairs of other states. This paper addresses “Where does the concept of dissuasion arise? How American dissuasion differs from other forms of dissuasion. When is dissuasion being applied? How is dissuasion being applied? Is dissuasion a viable option?”

INTRODUCTION

Dissuasion is increasingly being used by American diplomats, politicians and the military to describe the action that should apparently be taken against those identified as posing a threat to American interests prior to such potential adversaries

having the actual capability to pose a danger. Deterrence is now used to describe the action that American diplomats, politicians and the military should apparently take against those identified as posing a threat to American interests once such potential adversaries have the actual capability to pose a danger. Dissuasion and deterrence are policies in their own right but are also integrated with other defense and security options.

The measures advocated to implement dissuasion are first and foremost discussions or negotiation. There are positive aspects of such discussions such as offering incentives including security guarantees and economic packages. Advocated in such diplomacy is the necessity to negotiate from a position of strength and credibility. Such credibility includes missile defense systems and comprehensive civil defense procedures. These are aimed at dissuading a potential adversary from acquiring capabilities by highlighting that America is capable of defending against even the most hostile weapons.

If such diplomacy is not successful then the American government has clearly shown that it is prepared to take military action as a measure to nullify any potential threat from emerging. The American military ability and intent to affect pre-emptive military strikes follows a well-trodden doctrine that the best form of the defense is the offense. There are positive and negative consequences of such action. The positive aspect is that such intent and willingness accords diplomatic activity to further dissuasion a value of also being a deterrent against those who might contemplate developing a capability to endanger American interests. In doing so such willingness is also a means of affecting dissuasion by psychological means on those who are not willing to enter negotiations – this includes rogue states and non-state actors. Psychological means include the projection of an image that America is willing to affect pre-emptive military strikes that imposes upon a potential adversary the

element of high risk should it pursue capability to endanger American interests.

Unfortunately if this does not succeed then military action in pre-emptive or preventive war may challenge the Westphalian state system and indeed the United Nations Charter. Such pre-emptive or preventive war is justifiable as each and every state has the right to self defence and indeed has an obligation to protect all its citizens from fear, harm and terror. There is however a grey area in determining proportionality of military action in such pre-emptive or preventive war. Effecting regime change may be considered as interfering in another states internal affairs which is contrary to the principles expressed in the United Nations Charter. Establishing a new system of government after a pre-emptive or preventive war may challenge the notion of the the Westphalian state system that each nation has an inherent right to determine its own representatives and form of representation in self governance.

Other countries have not taken to using dissuasion and deterrence in such a fashion to show any form of marked difference from their ongoing defence and security policies. This does not mean that dissuasion is a totally new concept. Dissuasion, however, has not always been used in such a context as American diplomats, politicians and generals, are currently using it. The word dissuasion has been used in many different contexts for different purposes and indeed in different languages and countries over a period of centuries. This article will answer the questions pertaining to American dissuasion “Where does the concept of dissuasion arise? When is dissuasion being applied? How is dissuasion being applied? Is dissuasion a viable option?” The article commences by building upon existing literature on dissuasion to show how contemporary American dissuasion differs. In this alone, this article is significant in the clarification of the notion and the role of dissuasion and in settling outstanding questions on the future of dissuasion through

rethinking basic concepts such as defence, offence and deterrence. This matters in the construction of knowledge as well as in the implementation of dissuasion.

By focussing on level of the implementation of dissuasion namely the level of tactics this article sets the pace for further research and policy analysis and writings on the doctrinal and strategy levels. Tactics is the art and science of using available means to win battles and diplomatic engagements. This compares to strategy being the level of structure or infra-structure; doctrine being the level of how to implement a policy; whilst policy is a set of options dependent upon intent, capability, national role conception and style of government. Although it is easy to differentiate these levels in analysis, in reality these take place in an iterative and cyclic process given that tactics are implemented based upon the decision to proceed on a specific option while that policy option is determined by the ability to implement the option.

WHERE DOES THE CONCEPT OF DISSUASION ARISE?

