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Appendix

On military diplomacy and strategic signaling

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Résumé

The world moves between peace and war, in a state of varying degrees of tension. In this state, strategic signaling plays a major role. Very simply, strategic signaling aims to create or strengthen ties with friends and deter potential enemies and is thus an important instrument of military diplomacy. Strategic signaling is in turn an important tool for (military) diplomacy. The article discusses different aspects of strategic signaling and military diplomacy and emphasizes the importance of coherence in military capabilities, military action (maneuver) and (political) rhetoric.

"It is a new language that the world has not experienced before; it is the President communicating with 1st Secretary Khrushchev"

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (Dylan Baker) as a US destroyer intercepts a Russian merchant ship in the film about the Cuban Missile Crisis: *Thirteen Days* by Roger Donaldson.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1989, Syrian pressure on Christians in Lebanon increased. France had a frigate offshore, but to underline the importance of the issue from the French point of view, President Mitterrand decided to order the aircraft carrier *Clemenceau* to the scene. He knew that the sudden embarkation of the ship, in the middle of the vacation period, would have a strong impact on the press. And so it did, supported by an interview with the French Chief of Defense Staff. The crisis in Lebanon immediately calmed down and *Clemenceau was* able to return.[4]

This is a clear example of strategic signaling as a tool of military, in this case naval, diplomacy.

Military diplomacy and strategic signaling, or gesturing, as strategic concepts are relatively unknown in Sweden. This is probably because we make such a strong and at the same time unrealistic distinction between war and peace. But as Raymond Aron wrote about the Cold War: "Peace is impossible, war improbable."[5] The real world moves between peace and war, in a more or less strong state of tension. In this state, strategic signaling plays a major role. Very simply, strategic signaling aims to create or strengthen ties with friends and deter potential enemies and is thus an important instrument of military diplomacy. Other elements of this diplomacy include staff talks,

arms control and confidence-building measures, and negotiations.

An attempt to create a structure

The starting point is the political project of a government or organization. That is, in political terms, what does it want to achieve?

Offensive and defensive, virtual and real

The project can be offensive or defensive. Offensive means that we want to change the *status quo* in our favor. Defensive means that we want to preserve the *status quo* against the (potential) opponent's offensive project. In real life, a mix is often required, offensive in the main direction, defensive in other directions. When Germany launched its offensive against Poland in 1939, it waged defensive warfare against the Western powers under the protection of the Siegfried Line (*Westwall* in German). Once the campaign in the east was completed, the offensive in the west began.

There are two main types of strategies. A virtual strategy is based on influencing (potential) friends and (potential) enemies but not on real use of armed force. Armed force is only used to demonstrate, threaten, entice, etc. In a real strategy, armed force to neutralize the (potential) enemy plays the main role. In such a strategy, military diplomacy and strategic signaling are a supporting function, while in a virtual strategy they often play the main role. Real use of armed force also has virtual effects—a loss can create panic.

Today, Russia is using a real strategy against Ukraine and a virtual strategy against Europe. Both are offensive.

Virtual strategies are often used to influence the opponent's strategic capabilities and situational awareness. John Boyd describes the goal of a virtual strategy as follows in *The Strategic Game of ? and ?* from 1991:

> We shall endeavor to create or influence the moral-mental-physical atmosphere in which we live and of which we are a part so that we strengthen our inner spirit and strength. We shall also influence our potential opponents and those who have not taken a stand so that they accept our way of looking at life and become positive about our success. // At the same time, we shall isolate our opponents morally-mentally-physically from their allies and their support and isolate them from each other. Thereby we shall increase their internal friction and paralyze them.[6]

Putin could not have put it better.

But there are also other types of virtual strategies, the best-known being (nuclear) deterrence.

Virtual strategies can also be used to create a stable situation at a lower level of conflict in a crisis situation.

Diplomacy

Military diplomacy is part of public diplomacy. Military forces act in a certain way in order to support their own country's diplomacy. In NATO and the EU, it is about supporting the global diplomacy of these institutions.

Defense diplomacy or military diplomacy is the peaceful use of military resources and capabilities to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, foreign policy objectives.[7] In defense diplomacy, a distinction is usually made between naval diplomacy and air power diplomacy. Space power diplomacy is a relatively new field.[8] Diplomacy with ground forces is part of defence diplomacy

and is not usually seen as a separate field. The EU has developed *the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox*.[9]

Naval diplomacy, or maritime power diplomacy, can be seen as one of three main naval tasks, the other two being military and police (coastguard) tasks.[10] The subject was theorized in James Cable's classic *Gunboat Diplomacy*.[11] A modern analysis can be found in Hervé Coutau-Bégarie: *Le meilleur des ambassadeurs. Théorie et pratique de la diplomatie navale*.[12]

Maritime diplomacy aims to create and increase a state's political and/or economic influence. It can also aim to create and support (potential) friends as well as to coerce and deter (potential) enemies. This can be done through a range of activities, from visits, bi- or multinational exercises, deployment of naval forces to reinforce deterrence and strengthen allies. In older literature, naval diplomacy was often referred to as 'showing the flag' and 'gunboat diplomacy'.

