

IAFF 6101

International Affairs Cornerstone

Lecture 6
Coercion

October 4, 2016

Today's Class

- **Defining Coercion**
- Strategies of coercion
- Coercive threats: the problem of credibility
- Military compellence: finding the Achilles Heel
- The sanctions debate
- Smart sanctions?

Coercion

- Attempting to influence the behavior of another actor through the manipulation of costs and benefits
 - Costs: military and economic
 - Benefits: lots of things
- Coercion involves the use of threats and reassurances
 - Threats: promises to inflict some kind of cost in the case of noncompliance
 - Reassurances: promises **not** to inflict costs (or stop inflicting costs) in the case of compliance

Two Forms of Coercion

- **Deterrence:** Dissuading an adversary from taking an action (i.e., to **not** do something) by threatening him/her with undesirable consequences
 - *Defense* is about stopping an attack by direct military resistance
 - *Deterrence* is about persuading an adversary not to attack in the first place

Two Forms of Coercion

- **Compellence:** Persuading an adversary to stop an ongoing action or to start a new course of action (i.e., to **do** something) via the threat or use of force
 - **Conquest** is about completely defeating an adversary or taking what you want by brute force – with little or no cooperation from the adversary
 - **Compellence** is about getting an adversary to give you what you want without having to pry it from his cold, dead fingers
 - It's about achieving goals “on the cheap”

In Peace and in War

- Both deterrence and compellence can occur in peacetime and in wartime

Mapping Coercion

	Peacetime	Wartime
Deterrence	Deterrent threats	Intrawar deterrence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. threat vs. Iraq in 1991 not to use CW• Early WW2: “If you bomb my cities I’ll bomb yours”
Compellence	Compellent threats (a.k.a. coercive diplomacy) Threats or use of economic sanctions	Military compellence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blockade/sanctions• Strategic bombing• Limited nuclear use

Deterrence vs. Compellence

- Why is deterrence thought to be harder than compellence?
 - Complying with compellent threat involves a recognizable submission to recognizable threat
 - Can damage reputation, lead to further challenges from same challenger or others
 - Complying with deterrent threat involves doing nothing; can always claim you never intended to attack Country X
- Challengers in compellent scenarios thus have incentives to make it less embarrassing to comply
 - Help the adversary concede
 - Cuban Missile Crisis

Deterrence vs. Compellence: Evidence

Source	Success Rate
Blechman and Kaplan	18%
Petersen	24%
George	29%
Art	25%
Art (expanded)	31%
Sechser	41%
Average Compellence	35%
Deterrence	57%

The Coercion Calculus

$$V = B \times P(B) - C \times P(C)$$

- V Value of attacking/resisting
- B Expected benefits
- P(B) Probability of attaining those benefits
- C Expected costs
- P(C) Probability of incurring costs
- Coercion succeeds when $V < 0$

B

- $V = \mathbf{B} \times P(B) - C \times P(C)$
- The more the adversary values taking action/resisting, the harder it will be to coerce
- B is extremely difficult to influence but highly consequential
 - Disagreement over Soviet motives and objectives led to disagreements over U.S./NATO's ability to deter
 - Link to IR theory: greedy states value expansion more than security seekers, will be harder to deter
 - You often don't know which type you face – uncertainty
 - Worry about rogue states – do they value territory or inflicting damage so much that they are very hard (or impossible) to deter?

$P(B) \rightarrow$ Denial

- $V = B \times \mathbf{P(B)} - C \times P(C)$
- Reduce probability that enemy will reap benefits of attack or resistance
- Goal = lower the likelihood that target's military strategy will succeed
- Deterrence by defense/denial: maintain capabilities to defeat adversary's attack
- Compellence by denial: threaten/attack military forces, or ability to transport or supply those forces

C → Punishment

- $V = B \times P(B) - C \times P(C)$
- Traditional punishment
 - Increase costs to **civilians**
 - Deterrence: threaten to inflict costs in retaliation for an attack
 - Nukes
 - Compellence: (threaten to) raise costs of resistance by inflicting pain on civilians, induce them to demand surrender
 - Target set: things that affect civilian life and well-being
- New (“smart”) punishment
 - Increase costs to **elites**
 - (Threaten to) inflict pain on leader or regime supporters, induce them to change their mind or get rid of the leader
 - Target set: things that affect well-being of elites

$P(C) \rightarrow$ Manipulation of Risk

- $V = B \times P(B) - C \times P(C)$
- Manipulate the probability that costs will be suffered
- Goal = Inflict pain gradually; fear of future pain extracts concessions, not pain already suffered
- Target set = same as Punishment