The usage of dissuasion is not copyright to top-level strategic issues nor is it confined to European or North American affairs. The prevalence of dissuading is to be found in texts from ancient and biblical times given that such an approach is integral to diplomacy and war.¹ The term dissuasion was used in the announcement on 28 February 2004 when 53 African leaders met at an African Union (AU) summit to set up a multinational force empowered to intervene across the troubled continent to end civil wars or genocide.² This was not the first time that dissuasion had been used

¹ J. C. Paget, "Persuasion and dissuasion in early Christianity, ancient Judaism and Hellenism," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56, no.3, (2005):118.

² Editorial, , African Leaders Agree To Set Up Peacekeeping Force, Reuters, 28 February 2004; and Irish Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, EU-Africa Meeting Announces

in the African context. The South African Communist Party in exile had used dissuasion against the Apartheid regime in the form of trade sanctions, sabotage and the sponsorship of anti-government banditry or rebel movements.³ Dissuasion is also a well-known concept in economics, health care and criminal justice.⁴

During the Cold War writers in the French language during the late 1950s and 1960s, such as Gallois and Beaufre, used the French word dissuasion in the context of nuclear matters.⁵ They were referring to both British and French nuclear arsenals in the context of the ability of the lesser to intervene in the affairs of the greater (the United States and the Soviet Union) to dissuade them from using Europe as a battlefield. In this context all four countries already had nuclear weapons.

This use of dissuasion commences with a theoretical case of country A having a nuclear arsenal. It considers that this is deterring country B, which also has a nuclear arsenal, from initiating war because country B is not doing so. Country A does not

€250 Million Peace Facility For Africa, 1 April 2004,

[Http://Foreignaffairs.Gov.Ie/Information/Display.Asp?Id=1475](http://Foreignaffairs.Gov.Ie/Information/Display.Asp?Id=1475)

³ Stephen Ellis, Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 95.

⁴ R. Preston McAfee, *Competitive Solutions: The Strategist's Toolkit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 45; Steven G Hillestad, Eric N Berkowitz, *Health Care Market Strategy: From Planning to Action* (Sudbury MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2004), 27; Shao-Chuan Leng (ED), *Criminal Justice in Post-Mao China: Analysis and Documents* (New York: SUNY University Press, 1985), 238.

⁵ Andre Beaufre, *Dissuasion et Strategie* (Paris: Colin, 1964); Peirre Marie Gallois, *The Balance of Terror: Strategy for the Nuclear Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).

feel threatened and is therefore also self-deterred from initiating war against country B. Countries A and B do not exist in solitude in this game of deterrence. Country C is dissuading both Country A and B from going to war against each other or from intervening in its affairs if it acquires a smaller nuclear force than either countries A and B and if it projects the credibility that it could escalate a conflict thereby forcing Country A and B into a total war. It is the credibility of the capability and intent of Country C that grants it the ability to influence both Country A and B and dissuade them both from attacking each other or in interfering in the affairs of Country C. Clearly nuclear weapons did not dissuade armed conflicts in general only deterring war between nuclear weapon possessing states.⁶

Reading the above, it is not hard to consider why the word dissuasion was also used in official NATO documents in the French language as a direct translation of the English word deterrence in context of both conventional and non-conventional weaponry.⁷ In this context dissuasion is considered as deterring an adversary from a specific action rather than as coercion into an action. This concept of dissuasion is still in use by France and in the French language version of NATO documentation. It is therefore important to maintain caution when using dissuasion and explicitly state when it is French dissuasion, American dissuasion, dissuasion as a translation from

⁶ The doctrinal and strategic levels of the nuclear debate are well documented in Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Future Defence Planning 181*, Permanent Representative To North Atlantic Council To Secretary Of State For External Affairs Dispatch No.4206 Top Secret Paris, (15 October 1957) *The Present Position Of NATO* <http://www.Dfait-Maeci.Gc.Ca/Department/History/Dcer/Details-En.Asp?Intrefid=6603>

another language or indeed dissuasion by other countries or in contexts other than defence and security.