Air power diplomacy can be defined as:

> air power diplomacy, encompasses both the cooperative use of air assets in interstate relations and the coercive use of air assets when decisions are sought not through confrontation of military forces, but through negotiation of a diplomatic outcome.[13]

One example of space power diplomacy is negotiating the use of another state's territory for space communications. Another is when China demonstrated its ability to destroy satellites. A third is the rumors surrounding Russian deployment of satellites with nuclear weapons.

Examples of cyber diplomacy include cooperation to counter cyber attacks and the issue of sanctions against cyber pirates.

Power

Strategic signaling requires the ability and power to influence, as well as the freedom of action and political will to use this power.

The word power can be linked to a state and its role in international relations or the strategic capacity of an actor, usually a state. Increasingly, power is created through proxies, which can be non-state actors ranging from terrorists to criminals to activists or spies; the Wagner Group is a recent example.

Raymond Aron defines "power" as follows: "On the international scene, I would define power as the ability of a political entity to impose its will on other entities." Further: defensive power is "the ability of a political entity to prevent the imposition of its will on other entities."[14]

Aaron's concept is based on hard power, which is usually linked to the active use or threat of use of military means. Hard power is used to deter and/or coerce.

Joseph S. Nye distinguishes between hard power and soft power. Soft power is used to influence the behaviors and perceptions of the other in order to persuade and/or attract the other. Military means can be used in a virtual sense, but the term "soft power" is usually linked to the use of non-military means.[15]

Nye shows that there is a continuum between hard and soft power. In this context, Nye proposes a combination of stick and carrot called *Smart Power,* which can be summarized as "If you do what we want, we will help you, but if not, we will persuade you by using force." His approach has been studied closely in Russia in recent years.[16]

Aron also distinguishes between *deterrent* and *coercive threats*. The former is defensive in nature. The latter is offensive. It is the one who makes the threat who is forced to honor his commitments.[17] Schelling has

emphasized the difference between a threat intended to *prevent* an opponent from starting something and a threat intended to *force* the opponent to do something. In the first case, there is no need to act—apart from the need to make the deterrent threat credible—until the adversary acts; in the second case, there is often a need to act until the adversary does what one wants—which is much more difficult.[18] Moreover, the actor risks an embarrassing setback, with a consequent loss of credibility.

In summary, force in this context is used to influence other states or other states' entities, such as armed forces.

Different forms of military power

In English, a distinction is made between *Sea Power*, which is a strategic concept, and *Seapower*, which is a question of identity—political, cultural and/or economic, i.e. a *thalassocracy*: *thálassa* = sea and *krátos* = power.[19]

A modern definition of sea power is: "what it takes to use the sea ... and the ability to influence the behavior of other people or things by what one does on or from the sea."[20] According to Geoffrey Till, the components of sea power are "navies, coastguards, marine and civilian shipping, maritime industries in the broad sense and, where appropriate, land and air forces."[21]

One definition of air power is "the ability to use air power in and from the air to influence the behavior and course of events of actors."[22] The five elements of air power are: "military aviation, civil aviation, aerospace industry, air bases and not forgetting the airmen themselves."[23]

Land power is not a strategic concept like sea power, it is rather a geographical and identity concept that is the opposite of sea power in the sense of *speech democracy*.

Space power can be defined in the same way as sea power: what it takes to use space and the ability to influence the behavior of other people or things through what you do in or from space.

Influence

While power to influence is more temporary and specific, influence is long-term and more general. Hard power gives influence by forcing, while soft power gives influence by enticing and attracting. But influence can also be created in other ways. One example is when Russia bribes members of the European Parliament. The Swedish societal model gained influence in the Western world not through power but by being seen as a role model.

The US influences Europe through its cultural, economic and military power and can influence, for example, a state's choice of new aircraft system. Europe influences the US through trade, including the possibility of choosing which aircraft system to procure. The literature often ignores the power that the recipient of military resources has to choose how much dependence on the great power should be diversified and how much cost the recipient is prepared to take to free itself from dependence on a power that tries to impose its own will on the recipient.

"Influence means for actor A to get actor B to do something he would not otherwise have done but without coercion."[24] A can use a strategy of influence, i.e. a consciously planned action.

Information warfare

Information warfare is a multifaceted concept. It can involve propaganda and disinformation

in order to influence, and create influence, but also to create *Information Dominance—Optimizing own information while denying information to the adversary as well as secure/verify own information and falsify the adversary's*" which is a military operational term.

In the first case, the target is the cognitive ability of the opponent, in the second, his combat forces.

Information warfare can involve both interpretations, which do not necessarily contradict each other. An enemy deceived by our *Information Dominance* is also an enemy whose cognitive ability has been negatively affected.

The US Navy's concept of information warfare includes the areas of meteorology, oceanography, cryptology, intelligence, liaison, and operations in the space and cyber domains.[25] Here, the last two areas are mainly concerned with (military) diplomacy.

Strategic signaling

Strategic signaling is a means in the service of diplomacy. However, the term "diplomacy" is often used as a synonym for "strategic signaling"—i.e. no distinction is made between means—signaling and ends—diplomacy.

