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ABSTRACT: The strategy of integrated deterrence is a repackaged version of Cold War strategies. The integration of assets to deter adversaries was part of both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations' overarching strategies that forced the military services to change their operating concepts, capabilities, and doctrine simultaneously. The US Army is an example of how national strategy forces organizational changes. This article assesses how the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations forced institutional change while considering the significance of integrating deterrence. These examples will assist US military and policy practitioners with adapting their organizations to existing national defense strategies.

Keywords: integrated deterrence, strategy, Cold War, flexible response, New Look

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine seems to signal a failure of American strategy. With its new defense strategy predicated on integrating allies and partners across multiple domains, how could the United States look at the near-peer invasion of a partner as anything less? Ukraine, the United States, and NATO failed to signal costs significant enough to prevent a Russian invasion. At the same time, the Russia-Ukraine War represents a much broader success in that the war has not expanded beyond a limited regional conflict.¹ Much like limited regional wars during the Cold War in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, the deterrent threat of atomic weapons has thus far prevented a general nuclear war. Similarly, national strategy is forcing intense bureaucratic and institutional changes, of which the US Army is a crucial example.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III has identified integrated deterrence as critical to how the Biden-Harris administration defines the United States' role in the world. The Pentagon has identified China as the pacing threat to which the United States must respond and deter across all domains of potential conflict. Still, Russia is dangerous. According to General John E. Hyten, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the goal is "to compete with a global competitor and at all levels of conflict"—all levels, and across

1. Benjamin Jensen, "The Two Sides of Deterrence in Ukraine," Center for Strategic and International Studies (website), March 30, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/two-sides-deterrence-ukraine>.

all domains: land, sea, air, cyber, space, and information.² As Austin said in 2021, “[I]ntegrated deterrence means using every military and non-military tool in our toolbox in lockstep with our allies and partners. Integrated deterrence is about using existing capabilities, . . . building new ones, and deploying them all in new and networked ways—all tailored to a region’s security landscape, and growing in partnership with our friends.”³ Throughout the Cold War, American strategic formulations featured flexible capabilities tailored toward the geostrategic context where they were required.

For the historian, however, great-power competition is familiar. Indeed, Thucydides wrote about it long ago in his history of the Peloponnesian War, acknowledging that human nature meant similar great-power competition might happen again and that his work might be “a possession for all time.”⁴ These ideas are timeless, and the Cold War offers a good, if imprecise, parallel. Political scientist John J. Mearsheimer has likewise written about how the West will look back fondly on the Cold War as a time of predictability. His thesis is flawed, however, in that it is predicated on the fundamentally untrue idea that the Cold War was a long peace. The Cold War was, in fact, deadlier than the preceding period, mostly for non-Europeans. It was an era of revolution, “wars of national liberation,” and proxy wars, not unlike what the world has experienced since. While Mearsheimer notes the stability and predictability brought by superpower competition, he overlooks the complexity and uncertainty accompanying limited wars throughout the periphery. No doubt, seeing everything through the good-versus-evil, capitalism-versus-Communism lens during the Cold War had deleterious effects on the handling of crises such as those between the West and Vietnam or the Soviet Union and Hungary—not to mention the constant struggle for Berlin. The Cold War’s history nonetheless provides “intellectual depth” as the West moves into its next phase of challenges.⁵

The ideas that undergird integrated deterrence have been critical components of American global strategy for over half a century. The Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations specifically sought to integrate atomic weapons and other capabilities across multiple domains with allies

2. Michael Clarke, “Back to the Future: Is ‘Integrated Deterrence’ the New ‘Flexible Response?’,” *National Interest* (website), October 23, 2021, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/back-future-integrated-deterrence-new-flexible-response-195274>.

3. Lloyd J. Austin III, “Transcript: Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Participates in Fullerton Lecture Series in Singa,” U.S. Department of Defense (website), July 27, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2711025/secretary-of-defense-loyd-j-austin-iii-participates-in-fullerton-lecture-series/>.

4. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. J. M. Dent (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910), 1.22.4.

