

Paul K. Huth, "Extended Deterrence and the Outbreak of War"¹

While deterrence against an attack on one's own state is inherently credible, extended deterrence is less so. Extended deterrence in which a state (the defender) threatens to use force against another (the potential attacker) to prevent the potential attacker from attacking a third state (the protégé). Extended-immediate deterrence occurs when the potential attacker is actively contemplating an attack and the defender state threatens either through statements or movement of forces to use force if an attack occurs.

Huth analyzed 58 cases of extended-immediate deterrence from 1885-1984, of which 24 were failures and 34 successes.

Assumptions about the potential attacker:

1. It is motivated by offensive and defensive goals.
2. It will consider two options to resolve the conflict:
 - a. reliance on threat and use of force.
 - b. reliance on negotiations
3. It will worry about how its actions will affect its own bargaining reputation.
4. It will make the final decision by weighing the potential costs and gains of different actions.

Four sets of variables determining credibility of defender's deterrent threat:

1. The balance of military forces.
2. The interests of the defender in protecting the protégé.
3. The past behavior of the defender in confrontations.
4. The defender's bargaining during the immediate deterrence confrontation.

1. Military balance:

Three strategies will be considered by the attacker:

- A. limited arms strategy of quickly seizing territory while avoiding direct confrontation with main enemy forces
- B. rapid offensive attack strategy of trying to quickly and decisively beat the opponent's forces
- C. attrition strategy of wearing the opponent down over time

Hypothesis 1. The probability of extended deterrence success increases as the balance of forces improves for the defender. The immediate and short-term balance of forces is more important than long-term balance.

Hypothesis 2. The possession of nuclear weapons by the defender will not have significant impact on the extended deterrence of a nonnuclear potential aggressor.

2. Interests at stake for the defender

Hypothesis 3. The probability of extended deterrence success will increase if the defender has an alliance with the protégé.

Hypothesis 4. The probability of extended deterrence success will increase as the protégé's reliance on arms transfers from the defender increases.

Hypothesis 5. The probability of extended deterrence success will increase as the protégé's share of the defender's foreign trade increases.

¹I would like to thank Bear Braumoeller for his earlier comments about the use of fuzzy bunny rabbit and candy references out of season. Any remaining inappropriate holiday references are my own.

3. Bargaining behavior of the defender

There are two principle dimensions of bargaining, each of which has three strategies for the defender.

A. Strategies of military escalation

1. Policy of strength, in which the defender responds with greater-than-equal levels of military preparedness.
2. Policy of tit for tat, in which the defender responds with equal levels of preparedness.
3. Policy of caution, in which the defender responds with less-than-equal levels of military preparedness.

B. Strategies of diplomacy and negotiations

1. Bullying policy, in which the defender adopts an unyielding position and doesn't reciprocate accommodative initiatives.
2. Firm-but-flexible policy, in which the defender adopts a mixed policy of refusing to concede to repeated demands and threats while proposing to compromise.
3. Conciliatory policy, in which the defender offers a proposal of concessions that lack reciprocal concessions.

Hypothesis 6. A policy of tit for tat by the defender will increase the probability of extended deterrence success relative to alternative policies.

Hypothesis 7. A firm-but-flexible policy by the defender will increase the probability of extended deterrence success relative to alternative policies.

4. Past behavior fo the defender

Hypothesis 8. The past behavior of the defender in confrontations involving the current potential attacker will have greater impact on deterrence outcomes than those in which the current potential attacker was not directly involved

Hypothesis 9. The use of firm-but-flexible bargaining by the defender in past confrontations with the potential attacker will enhance deterrence actions, while other strategies will increase the probability of deterrence failure.

The data analysis:

Hypotheses 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 were supported by the probit analysis.

Hypothesis 9 was partially played out: bullying or backing down had a negative affect on rates of success, but firm-but-flexible strategies did not necessarily increase the probability of future success.

Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 were not supported by the analysis.

The conclusions drawn about what will make successful policies are rather self-evident.