Going back to the initial example, the political project involved persuading Syria to relieve pressure on its Christians; an offensive objective backed up by a virtual strategy ready to turn into a real strategy, or at least Syria could not ignore this possibility. The strategy was based on hard power, sea power in the form of an aircraft carrier. How this would be used is unclear, but it can be assumed that it would at least be used to demonstrate power and ultimately French military intervention. An aircraft carrier offers a significant set of options ranging from mere presence, to interventions of various kinds. In a crisis situation, a limited number of threatened Christians could have been evacuated. The signal was reinforced by the fact that it was holiday time and that the mission meant that the staff, some 2 000 men, were recalled from vacation, which naturally echoed in the press, and that the Chief of Defense Staff was interviewed. The result was to influence Syrian behavior in line with the objectives of the political project.

There are, of course, other ways of describing the relationship between these different terms and activities. The word 'power' alone has many different definitions. But to move forward, we must be pragmatic like the French admiral and strategist Castex: "I, more than anyone else, detest these Byzantine disputes about terms, this whole complicated discussion that smacks of medieval scholasticism and pedantry like that of Molière's physicians."[26]

Executive summary

We discuss here virtual strategies that aim to positively or negatively influence the perception of the object as opposed to real strategies that aim to destroy the object.

Diplomacy aims to influence the environment in our favor. Power influences. Power creates influence, but influence can also be obtained without power, for example by setting an example. Conversely, power does not automatically give influence—Russia has hard power but its influence in Europe is limited because it lacks soft power. Strategic signaling is a tool in these contexts: demonstrating power, creating influence, etc. Strategic signaling is also a tool in information warfare regarding propaganda and disinformation.

We now turn to discussing strategic signaling in more detail.

Strategic signaling

Strategic signaling is a tool for diplomacy, especially but not only for defence or military diplomacy. Within NATO and the EU, it is about supporting the global diplomacy of these institutions.

Signaling done correctly strengthens the credibility of the strategy in question. Signaling that is inaccurate or gives the wrong impression instead undermines credibility.

Mirror thinking is a common mistake; the actor believes that the opponent thinks along the same lines as the actor. It is also common for the conflict to be asymmetrical and for the actor not to understand this. The signaler must know what strikes a chord with the receiver. During the Vietnam War, the US graded its actions to signal that it could hit much harder but was prepared to discuss and de-escalate. Instead, North Vietnam used the 'pauses' in US warfare to strengthen its fighting forces. The US administration did not understand that for North Vietnam this was an existential war, which it was not for the US. The administration had ignored the fact that 'the first task of the strategist is to determine the character of a war', as Robert McNamara's book *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (1995) makes clear.

Signaling methods

Three main methods of strategic signaling can be distinguished:

1. Capability
2. Maneuvers
3. Rhetoric

An effective signal should contain all three components so that synergy is created. In which case it is important that, for example, the rhetoric does not contradict the maneuver, etc.

Capability

One of the most important tasks of the intelligence community is to assess the military capabilities of other states and their variation over time. Increases or decreases in military capabilities thus send important signals, though not always intentionally. Swedish disarmament at the beginning of the century was hardly intended to send a signal of military impotence, but it is clear that it was certainly judged that way. But the picture is not clear-cut; the talk of Swedish defence becoming active "here and now" and having expeditionary capability, as well as the abolition of the old mobilization defence, was perceived in many quarters as far-sighted and as part of the "transformation" that was in vogue in the wake of the RMA, *Revolution in Military Affairs*.[27] The fact that this expeditionary capability was never created was not noticed, or was it?

Credible capability is a cornerstone of deterrence and threat. The various elements of nuclear deterrence must work—and be known to work—from the President's decision to deploy, through the commander of the missile station (strategic submarine commander, bomber pilot, missile silo commander), to the launch of the missile into its intended orbit. Specific procedures ensure that missiles can be safely launched when the order comes and only then. The system is tested and practiced. From time to time, tests are carried out on the functioning of the missile. After the test ban agreement, the nuclear warhead is tested in special simulators.

Recently, the British Royal Navy conducted a test of a *Trident* strategic nuclear missile from a submarine. This failed, and for the second time in a row. The credibility of British deterrence has been damaged.

Similarly, a threat with an untrustworthy weapon system is empty. When Putin threat-

ened the West with his new *Poseidon* nuclear torpedo, it had little effect, even though the torpedo was said to be capable of destroying New York or creating a tsunami that drowned the British Isles. Only James Bond lives twice; for most people, the threat of dying twice is no more threatening than a credible threat of dying once.

Maneuvers

The way a state manages preparedness, exercises and operations is monitored by the relevant intelligence services and provides a picture of the state's credibility.

The initial example concerning the aircraft carrier *Clemenceau* is an illustration of the concept of maneuver.

When Russia attacked Ukraine on February 24, 2022, France strengthened its nuclear capabilities by deploying two strategic nuclear submarines in addition to the one already at sea. This was unprecedented and sent a strong signal about how seriously the French government took the situation.

During the Cold War, Sweden never significantly increased its readiness; neither Alert, Vigil, Readiness Exercise nor Partial Mobilization was carried out despite a sometimes very tense international situation. A potential aggressor could only have concluded that Sweden would not undertake any serious increases in readiness before combat operations began.