This article will continue to focus on the implementation of dissuasion by American politicians, diplomats and generals in the post Cold War environment. This contemporary American dissuasion seeks to bring an adversary into dialogue and diplomacy before that adversary has the actual weapons capability to endanger American interests. Hence contemporary American dissuasion includes activities of diplomacy, negotiation and projection of intent relying on credibility from its position of superior military strength and willingness to use such strength pre-emptively.⁸ Similarly President Putin of Russia has also spoken of dissuasion to guarantee global security and defend Russia from pressure or blackmail using political-military means.⁹

Brian Bates has articulated an example of American dissuasion in context of the Counterproliferation Initiative (CPI) noting, “Dissuasion involves persuading a potential proliferator not to develop a CBRN program. Once the rationale for the weapons program has been determined states may dissuade the potential proliferator from starting or continuing a weapons program with an offer that addresses his security concern.”¹⁰ C S Lewis, Colin Gray, Stephen J Cimbala and James Scouras,

⁸ J. Hagood, “Dissuading Nuclear Adversaries: The Strategic Concept of Dissuasion and the U.S. Nuclear Arsenal,” *Comparative Strategy* 24, no.2, (2005): 173-184.

⁹ V. Putin, “Russia to Upgrade Armored Troops”, *Prensa Latina*, (23 November 2005), [http://www.plenglish.com/article.asp?ID=%7B00FDDC2B-204B-4FFC-BFE3-2AB4E8945665%7D\)&language=EN](http://www.plenglish.com/article.asp?ID=%7B00FDDC2B-204B-4FFC-BFE3-2AB4E8945665%7D)&language=EN)

¹⁰ Brian Bates, *Developing a Theoretical Model of Counterproliferation for the 21st Century* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 47.

Samuel Grier and James Rapkoch, and the International Court of Justice offer other recent examples and references to such dissuasion in writings.¹¹

WHEN IS DISSUASION BEING APPLIED?

The purpose of dissuasion being implemented prior to the attainment of capability by a potential adversary has been pronounced by the Bush administration in its cacophonies of documentations and speeches that include the Quadrennial Defense Review (2001), the Nuclear Posture Review (2001), the National Security Strategy (2002), the 2004 National Military Strategy (NMS), the 2005 National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the Quadrennial Defense Review (2006).¹²

¹¹ C. S. Lewis, *New Challenges, New Tools for Defense Decisionmaking* (Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation, 2003), 60; Colin S Gray, *The Sheriff: America's Defense of the New World Order* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004); Stephen J Cimballa, James Scouras, *A New Nuclear Century: Strategic Stability and Arms Control* (Wesport CA: Praeger, 2002), 174; International Court Of Justice, *Case Concerning Military and Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2000); Samuel Grier and James Rapkoch, "Applying U.S. Power in the Absence of Global Equilibrium," *Air & Space Power Chronicles*, (June 2004),

<http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/cc/Grier.html>

¹² Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Washington DC, (30 September 2001), <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf>; Nuclear Posture Review (2001) <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm>; NSS 2002, 14, 29, 30 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>; The National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America, The White House, Washington DC, (17 September

It is appropriate to quote directly from these documents and speeches to highlight American dissuasion. The 2001 QDR states that dissuasion “influences the nature of military competition, channels threats in certain directions, and complicates military planning for potential adversaries.”¹³ According to the 2001 QDR, dissuasion targets “future military competition.” In addition, the 2001 QDR describes dissuasion as having a “channelling” affect due to superior U.S. technological strengths. The 2002 NSS states “our military must dissuade future military competition.” Explicitly the 2002 NSS of the U.S. dictates the use of dissuasion.¹⁴ Furthermore, The 2005 National Defense Strategy (NDS) advocates “We will work to dissuade potential adversaries from adopting threatening capabilities, methods, and ambitions, particularly by developing our own key military advantages.”¹⁵ This is continued in

2002), iv, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>; 2004 National Military Strategy, Joint Chiefs of Staff, DoD, Washington DC, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf>; The National Defense Strategy (NDS) of the United States of America, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Washington DC, (March 2005), <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>; Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Washington DC, (6 February 2006), <http://www.comw.org/qdr/qdr2006.pdf>

¹³ 2001 QDR, p. 11

¹⁴ The National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America, The White House, Washington DC, (17 September 2002), iv, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.