5. John J. Mearsheimer, “Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War,” *Atlantic* 266, no. 2 (August 1990): 35–50, <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/politics/foreign/mearsh.htm>; Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2019); and Hal Brands, *The Twilight Struggle: What the Cold War Teaches Us about Great-Power Rivalry Today* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 8–11.

and partners worldwide to deter the Soviet Union and China from starting World War III. Today, the United States finds itself in a similar strategic position, with China representing its major pacing threat and Russia a lesser one. Consequently, US leaders have once again taken up a national strategy of integrated deterrence. As in the past, a shift in national strategy means institutional change. During the Cold War, the transition to integrated deterrence caused an identity crisis for the US Army, forcing Army leaders to make organizational changes to carry out integrated deterrence. The two approaches taken by the Army during the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations thus provide key lessons for today's leaders on adapting to a national strategy of integrated deterrence.

The New Look

In the aftermath of Hiroshima, strategist Bernard Brodie wrote that “the chief purpose of [the US] military establishment” had changed from that of victory to prevention.⁶ As such, by August 1950, the State Department—not the Joint Chiefs of Staff—codified a strategy of containment and deterrence in National Security Council Memorandum-68.⁷ For its part, the Army endeavored throughout the decade to understand and nest itself within that concept, impressing upon its officers the importance of merging US Army efforts with all elements of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. Major General Charles H. Bonesteel III concurred in a 1960 speech to the National War College, when he noted that the military's chief role was to reassure allies. He stated that forward-based troops, “a strategy of alliances to try to prevent the Free World from being nibbled to death by lesser wars,” and nuclear deterrence provided an umbrella of power for newly independent nations.⁸

When Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed the presidency, his administration articulated a strategy that avoided inclusive ground wars and placed a premium on atomic weapons. Known as the “New Look,” the idea was to reduce costs, through this strategy included a robust commitment to supporting allies and partner regimes rather than spending on US forces. His foreign policy

6. Bernard Brodie, ed., *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), 74.

7. James S. Lay Jr., *A Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay)* (Washington, DC: April 4, 1950), document no. 85 in NSC 68 series in Foreign Relations of the United States: 1950, Foreign Economic Policy, vol. 1, 237–39, Office of the Historian (website), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v01/d85>; and John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

8. Charles H. Bonesteel, “The Role of the Military in Non-military Warfare” (speech, National War College, Washington, DC, July 21, 1960), box 1B, Charles H. Bonesteel II Papers, US Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC), Carlisle, PA; and Department of the Army (DA), *United States Army and National Security*, ROTC Manual 145-5, June 1958, 36.

also included covert operations such as the CIA-orchestrated coups in Iran and Guatemala.⁹ Nonetheless, much of the focus was on atomic weapons, as Eisenhower believed in the power of technology—especially nuclear weapons—to deter Soviet and Chinese aggression, an overarching strategy that the administration conceptualized as a massive retaliation. Eisenhower wanted to save money by relying on atomic deterrence at the expense of a powerful army and believed that the deterrent value of nuclear weapons lay in their destructive power. If atomic war were the only option, the destructiveness of such a war should deter any rational actor from pursuing it.¹⁰

Many military leaders blamed foreign policy frustrations on massive retaliation. In 1954, Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs during the first Eisenhower term, critiqued the policy to Congress, stating that “our planning does not subscribe to the thinking that the ability to deliver massive atomic retaliation is, by itself, adequate to meet all our security needs . . . I believe that this Nation could be a prisoner of its own military posture if it had no capability other than the one to deliver a massive atomic attack.”¹¹ The United States’ nuclear advantage from 1945–49 created a false belief in atomic weapons as an all-purpose deterrent capability. Limited aggression continued despite the atomic advantage—and the Army noticed. American nuclear superiority, in the Army’s view, had failed to check Communist aggression in the Berlin blockade and the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula. The Army learned from these examples that nuclear weapons were an insufficient deterrent and that the country must have a sizable ground force to remain influential in world affairs.