President Putin has repeatedly threatened the 'West' with nuclear weapons in the context of the ongoing war. Each time, however, Western intelligence services have found that the threats have not been accompanied by increases in readiness. The threats have become less and less credible.

An interesting case is the statement of the then Supreme Commander Göranson about the "one-week defense":

> We can defend ourselves against an attack with a limited target. We are talking about about a week on our own. After that, we will have to get help from other countries.[28]

In many countries, the opinion would immediately lead to the dismissal of the general in question for undermining the credibility of the state. In Sweden, clear attempts were made to achieve just that by investigating breaches of secrecy, but this attempt did not succeed. In addition, the media reaction was that if the general had been removed, he would have been canonized. Thus, the then Supreme Commander clearly won the battle for the narrative relative to the government.[29]

The government considered the issue important but lost the battle, which was an important signal in itself. From that point on, the discussion became completely different and resulted in changed conditions in the preparation regarding both the situation (Russia), but above all regarding the economy.[30]

Rhetoric

Statements by political and military leaders on security issues are closely scrutinized by analysts and intelligence services. For example, a newly (re-)elected French president always gives a keynote speech on nuclear deterrence. The content is weighed on a golden scale by analysts of various kinds: "has the doctrine changed and if so, how?"

A classic example is when US Secretary of State Dean Acheson did not include Korea in the US *Asian Defense Perimeter*. The aggressor North Korea, supported by the Soviet Union and China, took the view that the US would not intervene. President Biden made a similar mistake when, in connection with the Russian attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, he stated, among other things, that the US would not actively participate

in the defense of Ukraine, that the embassy in Kiev was closed and that military advisors were called home.

In 2014, President Obama drew a 'red line' in the event of a chemical weapons operation by the Syrian government. Surface ships and submarines with cruise missiles were on standby in the eastern Mediterranean. France and the UK also had ships on standby. The Syrian government used chemical weapons against the opposition, but Obama did nothing. His credibility as president was seriously damaged.

President Macron's speech at the beginning of the war in Ukraine on the importance of maintaining dialogue with Russia undermined France's credibility as a player in the eyes of the 'West'.

Prime Minister Reinfeldt's statement about defense as a special interest showed the world that Sweden did not take defense and security seriously.

An attempt at structure

After these deliberately disparate examples, it is time to see if it is possible to create a structure around signaling.

Signaling can be defensive or offensive.

Defensive signaling is used to deter a potential adversary but also to support friends against their potential or actual adversaries. Deterrence can be nuclear or conventional. In the latter case, the word "avhålla" is often used in Swedish.

Offensive signaling is used to threaten or coerce, but also to influence, persuade and gain respect.

One example. Sweden's participation in NATO exercises naturally increases our ability to carry out military tasks together. But the activities of Swedish units must also create a positive image of Sweden and our capability. This, in turn, requires well-trained and disciplined personnel and efficient and well-maintained equipment.

Target	Signal
Deter	Reliably repel an attack and/or seriously injure the attacker.
Assure	Demonstrate support for ally. Show restraint.
Threaten	Force the opponent to take action favorable to me.
Manifestation	Signal our interest.
Manipulation	Reminding a 'client' that they are dependent on our goodwill.
Build confidence	Reduce the opponent's mistrust of my intentions. Demonstrate capability in relevant respects. Show that commitments made will be honored.
Mislead	Create a false perception for offensive or defensive purposes.
Show restraint	Prevent a situation from escalating.

There are a variety of possible actions when it comes to strategic signaling. The difficulty is to send a signal that is perceived in the way the sender wants it to be perceived. Strategic signaling uses the C-method;[31] responses are often not direct and what is perceived as a response may not be related to our signal at all.

Signaling and diplomatic effects

The following text should be seen as an example of strategic signaling in the context of military diplomacy. An exhaustive text is hardly possible—the history of security policy is full of signals that have been understood and led to the intended result, but also the reverse: misunderstandings and sometimes disastrous miscalculations.

Political signaling

The political signals sent by the state's leadership must of course be linked to the strategic signaling of the armed forces. Or rather the other way around. Strategic signaling must be based on the state's security policy and diplomacy. When then-Prime Minister Reinfeldt called defense a special interest, he signaled a lack of interest in the country's defense policy, which naturally drew the attention of friends and potential opponents. When the then Supreme Commander Göransson spoke of the "one-week defense" and was not reprimanded for it, the government signaled "sure, and *so what*?" The situation was made even more serious by the fact that both "special interest" and "one-week defense" were powerful expressions that struck a chord with the press and the public.

Successful strategic signaling requires active action from the government's leadership, including customized RoE—Rules of Engagement.

Military assistance from the signaling perspective

Military assistance was an important strategy for both the Soviet Union[32] and the United States in Vietnam, Africa and the Middle East. France and the UK have also devoted significant resources to this activity, perhaps especially in their former colonies. China is a new but active player in the field globally but already played an important role in North Vietnam in the sixties to diversify the dependence on Soviet aid which had long sought to limit the offensive capabilities of the Vietnamese. In the Middle East, this means that the development of forces due to military aid correlated very strongly, for example, in the case of Israel with that of Egypt and Syria.