¹⁵ The National Defense Strategy (NDS) of the United States of America, Office of the Defense (OSD), Washington DC. (March 2005), iv. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>

the 2006 QDR that mentions dissuasion five times including stating that the United States will work “To dissuade major and emerging powers from developing capabilities that could threaten regional stability,” and will “attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive or other capabilities that could enable regional hegemony or hostile action against the United States or other friendly countries.”¹⁶

The singular understanding from a reading of these documents and speeches is that there is a narrative of dissuasion that supports various security activities like service budgets, military war planning, and foreign diplomacy. From this narrative there emerges a common thread of intent in how to implement dissuasion compared to other tactics. This is that assurance policies target allies, dissuasion targets emerging threats, deterrence targets existing threats, and defeat targets engaged threats. Clearly, the characteristics that make up dissuasion represent some of the same ones that factor into deterrence and assurance. However, merely transposing the conditions for deterrence or assurance success does not do justice to the fact that dissuasion has its own characteristics. A key difference between deterrence and dissuasion is that the latter tries to pre-empt the production of weapon systems whereas the former assumes the weapon system already exists or will exist shortly.

Digging deeper into the documents reveals that dissuasion seeks to target threats predicted upon emerging capabilities, methods, or ambitions. This could be a state, a non-state organization, or a potential weapon system. From this dissuasion is defined as a policy in its own right. Steven Lobell has traced the lineage of the Bush

¹⁶ Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Washington DC, (6 February 2006), <http://www.comw.org/qdr/qdr2006.pdf> P.42

concept of dissuasion to similar policies in Spain under King Philip IV (1621-1665) and his Count-Duke of Olivares, Gaspar de Guzman (1622-1643).¹⁷

Assessing the utility of a dissuasive policy is challenging. Taking up the challenge include Professor Richard Kugler of the National Defense University (NDU) who summarizes the rationale for contemporary dissuasion noting where examples will emerge. Kugler writes, “It offers a potent concept for handling geopolitical situations in which U.S. relationships with key countries fall short of overt rivalry but can deteriorate if strategic and military competition takes hold.”¹⁸ Increasingly dissuasion is also being voiced in conjunction with policy against terrorism and rogue states.¹⁹

HOW IS DISSUASION BEING APPLIED?

The objective of dissuasion by American diplomats, politicians and generals is to negate the capabilities posed by states and non-state actors engaged in extremist politics, radicalism militarism and acts of suicide before they have the capabilities to affect damage to American interests. The implementation of dissuasion has evolved since the end of the Cold War noted in concerns voiced by Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush over non-state actors exemplified by terrorism and states evident in the

¹⁷ S.E. Lobell, “The Bush Defense Policy of Assurance and Dissuasion: Lessons from Philip IV of Spain”, *Comparative Strategy* 23, no.2, (2004): 197-208.

¹⁸ Richard Kugler, “Dissuasion as a Strategic Concept.” *Strategic Forum*, no. 196, (December 2002). Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SF196/SF196.pdf>

¹⁹ S.D. Collins, “Dissuading State Support of Terrorism: Strikes or Sanctions? (An Analysis of Dissuasion Measures Employed Against Libya)”, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27, no.1, (2004): 1-18.

proliferation and the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.²⁰ This arose because it was understood that there is neither effective defence nor effective deterrence against extremist politics, radicalism militarism and suicide terrorists. The primary means of implementing dissuasion is not to engage in conflict on a battlefield but to impose one's will upon an adversary at relatively little cost to oneself. Thus implementing dissuasion is first and foremost through diplomacy and the projection of intent where the adversary is willing to negotiate or through pre-emptive military action where a potential adversary is not willing to negotiate.

Implementing dissuasion through psychological means requires the threat of the use of armed force to be credible to dissuade an adversary when dialogue and diplomacy is not possible or when it has failed. It could be contemplated that a perceived or real threat of pre-emptive military force by superior armed forces would be a good method to dissuade. This shows that one means of implementing dissuasion is the negation of an adversaries options relying on the credibility of pre-emptive armed force. Clearly it would not be prudent to utilise military means in all instances. The notion of rationality of an adversary is required for dissuasion to be successful short of the actual use of armed force.