While it is possible that the American nuclear advantage and fear of atomic retaliation helped quell the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, aggressive acts by adversaries did not cease. Atomic weapons deterred a superpower war but prompted adversaries to create strategies to support wars of national liberation and to assist revolutionary efforts through aggressive insurgency worldwide. World leaders were calling the Americans’ bluff, wagering that the Americans would not use such powerful weapons to protect these peripheral areas at the risk of an all-out nuclear war with the Soviet Union. These acts of defiance occurred despite the administration’s success in handling

9. Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower’s New-Look National Security Policy, 1953–61* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); and Richard A. Aliano, *American Defense Policy from Eisenhower to Kennedy: The Politics of Changing Military Requirements, 1957–1961* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975).

10. Jack Raymond, “The Influence of Nuclear Weapons on National Strategy and Policy” (lecture, Naval Command Course and the School of Naval Command and staff, September 7, 1966), in *Deterrence: Selected Articles from the Naval War College Review*, ed. Robert C. Ayer, Newport paper no. 46 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2021), 11.

11. *Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 83rd Cong. (1954) (statements of John Foster Dulles, secretary of state, and Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), 50.

the twin Taiwan Strait crises in 1954 and 1958, in addition to the Berlin crisis and American intervention in Lebanon that same year. Nations and non-state actors played to American weaknesses through these gray-zone activities, creating a significant deterrence challenge.

To continue deterring Communist influence in nonaligned states, the Eisenhower administration integrated nuclear deterrence with an exemplarist foreign policy, intended to demonstrate that democratic capitalism leads to better outcomes.¹² Eisenhower pursued this policy in part by prioritizing communication and psychological warfare to shape the international environment. According to historian Kenneth Osgood, Eisenhower's myriad programs were designed to convince the world that Soviet peace protestations were propaganda and their "hostility and intransigence . . . compelled the United States to adopt policies of strength." This form of psychological warfare, what might be termed "information operations" today, was accomplished through consistent messaging by the US Information Agency, the Atoms for Peace program, and the Open Skies treaty. The latter two demonstrated American willingness to cooperate, while the Atoms for Peace program promulgated the idea of the peaceful application of nuclear technology. A key example of the confluence of propaganda with the American example of capitalist dominance occurred during the so-called kitchen debates in Moscow in 1959, in which then Vice President Richard Nixon showcased the advanced state of the middle-class American single-family home, thanks to a capitalist economy.¹³

Another key component of the New Look was to reduce spending on major overseas commitments, which the Eisenhower administration accomplished by supporting allies. Rather than assign the Army these sorts of missions, anything short of general atomic war—particularly limited local wars—was the responsibility of local actors and allies. This idea manifested in the myriad military assistance advisory groups dedicated to training conventional armed forces and facilitating military aid in multiple countries worldwide. Today, officers even seek to revive the more focused military assistance advisory groups—especially for Taiwan.¹⁴ These groups were an essential military arm of broader efforts to support allies during the 1950s.

12. George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 84; and John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 63. For more on the exemplarist foreign policy see H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vii–viii.

13. See Kenneth Osgood, "Eisenhower's Dilemma: Talking Peace and Waging Cold War," in *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, ed. Kenneth Osgood and Andrew K. Frank (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 140–69; and Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

14. Jake Yeager and William Gerichten, "Commentary: Reestablish the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group-Taiwan," *War on the Rocks* (website), January 7, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/01/reestablish-the-u-s-military-assistance-advisory-group-taiwan/>.

In a broader show of international support, Eisenhower emphasized the US Mutual Security Program throughout his presidency. The program was an existing foreign aid program organized under the Mutual Security Act of 1951 that had replaced the Marshall Plan. Eisenhower ensured that the act creating the program was renewed each year of his presidency. A bipartisan committee of civilian and military personnel, known as the Draper Committee for its president, William H. Draper Jr., analyzed the Mutual Security Program in 1958 and found that the threat of Communist dictatorships was greater than ever. The committee proposed that economic and military assistance was necessary to deter the threats “posed by the activities of international communism” and that, while costs would rise to \$1 billion per year by fiscal year 1961, funding allies was critical to staving off Communist expansion.¹⁵ Overall, the program helped create a strong network of allies worldwide, but it was disbanded as the Kennedy administration reorganized American aid in 1961.¹⁶

The military assistance advisory groups and mutual security programs provided an essential means to integrate the United States with allied and partner-force militaries, financially and logistically. Mutual security, alliances, and covert operations were paramount to American retrenchment behind atomic weapons, leaving little role for the Army’s large conventional formations. The Eisenhower administration proposed a mop-up duty role for the Army in the event of general war: occupying nuclear wastelands or restoring order to the devastated United States.¹⁷ Army leaders could not stomach this sort of role.