Military aid plays a major role in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. The provision of aid signals support for one side against the other, but aid can also be provided more generally with the aim of creating a more favorable balance of power in a particular area. Signals about the limits of aid play a very important role in the war by reducing deterrence against Russian conventional aggression on the one hand, while at the same time intending to reduce the risk of escalation to nuclear war on the part of the United States.

The nature and extent of aid, obviously plays a major role in the impact. The hesitant support from the West at the beginning of the Ukrainian war probably supported the Russian analysis that it would be possible to isolate and eradicate Ukraine. Over time, as is well known, aid has been stepped up and, conversely, the lack of Russian escalation has undermined the credibility of Kremlin threats. The increasingly wavering support from the US of now (April 2024) risks leading to a reverse process.

But for aid to have its intended effect, as a strategic signal of "we support you", it needs to be credible. Germany's dithering on the tank issue and the US equivalent with the F-16 undermined the credibility of the strategic signal (and creates real military problems, but that is another matter).

Military aid also creates dependency and turns the recipient, at least in part, into a client, as it is often given with certain conditions. In the case of long-range weapons to Ukraine, the condition is that targets in Russia proper may not be attacked. This gives the West influence over Ukraine's strategy. It is also clear that Ukraine launched its counteroffensive in the spring of 2023, at least in part, prematurely in order to make a positive impression on donor countries. At the same time, history shows that a country like Egypt, which appears to be extraordinarily dependent on one donor (the Soviet Union), can reverse power relations by launching an offensive that forces Russian support for a policy that it may not have initially wanted to support.

In addition, assistance with qualified equipment requires training efforts. The military of the donor country trains the military of the recipient country, thereby gaining influence in the latter's military culture. An example of this is the Iraqi armed forces before Desert Storm in 1991. The Iraqi armed forces received not only Soviet equipment but also Soviet doctrine, which probably contributed to the rapid defeat at the hands of the US-led UN coalition.

Presence

Marine

Naval Presence is a fundamental task for naval forces. We then examine whether there are equivalent measures in the air force and ground combat domains.

By operating and exercising in (potential) crisis areas, navies demonstrate their ability to intervene in support of their own security policy objectives, allies and partners. Thanks to the Law of the Sea, warships have the possibility to move freely at sea and thus act—albeit with some restrictions—in other countries' territorial waters.[33]

Presence can be simultaneously supportive to friends and threatening to potential enemies.

Early and decisive action can prevent crises from escalating into war. Alternatively, presence can quickly turn into a real operation. Warships have all the weapons on board. A naval presence can act as a strategic equalizer by supporting a relatively weak state against a stronger one. Castex put it this way: "Maritime power can, depending on the situation, constitute a multiplier or dividend vis-à-vis land power, strengthening or weakening the decisive effort which, in fact, is a characteristic of armies: to defend or conquer territories."[34]

No presence, no influence. Here, a navy has two methods to choose from: a clear and an indeterminate one. In the former case, surface ships are present in the area; in the latter case, submarines are used. A submarine operates covertly and thus creates uncertainty for the other side, which must assume that submarines may be present in the area.

A strong naval presence with qualified and well-trained units creates confidence among friends and respect among potential aggressors and thus stability. Conversely, too weak a force can become hostage to other forces in the area.

Presence should be varied to keep potential adversaries in the dark and should of course also be adapted to the current threat level.

But a naval presence also puts a strain on units and, for a small navy, reduces the freedom of action to quickly transition to a larger real operation.

Presence can have a number of strategic effects depending on the actions of naval forces. But the outcome also depends on *posture* and credibility. This can be illustrated by the following formula:

Diplomatic outcome = (action + attitude) x credibility (if credibility is zero, the outcome is zero).

This formula can be illustrated by the experience of the Falkland Islands. In the early 1980s, the UK had no presence in the South Atlantic except with an oceanographic vessel. As a result, Argentina believed that the British had no interest in the islands. Consequently, they believed that these islands would not be defended, which led to the country invading them. The result was the Falklands War in 1982.

Land

As far as is known, there is no concept of presence in this sense, but at the same time it is clear that there is a strong link between presence and influence. Ground forces have a variety of possibilities to show attitude: the degree of combat readiness, material in storage or in the field, fulfillment of units, leave or not, etc. The important thing in this context is to see the action from a signaling point of view.

Air power

The main assets of air power are speed and responsiveness. However, air presence can be seen as a cumulative function, i.e. the sum of all air assets in an area. Air power can hardly be hidden but is always highly visible.

Air power cannot be exercised on the territory of another state without its authorization; there is no concept of 'innocent passage'.[35]

Presence in the form of more or less temporary basing is a strong signal of support to the host state but requires a lot of logistical preparation.

A more or less permanent presence in the air requires considerable resources.

Deterrence[36] and dissuasion

In Swedish nomenclature, the difference between deterrence and dissuasion is that the latter strategy refers to conventional means of warfare.

Deterrence and dissuasion rely on the defender to convince the potential attacker that an attack would be too costly.