Notably not all methods of dissuasion are through actions of the armed forces but could be through socio-economic interactions. Dissuasion could also be implemented through the disruption of the relations between different parts of the adversary according to the well-trodden doctrine of “divide and conquer”. This could

²⁰ The Clinton administration has been detailed by Paul Hoyt Rogue States and International Relations, Conference paper presented to International Studies Association Conference 1999 <http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/hop01/> while the first Bush administration has been detailed by Glen Segell “Counter-proliferating the Rogue States”, Defence and Security Analysis, 20, no.4, (2004): 343-354.

be by disrupting the network of social relations or tele-communication; by generating squabbles amongst the adversary by offering various and alternate versions of criticism and support for parts of their values and norms; by promoting or befriendng parts of the adversary to the dismay or anger of other parts of the adversary; or even through ensuring that the adversary, through example, becomes sensitive to the costs of any form of belligerent activity.

IS DISSUASION A VIABLE OPTION?

The inability to defend a point such as the USS Cole, the Pentagon or the Twin Towers in New York, the Cold War lessons of the futility of tactical nuclear weapons on the battlefield that would inevitably lead to escalation, the inability of strategic nuclear weapons to deter anything but other nuclear powers and indeed the difficulties in negotiating with extremists and fundamentalists have led this article to suggest that dissuasion is increasingly being sought as a means of protecting American interests. Dissuasion is the concept being used by American diplomats, politicians and the military to advocate the action that should be taken against those identified as posing a threat to American interests prior to such potential adversaries having the actual capability to be a threat. Dissuasion in this context entails denying or neutralizing.

Persuasion would be the preferred activity over that of dissuasion. However this is not always possible with rogue states and terrorists given that they might not wish to engage in negotiating and diplomacy. So long as such potential adversaries are convinced of American intentions to respond or to pre-empt to any threatening capability by military force then dissuasion is likely to succeed.

The key to credible dissuasion is that the dissuasive action threatened must effect rationality on a potential adversary or at least impose a cost to the consequences

of any irrational act. Potential adversaries are then likely to be dissuaded from attaining the capability to threaten. This suggests that the notion of dissuasive credibility must provide sufficient threat to a probable “force” aggressor with an exorbitant sanction in relation to the stake. This relies on the understanding that America has both the capability and credibility to initiate or to respond – which it does possess – though a limitation would be public opinion. A requirement of dissuasion is to project the intent to be prepared to engage in war. Dissuasion needs to threaten to inflict to the aggressor forcefully unacceptable losses intended to dissuade the aggressor ex ante to initiate the acquisition of capability to affect an attack. Hence dissuasion is also a war-fighting posture, not just in appearance but also in fact.

Dissuasion, however, does not require pre-committed armed forces in the manner in which nuclear deterrence requires forces ready to strike and respond at a moments notice. Dissuasion differs from deterrence and defense since in warfare the aim of deterrence and defense is victory over the enemy. Victory is not sought between adversaries in dissuasion. The aim of implementing dissuasion is to check the other side before it has acquired the capability to engage in battle, rather than to defeat him in battle.

Given that potential adversaries such as terrorists, extremists and fundamentalists do not always have a demarcated territorial imperative implementing dissuasion requires the projection of credibility through the control of the pace of engagement between the two sides in the confrontation. The pace of engagement is defined as an objective to gain time to locate the terrorists, frustrate their endeavors and negate their capabilities. The location of potential adversaries is not essentially significant to initiate dissuasion if they have not yet acquired threatening capability. The use of the media and tele-communication is important given that the location of non-state actors is not always possible to determine. The global portrayal of American

resolve to be able to absorb any attack or constant indication that it is capable of detecting any threat and neutralizing it plays important role in weakening an adversary's intent to acquire capability to threaten American interests and in determining the pace of engagement. The greater the portrayed strength of America the longer it would take for an adversary to reach the capability of being able to threaten her.