Eisenhower’s New Look and massive retaliation affected the operating concepts and capabilities of the services, notably the US Army, which found itself suddenly unpopular and without its traditional role. For its part, the Army continued to emphasize its role within a national security program that included “political, diplomatic, military, economic, psychological and cultural fields which contribute to the security of our people in the enjoyment of their basic rights as citizens of the United States and to the attainment of the national objectives.”¹⁸ To that end, it sought to integrate its capabilities within the national emphasis on atomic munitions and its need to maintain a conventional force capable of deterring Communist aggression. The US Army began reorganizing itself as a dual-capable force ready for either eventuality.

15. President’s Committee, *Composite Report of the President’s Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program* (Washington, DC: White House, March 1959), Draper Committee records, 1958–59, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

16. Act for International Development of 1961, Public Law 87-195, 87th Cong. (1961), U.S. Statutes at Large 75 (1961), 424–65.

17. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 446–47.

18. DA, *National Security*, 36.

If war broke out with the Soviet Union, the Army visualized a limited atomic land war against the Soviet Union that did not include atomic strikes on cities but tactical exchanges of nuclear weapons between land forces. It developed the Pentomic division to meet this requirement. This new division structure used fewer personnel than before, was completely air-transportable, and promised to be better suited for mobile warfare on an atomic battlefield. The Pentomic division was a five-sided infantry division consisting of five battle groups (formerly battalions) capable of fighting alone in all directions. Each battle group consisted of five rifle companies. The battle group was intended to be the perfect nexus of a unit that was capable of sustained combat, yet expendable in a nuclear blast.¹⁹

Dual capability required immense flexibility for both commanders and soldiers—however, it was never fully achieved, as units were never well prepared for anything other than nuclear war, even as the realization that the next war would be conventional increased. The Secretary of the Army agreed and believed the Army had achieved a dual-capable force ready for “all-out or limited war.” Naturally, many officers were displeased with the idea of a dual-capable force and found it increasingly difficult to train their formations for multiple eventualities. Nevertheless, General Maxwell Davenport Taylor, Chief of Staff of the Army from 1955–59, believed that developing a capability for limited nuclear warfare gave the Army a key role in deterrence and that atomic firepower would be key to future victory. To Taylor, the US Army needed strong conventional capabilities augmented by atomic firepower and mobile doctrine.²⁰

As far-fetched as the Pentomic Army and limited atomic warfare sounded, it was an attempt by the Army to integrate itself into the existing deterrence framework. If the Soviets were to launch an invasion of Europe—if massive retaliation failed and they called Ike’s bluff—then the idea was that a nuclear-capable land army employing battlefield atomic munitions might provide another layer of deterrence or, if not, a way to defeat an adversary with numerical superiority. Tactical atomic warfare or not, the role of the Army in “non-military warfare,” as Major General Charles H. Bonesteel put it, was “to make manifest to the people that want to remain free that there

19. Secretary of the Army, *Semiannual Report of the Secretary of the Army, FY 1958* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1959), 106. See also A. J. Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era: The US Army Between Korea and Vietnam* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1986), 5; and Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 87.

20. Maxwell D. Taylor, “Missions of the United States Army” (remarks, Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA, November 1956), box 5, Maxwell D. Taylor Papers, National Defense University, Washington, DC.

is a free world power backing them.” Military deterrence, then, was a crucial cog in the overall national deterrence framework.²¹