Theoretically, this is expressed as follows. The *political-strategic expectation*, i.e. the risk/reward ratio, must be greater than 1 for the rational aggressor to attack. We can express this as $F=V/R>1$. But war is by definition uncertain ground. It is impossible to say with certainty how it will turn out, as history shows. One must therefore work with probabilities: $F=(P_1V/P_2R)$, where the potential rational attacker wants to achieve $F>1$ in order to attack while the defender strives for $F<1$—i.e. a functioning deterrence. Here P_1 is the estimated probability that the gain will occur; the defender naturally tries to make P_1 as close to 0 as possible. Further, the attacker wants P_2 to be low, i.e. the risk is unlikely to be realized; the defender wants to make P_2 as close to 1 as possible.

The difference between deterrence and dissuasion is that in the nuclear case, R is very large—loss of millions of citizens and widespread destruction. In the case of dissuasion, conventional deterrence, R means loss of military power and time.

Note that it is the potential attacker who makes the assessment and that he does not necessarily follow the same rationality as the defender, especially if he is a desperate actor. This is why the defender's strategic signaling is so important. It consists of helping to keep P1 low and P2 high. But the signaling will be different depending on whether it is a question of deterrence or dissuasion.

Deterrence

In the nuclear case, it is R that is the dominant factor, i.e. that the defender triggers a strategic nuclear strike in response to the attacker's attack.

Deterrence depends on credibility: when the head of state orders a strategic nuclear operation, it must be absolutely certain that this operation will be carried out—but only then. This requires that the whole chain from head of state to weapon system works—in the eyes of the outside world. There must be secure communications systems, effective protection of the weapon systems, which must be modern and equipped with comprehensive safeguards.

The doctrine is promulgated by the President (or equivalent) in line speeches or decision documents. These are carefully crafted texts that will be analyzed by friends, potential enemies and analysts of various kinds. It is extremely important that members of the government and other leading figures do not make statements that could in any way be interpreted as questioning the doctrine. This is a discipline that must also very much apply to NATO members. Once NATO has decided on a policy at a summit, it must be defended by the members of the Alliance.

"Secret" weapons have no deterrent effect—cf. the doomsday bomb in the movie *Dr. Strangelove*!

The 9K720 *Iskander* (SS-26 *Stone)* ground missile has been used by Russia in particular in Kaliningrad for strategic signaling. The fact that the missile can carry a conventional or nuclear warhead creates a situation of uncertainty. There are several possibilities:

- The missile is deployed in Kaliningrad with a conventional warhead;
- The missile is fitted with a nuclear warhead;
- The missile is driven out of storage;
- The missile is driven into storage;
- Preparedness measures around nuclear weapon systems are activated;
- Etcetera.

When Russia attacked Ukraine, France increased the number of strategic nuclear submarines at sea by two. The signal should have been clear.

The deterrence function places great demands on the intelligence services and their capacity for strategic analysis. It is of course important to be able to sense if something unusual is going on. Not least, it is important to assess the intentions of the potential attacker in a given situation. This requires a broad military capability that can meet the adversary at different threat levels.

An important part of credibility is research and development. It takes decades to develop a new generation of strategic nuclear submarines or nuclear weapons. The government needs to think about having sufficient industrial capacity and the right skilled personnel in the long term; those who will develop new generations in the middle of the century are in primary school today. A reduction in funding for education, research and development would immediately be registered by the outside world and thus reduce credibility.

Russia has recently demonstrated particularly exotic weapons. A typical example is

the *Poseidon* nuclear torpedo with a speed of 100 knots, unlimited range and a warhead of at least 2 Mt. One use, according to Russian propaganda, would be to create a tsunami that could drown the British Isles, for example. But the weapon has had no visible impact on Western assessments. Why not? Probably because the consequences are unimaginable, you can only die once, and because the whole thing seems pointless—what's the point?

Dissuasion

Dissuasion is not as critical as nuclear deterrence and the stakes are not as high.

For the potential attacker, P1 is a question of the assessed operational capability of the defender while P2 is more about the political credibility of the defenses.

The defender must therefore demonstrate such strength, equipment, training and readiness that the potential attacker refrains from attacking (P1 close to zero). These signals are of course based on facts of the type found in *Military Balance*. But they are also based on the assessments made by the intelligence services of the countries concerned in connection with exercises, especially international ones, and operations of various kinds. When a Swedish officer is appointed head of a naval force in connection with a major NATO exercise, this sends a very positive signal regarding Swedish capabilities.

The opposite is of course also true. For example, the Swedish Air Force's lack of preparedness in connection with the so-called Easter flights in 2013 must have sent a very negative signal regarding Swedish capabilities.

Returning to *posture,* a unit may behave in a more or less aggressive or friendly manner, thus creating different perceptions in the other. Examples of the former are locking on to the other with fire control radar or flying very close to him, while the latter can be exemplified by the exchange of greetings and courtesies of various kinds. The choice is political and should be reflected in the RoE.

As far as P2 is concerned, this is very much in the hands of the government. Savings, canceled exercises, poorly functioning equipment due to low defense budget contribute to the risk of an attack being seemingly low. Statements of various kinds—cf. Reinfeldt above—naturally also play a major role.