For example it could be possible for a terrorist organization to acquire chemical or biological components and to weaponise them within American borders. Time is an important element in detecting and apprehending such terrorists. The control of pace is thus when American agencies are able to dictate to the non-state actors (terrorists) the time scale of any confrontation by highlighting through the public media and other communication that there is no value in escalating to such chemical and biological weapons. This could be by informing, through the public media, of antidotes to chemical weapons, or of civil-defense preparedness.

Missile defenses and hardened shelters are another example of how to dissuade others from acquiring missiles to strike against American interests. The ability to defend against a missile attack would dissuade an adversary from developing and deploying missiles given the futility in doing so. Other states participating in such missile defence systems would also benefit from the overall American supremacy in an alliance agreement through direct and indirect effectual dissuasion propensity against missile attack.

Indirectly missile defences would also bolster collective arrangements such as NATO. In doing so the collective strength would enhance dissuasion. For example, during the Cold War the military rationale for NATO was a nuclear shield provided by the United States for Western Europe. In the post Cold War NATO has lost part of its military value in Europe given the open-borders of an enlarged European Union

that do not require large armies for territorial defense coupled with the demise of the nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. A missile defense shield could replace the nuclear shield by the stationing of radar and maybe even missiles on European soil. The argument being an adversary would be dissuaded from an attack on these systems in Europe as such systems would be able to protect European interests as well as any attack on them would be a provocation against the United States.

Developing such dissuasion credibility is in progress given the £449 million project to upgrade RAF Fylingdales to make it part of the anti-missile defense program of the United States and the Danish government deal to allow a radar base in Greenland.²¹ Similarly Japan and the United States have signed an agreement cementing cooperation on the development of a ballistic missile defense system.²² Further Russia has claimed to have successfully tested a modernized anti-ballistic missile, the A-135 missile, at a range in the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan.²³

Dissuasion could also be implemented through confusing and trapping any potential adversary into attacking targets that are of no value or that are even artificial. For example constructing military bases that have cardboard cutout tanks, helicopters and aircraft. The potential adversary may then find that it is unable to acquire sufficient capability to make an impact or to meet its' expectations of a victory. Using such techniques potential adversaries might then be no longer able to maintain

²¹ Editorial, PM Agrees to Host US missiles, BBC, 17 October 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3750294.stm>

²² Editorial, Japan, U.S. Sign Missile Defense Pact, Reuters, 17 December 2004.

²³ Jonathan Marcus , “Russia tests anti-missile system”, BBC, 29 November 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4052847.stm> and Editorial, Russia's new mobile N-missile , AFP, 10 December 2004.

representational distinctions between the real, the visual, and the virtual – confusion would ensue. The potential adversary would be dissuaded from acquiring a capability to endanger American interests.

To do so makes the object of dissuasion less radical than that of physical war, which aims at making the decision to capitulate. Any action of coercion (and in particular war) aims, by the use of various means, a positive psychological objective by forcing a power, by its capitulation, to make the decision to give up being opposed to its adversary. Dissuasion aims at preventing an unfavorable power in the presence of a given situation, to make the decision to employ the coercive means (violent one or not) while making it fear the use of existing coercive means. To dissuade thus consists in being opposed to the project of others and leading it to the renouncement (negation of the assertion) of its action. Physical war has the means of pressure, which the use of the forces constitutes, while dissuasion obtain its effects by the simple threat of employment of the forces.

Indeed, the prohibition of the unfavorable posits actions that can adopt two forms: defense, i.e. effective reaction by engagement with the adversary actions through the projection of irrationality and ambiguity; and offense ie. Through deployment of images of credibility that make an adversary conscious of the inequality of the involved forces or its insufficient superiority. If dissuasion is limited to prevent an adversary from starting on oneself an action which one fears, its effect is defensive, while, if it prevents the adversary from being opposed to an action which one wants to make, dissuasion is then offensive. In both instances the adversary is led to dissuasion because the probability of success appears low by virtue of the adversaries perceptions that it is weaker. In sum the objective of dissuasion is to reduce threat. The target is at emerging threats. The measure of the effectiveness is that the threat never develops beyond a certain stage.