Credibility and Deterrence

- The lynchpin of deterrence is **credibility** – the opponent's belief that you will carry out the threat
- Credibility is a function of capability + willingness
- Capability is a function of power; willingness is a function of interests
 - How much you care about the issue in dispute dictates the costs and risks you're willing to accept
- If costs are high and interests are questionable, credibility is lower and deterrence more likely to fail
 - Nuclear weapons – especially when you are vulnerable to retaliation (MAD)
 - Extended deterrence – when you are defending a protégé against aggression from a third state
- U.S. faced both of these during the Cold War: nuclear threats to deter Soviet aggression in W. Europe

The Art of Commitment

- Schelling: about “threats that are hard to make, the ones that are not inherently so credible that they can be taken for granted, the ones that commit a country to an action that it might in somebody’s judgment prefer not to take” (1966, 36).
- Threats to hurt somebody can be credible even if they hurt you, too, if you can make them believe that you’ll actually do it
- \$64,000 question = how to make them believe it?

The Art of Commitment

- The rationality of irrationality
- Relinquish the initiative
- Incur the nation's honor, reputation
- Interdependence of commitments

Credibility and Compellent Threats (a.k.a., Coercive Diplomacy)

- Get target to change its behavior by threatening to use force, or by using force in limited amounts (demonstrative force)
 - CD fails if war/large-scale force is needed
- What makes compellent threats credible?
 - Power?
 - Can be counterproductive – why?
 - Interests?
 - Usually favors the side defending the status quo
 - Regime type?
 - Democratic threats more credible?

Factors Associated with Compellent Threat Success

Variable	Effect on Threat Success
Water barrier	+
Distance	+
Contiguity	-
Challenger has long-range weapons	-
History of challenger-target conflict	-
Challenger's capabilities	-
Target has recently backed down	+
Militarized signal	+
Challenger is a democracy	n.s.
Challenger is a coalition	-
Threat is over leadership	+

Source: Todd S. Sechser, "Reputations and Signaling in Crisis Bargaining," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming 2016).

Military Compellence

- Compellence that happens during ongoing war
- Key: find a short cut to victory; persuade adversary that resistance is futile or not worth the costs
- Focus on strategic bombing

$P(B) \rightarrow$ Denial

- Reduce probability that enemy will reap benefits of resistance
- Goal = lower the likelihood that target's military strategy will succeed
- Target Set:
 - Destruction of arms manufacturing
 - Interdiction of supplies
 - Disruption of movement and communication in battle area
 - Attrition of fielded forces

Denial Strategies

- Strategic Interdiction
 - Destroy enemy war production
 - Particular weapon
 - Critical component
 - Transportation
 - Works best in long wars

Denial Strategies

- Operational Interdiction
 - Prevent movement of forces in theater
 - Prevent reinforcements from reaching theater
 - Works best when front is fluid

Denial Strategies

- Close Air Support
 - Attack front-line forces, reinforcements
 - Works best with static front

Denial Works Best, But Not All the Time

- Conventional > guerrilla war
 - Rolling Thunder (1965-68) vs. Linebacker I (1972)
 - “Highway of Death” (1991)
- Benefits of surrender > costs of surrender
 - National extermination
 - Leaders fear punishment by public if they surrender

C → Punishment

- Increase costs of resistance to civilians
- Goal = INFLICT PAIN ON CIVILIANS, induce them to demand surrender
- Target Set = urban areas, civilian infrastructure, electricity

Prophets of Airpower

- Douhet, *Command of the Air*, 1923
 - Bomb civilians to induce widespread panic, societal collapse
- RAF develops a “bomber culture” under Trenchard in the interwar period
 - Moral effect of bombing is to material effect as 20 is to 1

Why Punishment Doesn't Work

- States accept high costs for important goals
- Conventional bombing can't kill enough people
- States can minimize vulnerability, adjust
- *Punishment doesn't turn the population against the government*

$P(C) \rightarrow$ Manipulation of Risk

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Why Risk Doesn't Work

- Has all the problems of punishment, plus –
 - Can't inflict enough pain
 - Hard to implement
 - Stops and starts communicate irresolution

Decapitation → ??