An interesting example is the booklet *Om kriget kommer*. The 1952 edition had the following text:

> Every attack on the freedom and independence of the state shall be met with arms. Any announcement that resistance will be abandoned is false. Sweden wants to defend itself, can defend itself and shall defend itself.

A shorter text was also included in the telephone directory. This wording meant that Sweden could not be forced to give up because such a message was false. Schelling writes that such a policy leads to a negotiating position of the 'no concessions' type. By locking oneself into a position, the entire burden of negotiation falls on the other party.[37]

Friendship and respect

On each occasion that combat forces present themselves, they are also assessed: discipline, equipment maintenance, skills, etc. This is particularly true in the case of naval visits, flying days or displays such as the Army's 500th anniversary. On such occasions the professional observer expects the unit (equivalent) to be well prepared. If not, this will reduce the 'grade'.

Naval visits are a classic way of making contacts and presenting oneself to a foreign audience, but also of presenting oneself to the compatriots living in the country in question. Naval visits can also be seen as a means of

establishing contact with a potential enemy. During the Cold War, for example, the navy carried out naval visits to several Warsaw Pact ports. In practical terms, this is a little more difficult for army units.

International exercises have a similar effect but are more focused on the combat forces of allies and partners.

An important activity is participation in other countries' defense colleges. This gives the participating officer an in-depth knowledge of the country's capabilities and doctrine. At the same time, the officer gives his fellow students a picture of his own defense force.

For the inviting country, foreign officers represent an investment, and it is therefore important to commission personnel with potential. France, for example, has been less welcoming to Swedish officers in recent years as very few former students have reached important and influential positions.

In tense situations, it is important that managers from both sides know each other. This can often help prevent mishaps of various kinds from escalating. For example, safety at sea is an interest shared by all seafarers. Maritime rescue exercises and training courses are therefore an example of an activity that can also be carried out between states that are not directly on friendly terms.

However, a word of caution must be added here. Security and confidence-building measures can play an important role in preventing "accidental war". At the same time, they can also be abused and used for provocations and become "tension generators".

Threatening and protecting

Threatening and protecting are often two sides of the same coin. You protect a friend by threatening, more or less actively, his (potential) enemy.

For the naval forces, it is important to operate in the relevant waters with credible combat forces and at the same time, for example, to exercise with the threatened country. Naval visits, preferably in conjunction with a high-level visit, show support. One example is when the Swedish royal couple on board HMS *Carlskrona* visited the newly independent Estonia in 1992. The visit made it clear that Sweden now accepted Estonia as an independent state, which just a year earlier had not been a matter of course.

The same applies to air forces. A temporary or more permanent basing in the threatened country is a clear signal of support. This also applies to the deployment of ground forces in the country concerned. NATO's presence in the Baltics is a clear example. In both cases, preparedness can be adapted to the situation but also to keep the potential aggressor in uncertainty. The same applies to reinforcements; showing that reinforcements can be brought in quickly is an important signal. Ground forces from a number of NATO member states also act as a 'tripwire'—an attack on the protected state immediately involves the forces of all countries present.

A special form of air power diplomacy is No-Fly zones. Modern history shows a number of such operations:

- Iraq 1991–2003; Operation Southern Watch, Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Focus;
- Former Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1993–1995: Operation Deny Flight;
- Libya 2011: Libyan no-fly zone, Operation Ellamy, Operation Odyssey Dawn, Operation Harmattan, and Operation Mobile.

A counterpart on the ground is buffer zones guarded by third parties. One example is the 'Green Line' that divides the Republic

of Cyprus into two parts: one free and one occupied by Turkey.

Defense diplomacy

Under this heading are a variety of actions such as staff talks, staff exchanges, participation as an expert in international negotiations, etc.

Arms control agreements and confidence and security-building measures such as the CFE Treaty or the Vienna documents often require significant cooperation measures between more or less potential adversaries.

These types of defense diplomacy do not constitute signaling per se but provide ample opportunities to send signals consciously but also unconsciously regarding the degree of skill, behavior, dress, etc.

Defense economy

During the Cold War, the Swedish defense industry played an important role. It would provide Swedish units with modern equipment adapted to our conditions—climate, topography and the fact that most of the personnel were conscripts. But it also supported our policy of neutrality. By having a strong defense industry, we showed our independence. This was particularly true for the aerospace industry. However, this independence was undermined over time as we became increasingly dependent on the United States.

In general, of course, a defense industry capable of exporting qualified equipment is a source of income. But it is also a source of influence. Arms deals are largely political in nature. The sale or purchase of qualified materiel requires long-term commitments, and the selling state often needs to support the buyer for a long time with training and the development of logistics. Large countries have special organizations for this activity, such as l'Office français d'exportation d'armement.

Evacuation and humanitarian operations

Evacuation operations generally require the ability to make quick decisions and to rapidly deploy combat forces over long distances and in chaotic situations. The ability to conduct such operations is thus also a signal of quality.