As with Cold War nuclear deterrence and dissuasion as with contemporary dissuasion - in both there is clearly the dilemma of irrationality posed and present. This is especially in the case of disgruntled individuals or organisations that might indulge in self-sacrifice (suicide) to gain self or communal recognition or to attain dignity or significance to a cause or their community.²⁴ Such disgruntled individuals may not be controlled by any organisation. They may act independently aggravating attempts at specific detection and direct dissuasion.

The viability of the implementation of contemporary dissuasion resting on credibility and capability necessitates demonstration of intent. It is fair to observe that such intent requires the policy options of pre-emptive military force and retribution. An adversary who is irrational could well be dissuaded if there have been previous instances where a democratic state has demonstrated the willingness to utilise all means at its disposal when persuasion and diplomacy has not succeeded. This could be the shown willingness to strike first (pre-emptive military strike in direct self-defence). For example war and regime change in Afghanistan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In short, the viability of implementing dissuasion rests on the credibility of American diplomats, politicians and generals in demonstrating to potential adversaries that any adversarial initiative would result in an asymmetrical response. The essential condition for implementing such dissuasion rests on the viability of limiting a military engagement and preventing escalation or at least the aggressor's fear that such an armed engagement would not be limited but would spiral rapidly upward. Dissuasion

²⁴ Glen Segell, "9/11: Wahabism/Hegemony and Agenic Man/Heroic Masculinity, United States Navy", Strategic Insights IV, no.3 (March 2005) www.mipt.org/pdf/9-11-Wahabism-Hegemony-March2005.pdf

thus fits the jargon of the theory of a trigger. This suggests a concept of catalytic war that presupposes a stable terror balance between all those involved.

CONCLUSION

American dissuasion differs from other forms of dissuasion such as the French strategy of nuclear dissuasion or dissuasion as the translation of deterrence for example in multi-lingual NATO publications and documentation. The aim of American dissuasion is to check an adversary before it has attained capability to endanger American interests. This dissuasion can be applied in both a defensive and an offensive capacity. It is expected to preserve the peace and maintain the territorial status quo and also to stop this or that action by an adversary, to limit the extent and intensity of dispute, and even in some cases to paralyse an adversary's resistance to some action it is proposed to take. The implementation of dissuasion is concerned with the exploitation of vulnerabilities, threats, risks, and uncertainties' regarding the outbreak and course of war, takes place in peacetime, and is aimed at avoiding war. Implementing dissuasion rests on credibility and capability, a modicum of irrationality, retribution, missile defences, several centres of decision, kin to network centric warfare, the introduction of deception to confuse an adversary and the option of pre-emptive military strikes. It follows that America does not need to have large numbers of armed forces at constant readiness. Dissuasion rests on the credibility that America has the intent, willingness and ability to project real or perceived capability against adversaries. Dissuasion lies in the utilization of the threat and, as we have seen, it is possible to keep this threat credible through instability and a modicum of risk. For example, the threat of pre-emptive military strike grants dissuasion certain validity thanks to the magnitude of the risk. The concept of dissuasion offers the possibility that other more costly defense options may not be required as often in the

future or that they may become stronger when integrated with other tactics into a comprehensive strategy. Dissuasion has the potential benefit of reducing the need to deter or defeat an adversary in the future, and anything that saves money and lives is worth considering and implementing.

About the Author:

Glen Segell, Ph.D, is the Director of the Institute of Security Policy, Editor of the London Security Policy Study, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Licentiate of the Royal Photographic Society.

RIEAS Publications:

RIEAS welcomes short commentaries from young researchers/analysts for our web site (**about 700 words**), but we are also willing to consider publishing short papers (**about 5000 words**) in the English language as part of our publication policy. The topics that we are interested in are: transatlantic relations, intelligence studies, Mediterranean and Balkan issues, Middle East Affairs, European and NATO security, Greek foreign and defense policy as well as Russian Politics and Turkish domestic politics. Please visit: www.rieas.gr (**Publication Link**)