- Goal
 - **Leadership** – Kill enemy leadership (B? C?)
 - **Political** – Foment a coup (B? C?)
 - **Military** – Cut off leadership from fielded forces (P(B))
- Target Set
 - **Leadership** – Enemy leaders
 - **Political** – Regime's repressive apparatus
 - **Military** – Means of communicating with the military

Why Decapitation Fails

LEADERSHIP DECAP

- Hard to find leaders, killing them doesn't always change policy, will successor be any better?

POLITICAL DECAP

- Airpower \neq good tool for fomenting coups, coups hardly ever happen in wartime, coups need support of army

MILITARY DECAP

- Hard to cut off communications, lots of ways to communicate, pre-delegation

Military Compellence (Conventional): Summary of Findings

- Punishment (of population) doesn't work
- Risk doesn't work
- Denial can work, but success is still far from assured
 - Threatens target's strategy of resistance
 - But depends on circumstances

Between Deterrence and Compellence, between Peace and War

- Crises with nuclear weapons = competitions in risk taking
- Nobody is likely to start a nuclear war on purpose, but a nuclear exchange could still happen
 - “A response that carries some risk of war can be plausible, even reasonable, at a time when a final, ultimate decision to have a general war would be implausible or unreasonable” (97).
 - Wars start via a process of escalation, not a bolt from the blue
- **Brinksmanship = manipulating shared risk of war**
 - “The risk of disaster becomes a manipulative element in the situation. It can be exploited to intimidate” (102).
 - Persuade the adversary to back down

The Role of Nuclear Weapons in Coercive Bargaining

- Nukes should not be judged on the basis of their battlefield utility – it's how they affect the risk of general war
- NATO does not have to be able to win a local war
- Don't need really strong conventional forces
- Don't delegate launch authority – want strict centralized control
- Plan for a war of nerve, not a tactical war – choose targets less for military than for symbolic/demonstrative effect
- Selective use rather than large-scale tactical use
- Nukes = signal; don't want to wait to use them until you're desperate

Economic Sanctions (Traditional)

- Induce change in target's political behavior by inflicting economic pain via reduction or restriction of international trade or investment with target
- Mild form of punishment

Hufbauer, Schott, And Elliott

- *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*
- 115 cases of economic sanctions, 1914-1990
- 40 successes: 34%
- More successful than previously believed

Pape Fires Back

- On closer examination, only 5 successes, not 40
- HSE failed to control for threat/use of military force
- Modern states are tough nuts to crack

Selection Effects

- Sanctions impose costs on both sender and target; both sides have an incentive to avoid them
- Targets inclined to acquiesce will do so to the threat of sanctions
- Sanctions only imposed when target is highly resolved – and will fail
- Most studies of coercion (including Pape's) don't get this, and thus seriously underestimate efficacy of sanctions

Evidence of Selection Bias

- Drezner looks at cases where sanctions were threatened as well as imposed – and force is not an option
 - Threat/use of sanctions in U.S. trade disputes
- Overall, DD finds the **threat** of sanctions was much more effective (66.7%) than imposition of sanctions (41.7%)
- Argues that this is evidence of selection bias

Selection Bias in Militarized Compellence?

- Drezner looks only at trade disputes – use of force not usually a possibility
- How could we test for selection effects in disputes where force is possible?
- Coercive diplomacy and compellent threats
- Already saw that threats of force are not more effective than use of force to compel!
- No evidence of selection bias in military sphere

Rise of “Smart” Sanctions

- Most sanctions until 2000 were “comprehensive” sanctions
- Turning point = Iraq sanctions in 1990s
- Enormous impact: 50% reduction in Iraqi GDP...
- ...but primarily affected population, not leaders
 - Huge effect on infant mortality
 - Largely conceded by Madeleine Albright

Target Elites

- Targets almost always authoritarian regimes – can divert effects of generalized sanctions away from regime supporters onto average people
- Need to target sanctions at leaders, core elite supporters of regime
- Financial sanctions, asset freezes, travel bans, restrict luxury goods, arms embargoes
- Pleases everyone!
 - Countries in UN get to cooperate with hegemon
 - No excessive humanitarian costs
 - More precise, targets the real evil-doers!
 - Bipartisan support in U.S.

Effect of Smart Sanctions

- Humanitarian effect = good
 - Less harmful than comprehensive sanctions
 - But comprehensive sanctions seem to work better sometimes
 - Target = democracy
 - Goal = regime change
 - For ending civil wars
- Less effective at gaining target compliance
 - Arms embargoes succeed only 8% of time
 - Financial sanctions not effective for higher stakes
 - Economic effect = unpredictable
 - Only big success was Libya in 2003
 - Iran?