Flexible Response

Although it was President John F. Kennedy’s stated strategy, flexible response was the product of ideas championed by successive Army Chiefs of Staff. They were fed up with their service’s role and foresaw the need for the country’s ground force to prepare for multiple missions and published post-career memoirs advocating this change. Taylor’s post-career book, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, defined flexible response as “a capability to react across the entire spectrum of possible challenge, for coping with anything from general atomic war to infiltrations and aggressions.”²² Opponents of Eisenhower’s policies were convinced that the administration’s preoccupation with “general war and the long-range strike forces” overshadowed any built-in flexibility to integrate capabilities across multiple domains.²³ These opponents believed the country had to be prepared to deter or fight any war as necessary. While he defended the 1957 budget, Taylor also used his day in Congress to outline his vision for deterrence at the local and strategic levels and the need to provide adequate means to fight limited wars. His testimony was the first public acknowledgment of his thinking on what became flexible response.²⁴

Flexible response fit Kennedy’s desire to calibrate the American response more precisely to the nature of the Soviet threat. Senator Kennedy asserted that the New Look had damaged the United States’ military preparedness, reducing its ability to influence the world. In a speech on the Senate floor on June 1960, he declared, “We must regain the ability to intervene effectively and swiftly in any limited war anywhere in the world—augmenting, modernizing, and providing increased mobility and versatility for the conventional forces and weapons of the Army and Marine Corps.” The missile gap served as political posturing for his burgeoning candidacy and ignored the wide integration of assets that occurred within Eisenhower’s foreign policy. Kennedy wrote, “our nuclear retaliatory power . . . cannot deter Communist aggression which is too limited to justify atomic war.” Almost as soon

21. “The Role of the Military in Non-military Warfare,” box 1B, Charles H. Bonesteel II Papers, USAHEC.

22. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, 6.

23. National Security Council Report, “NSC 5906/1, Basic National Security Policy,” August 5, 1959, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1958–1960*, III, National Security Policy; and Arms Control and Disarmament, document 70; *Task Force Report: American Strategy and Strength* (July 19, 1960), box 17, Brucker Papers.

24. *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations, House of Representatives, Relative to the Department of the Army Budget for Fiscal year 1957* (statement of Maxwell D. Taylor, US Army Chief of Staff), Taylor Papers.

as he entered office, he increased the defense budget by 15 percent and doubled the Army's strategic reserve.²⁵

Although President Kennedy campaigned against massive retaliation, he also argued forcefully in his campaign rhetoric that the United States had fallen behind the Soviet Union in atomic missile capability. This so-called missile gap proposed that the United States had fallen behind the Soviet Union regarding its capabilities to deliver nuclear payloads at intercontinental ranges. Originating from an Eisenhower study, Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy declared the Soviet Union would have three times as many intercontinental ballistic missiles as the United States by the early 1960s. For many, the successful launch of Sputnik in 1958 exemplified the idea of a gap. This idea drove Kennedy's campaign on national security and undergirded some of his policies regarding the procurement of new and better nuclear weapons. Whether true or not, the widespread belief that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in weapons technology fueled further development in that field. Kennedy believed that a policy based on deterrence through the threat of massive atomic retaliation created only two viable courses of action in the event of Communist aggression: all-out atomic war or retreat.²⁶ Nuclear threats remained valid, as evidenced by the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, but its de-escalation reinforced Kennedy's reliance on the menu of options that flexible response provided because it seemed an all-or-nothing approach à la massive retaliation might have led to general atomic war. The Cuban missile crisis exemplified mutual deterrence, or that, while atomic weapons might deter conflict between the two nuclear superpowers thanks to a "balance of terror," limited wars were still likely.²⁷

Atomic capabilities remained critical to Kennedy-era deterrence, especially after he campaigned on ending the missile gap. The effect of the gap demonstrates the importance of political pressure on defense spending and the concomitant need for a feeling of security. Like today, Kennedy's conception of deterrence relied upon a strong atomic capability as the bedrock to build additional deterrence capabilities through conventional, covert, and diplomatic means. The Space Race served as a de facto cover for developing long-range missiles that simultaneously pushed research funding into ostensibly peaceful space exploration. The demonstration of the advanced missile technology that was needed to put astronauts on the moon signaled

25. John F. Kennedy, *The Strategy of Peace* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 184; and James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 48.