Marine humanitarian missions include search and rescue (SAR) operations at sea and the 'projection' of assistance to distressed people ashore. The Navy's humanitarian mission takes 'advantage' of the fact that half of the world's population lives less than 80 km from a coastline that is linked to the capabilities of modern amphibious forces. It should be noted that civilian container and ro-ro ships need intact ports to unload, which limits their use in the event of disasters caused by earthquakes, severe storms, etc.; this is why the amphibious capability is well adapted to this type of mission.

Some examples:

One of the most famous humanitarian operations involving air power was the airlift that broke the Soviet Union's blockade of Berlin in 1948–49. A purely peaceful operation was when France, the United States, Canada and the Soviet Union sent airborne support to Peru after the great earthquake of 1970.[38]

Kolwezi 1978 was an airborne operation known as '*Operation Bonite*', led by a unit of the French Foreign Legion, together with Belgian and Zairean troops. The aim was to rescue European hostages held in the mining town of Kolwezi in Zaire. The operation was triggered by the massacre of 700 Africans and 170 Europeans and succeed-

ed in freeing the hostages with only minor military losses.

In 2010, the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70) and six amphibious ships, as well as more than a dozen escort ships, were deployed in response to the earthquake in Haiti that leveled the capital Port-au-Prince. *Operation Unified Response* provided critical assistance to various locations in the country by airdropping supplies to the Haitian citizens. The operation also established field hospitals, flew out evacuees, and provided medical assistance with the deployment of the USNS Comfort (T-AH-20).

The evacuation of Kabul in 2021 which engaged large amounts of ground and air forces. Likewise, the evacuation of Sudan in 2023.

Major powers typically have large medical capabilities within their armed forces that can support the local population during peace support operations or naval visits, etc.

Discussion and debate

It is important to realize that military diplomacy encompasses a range of actions with no clear boundaries between them. Moreover, the impact is linked to the perception of the other; a common pitfall is to believe that the other has the same perceptions as us. Knowledge of the object of the signaling is thus of great importance. A third element is that a ground, naval or air force may be simultaneously involved in several diplomatic actions, each with its own specific objectives.

The above review shows that the Swedish view that "the main task of the Armed Forces is armed combat" is too narrow. A defense force has major tasks even in peace and crisis.

"He who can cope with the fastest rate of change survives" Colonel John Boyd wrote in *A New Conception for Air to Air Combat* from 1976.[39] This is very much the case in strategic signaling—adapting readiness, strength and attitude to the current situation and threat level is crucial. This requires a flexible organization with the ability to make and implement rapid decisions.

More broadly, a country's readiness and defense budget send important signals. During the Cold War, Swedish forces were not mobilized once, not even partially. This created at least two effects: a doubt as to whether it would really be possible to mobilize, and that a surprise attack would have a high chance of success.

Academy member and Colonel Bo Hugemark has made an interesting analysis of this problem.[40] The preparedness system is supposed to work as follows. The defender initially has a relatively low level of readiness, which nevertheless provides a threshold sufficient to force the presumptive attacker into revealing attack preparations. When these are detected by the intelligence services (early warning), this leads to preparedness measures that raise the threshold. This forces the attacker to make further preparations etc. If all goes well, the surprise fails and the attacker is deterred.

In fact, this is not always the case. Hugemark identifies three reasons for this, which he collectively calls the rationality trap:[41]

1. The defender projects his own peaceful rationality onto the attacker—and thus cannot see any rational motive for an attack.
2. The defender believes that his own military judgment also applies to the attacker—not least in terms of strength requirements and propensity to take risks.
3. The defender overestimates his own ability to see what is going on.

A typical example of where this can lead is the German invasion of the demilitarized

Rhineland in 1936. The area was of vital importance to France as a buffer zone against Germany. Despite this, nothing was done. Public opinion was absolutely opposed to anything that might lead to war, the War Office was afraid of provoking the Germans, and the army grossly overestimated German capabilities. In fact, the Germans were prepared to withdraw at the first French countermeasure. But this did not happen. As a result, France had lost the freedom of action that might have helped Czechoslovakia in 1938. Fear of war and of provocation eventually made war inevitable.[42]

Finally. Strategic signaling can also be 'bad'—ill-conceived, counterproductive actions that reduce influence in the short or long term.

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Notes

1. The booklet is part of *Project SV-A-R, Sweden in the EU and NATO—Deterrence and Resilience,* Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences 2023–2025.
2. The author would like to express his warm thanks for important comments from KÖMS member Peter Thomsson.
3. The text is an extension of the article "Om Signalering", which was presented at the Academy's winter symposium. It is available on the Academy's website on March 1, 2024 under Det nya akdemieprojektet SV-A-R.
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27. As a member of the EU military staff, the author of the article read a letter in which the then well-known German general Klaus Nauman praised the Swedish commander-in-chief for his actions for 'transformation'.
28. Referenced in *https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enveckasförsvaret*.
29. This information is corroborated by sources in both the media and the RC.
30. This information is corroborated by sources in both the media and the RC.
31. Unidirectional signaling.
32. Contribution from Mr. Lars-Erik Lundin, MEP.
33. See UNCLOS Article 21.
34. Castex, *Théories stratégiques*, Vol. V, p. 170.
35. UNCLOS Article 21.
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