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# Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice

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study of the U.S. Military Academy. When reduced to its essence, it is a study of many internal conflicts masked from public view by the military tactic of "presenting a common front"—hiding much, as cadet life is masked by the imposing barracks walls.

The conflict takes many forms, ranging from the inner turmoil of the new cadet laboring under the intense pressures of the Beast Barracks (surely the most intensive institutional socialization process of any American college) to the several generations-old pedagogical conflict between the proponents and opponents of academic change. The authors skillfully interweave the dialog of tenured professor/colonels who resist change—insisting that the proven methods of over 160 years are valid today—and the transient generals, majors, and captains who desire to see West Point "stay abreast of the times." Through it all, however, the reader will find an unreal but pervasive sense that the Academy's destiny is being guided by something that transcends the lives of the individuals involved, something to which these many conflicts are but fleeting things. The young man's agonies of adjustment will pass, as will those of his successor and his successor's successor. In like manner the debaters of change will pass, as will their successors. Through it all the institution alone will prevail. This impression is enhanced by the authors' frequent personification of the institution. "West Point has come to regard itself as both an undergraduate college with an academic program and as a professional school for Army officers with an essentially military mission." The winds of academic controversy barely ripple the ivy growing on the grey stone walls.

This pervading sense of institutional domination is the source, however, of another conflict, a conflict permeating the entire book, a conflict which, if not resolved, must surely weaken the mortar of those ancient walls. This is the

conflict of ideals, the anguish of which is plainly evident in every chapter. Duty, Honor, Country were very real ideals, clearly understood and totally accepted by such as Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, USMA, class of 1917. In the aftermath of Vietnam they are neither so clearly understood nor accepted by cadets and recent graduates.

In 1962 General of the Army Douglas MacArthur told the Corps "... that in war there is no substitute for victory; that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed; that the very obsession of your public services must be DUTY-HONOR-COUNTRY." *School for Soldiers* examines both the development of this obsession and the education of the men who must possess it. Some of its pages will make you smile and swell your heart with pride; others will have you sadly shaking your head, troubled by what is said; all will make you think.

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George, Alexander L., and Smoke, Richard. *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974. 666p.

Few books of political science or history will possess more of importance for professional military men than this volume on the American theory and practice of deterrence. The book, in fact, combines the techniques of both political science and history to make deterrence theory more relevant to the practical problems of security in the nuclear age. Composed of three sections, the opening portion of the book describes the present state of deterrence theory with an emphasis on its deficiencies in limited conflict situations. A second section contains historical case studies of important attempts to employ deterrence from the Berlin blockade of 1948 to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962; and a

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third section extends deterrence theory on the basis of historical evidence and inductive logic.

The authors point to the fact that the real problems—and failures—of deterrence in American foreign relations since the end of World War II have come not in the realm of strategic nuclear confrontation, but in conflicts considerably lower on the scale. One problem is that traditional deterrence theory does not provide internal guides to application when the use of deterrence is appropriate and likely to produce desirable results. As a result, American leaders have often depended on deterrence in situations in which there was never any real possibility that it would work as, for instance, in the Middle East and to a certain extent in Indochina. Furthermore, showing its heavy debt to political science approaches, deterrence theory has been deductive and prescriptive, rather than inductive and explanatory, with the paradoxical result that it has been less, rather than more useful to policy-makers. The authors, therefore, in section three of the volume have suggested a new emphasis, understanding the intentions and calculations of the state or power which initiates a conflict situation rather than concentrating on the behavior that is necessary for a defender to deter a potential initiator of change or confrontation.

It is difficult in a short review to convey the depth of thought, the breadth of coverage, or the quality of material contained in this large book. The historical case studies alone are worthy of careful reading, and the chapters on theory as it stands and theory as it should be will indeed repay the effort invested in a reflective perusal. The book addresses one of the most fundamental issues of national strategy and policy, and it behooves every military professional to educate himself in the complexities and the

advances of this subject. There is no better way to begin than to read this book.

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Kohler, Foy D., et al. *Soviet Strategy for the Seventies: From Cold War to Peaceful Coexistence*. Miami: University of Miami Center for Advanced International Studies, 1973. 241p.

American public opinion in recent years has tended to vacillate between believing that the Government of the Soviet Union is bent on hostility and that détente has become a firm and lasting reality. The purpose of the present volume is to demonstrate that regardless of the current trend in public opinion, the Russian leadership from Stalin down to Brezhnev and Kosygin has been unswervingly hostile to the United States, an unpopular task in many circles, official and private. Assuming the general outlook of Americans at the present time, many reviewers will contend that the authors of *Soviet Strategy for the Seventies* are only interested in perpetuating the cold war. Yet, the hopes of the American people for peaceful coexistence with the U.S.S.R. have never borne fruit in the past, and one must at least be cautious about the present. (Back in the 1930's, a similar spirit of détente prompted the president of the Daughters of the American Revolution to visit the Soviet Embassy in Washington to participate in a fete of friendship, and the time must have come when Mrs. William D. Becker was sorry for her effervescent opinions.)

The authors of this volume believe that "peaceful coexistence" is just a meaningless phrase to the Soviet leadership and its in-house philosophers of Marxism, and surely the quotations gathered by the authors support their contention. The Soviets exclude from their calculations of "peaceful" wars of