26. Kennedy, *Strategy of Peace*, 33–45.

27. Jack Raymond, "The Influence of Nuclear Weapons on National Strategy and Policy" (lecture to the Naval Command Course and the School of Naval Command and Staff, September 7, 1966), in *Deterrence*, 13.

the concomitant capability to put warheads all over the Eurasian landmass. Kennedy's administration continued to increase and upgrade American strategic nuclear capabilities alongside his conventional forces buildup. By mid-1964, the United States doubled the number of Minuteman missiles the previous administration had ordered and added 10 additional Polaris missile submarines. This development constituted a 150 percent increase in nuclear weapons.²⁸ In effect, the administration prioritized nonnuclear means while providing an ample stockpile of weapons to continue deterring the Soviet Union from pursuing general nuclear war.

Deterring wars of national liberation was another critical component of Kennedy-era deterrence. In response to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's January 1961 pledge to support Communist rebels worldwide, the Kennedy administration emphasized unconventional warfare while assisting indigenous forces to resist Communist expansion across the globe.²⁹ As such, the Kennedy administration poured resources into special forces trained to understand irregular warfare's political, social, and economic aspects.³⁰ Mandatory courses on counterinsurgency at the various war colleges and within the State Department, coupled with discussions of Mao Zedong, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Che Guevara's writings on guerrilla warfare, demonstrated the seriousness of the administration and the Army's efforts to focus on this sort of warfare. At the Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, instructional hours concerning the nuclear battlefield dropped from a high of 600 in the late 1950s to 53 in 1961 and to 16 by 1966. Counterinsurgency instruction, meanwhile, ballooned from 35 to 222 between 1961–69.³¹

Kennedy took a personal interest in Special Forces training and equipment. He personally ensured the approval of the famous green beret as official headgear and even kept one on his desk. During his administration, the number of special forces personnel at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty), North Carolina, increased from fewer than 1,000 to more than 12,000, and their training school now bears his name. Kennedy also created an ad hoc Special Group (Counterinsurgency) in January 1962, led by Taylor, responsible for overseeing all counterinsurgency efforts worldwide. Despite some resistance and a desire to focus on the

28. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 47–49; and Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 217.

29. Conversations between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev, June 3–4, 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963*, V, Soviet Union, document 95.

30. Robert McNamara, *Report to the President, FY 1961 and 1962 Military Programs and Budgets*, annex A, attachment 2: Limited War Proposals, February 21, 1961, Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files, Departments and Agencies: Defense, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA.

31. Boyd L. Dastrup, *The US Army Command and General Staff College: A Centennial History* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1982), 110–11.

Soviets in Europe, by the early 1960s, the US Army was increasingly concerned with the problems of counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare.³² Stopping brush fires before they could become larger was vital to deterring general war. Initial US efforts in Southeast Asia during the Kennedy administration were primarily in an advisory role supporting South Vietnam as a partner.

Equally critical to the Kennedy administration's symmetrical approach to a more activist foreign policy were various programs that increased American soft power worldwide: the Food for Peace program, the US Agency for International Development, the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, and the Peace Corps. While Kennedy created the latter, the former were retooled and reemphasized Eisenhower-era programs.³³ These programs followed the new modernization theory that aimed to develop the Global South in America's image while integrating American capabilities across multiple domains to deter Communist influence in these regions.³⁴ More than just altruism, these efforts, to Kennedy, were additional weapons in the Cold War. When combined with US Army recalibration toward irregular warfare and a continued emphasis on atomic deterrence, these soft-power programs represented an essential example of a whole-of-government approach to integration.

The Current Environment

The primary lesson from both Cold War strategies is that deterrence can be achieved in various forms. Neither strategy was completely successful at deterring all conflict, but they did contribute to preventing general nuclear war. They offer examples of how to integrate numerous capabilities to deter great powers in today's international environment. Finally, these examples demonstrate that the US Army must remain a living organism, prepared to adapt to various national strategies while remembering its overall purpose as an instrument of policy and not just a force built for large-scale combat operations.

32. Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 146; Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 188; Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 48–49; and Gregory A. Daddis, *Westmoreland's War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15–37.

33. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, Public Law 83-480, 83rd Cong. (1954), U.S. Statutes at Large 68 (1954), 454–59; and Act for International Development of 1961, Public Law 87-195, 87th Cong. (1961), U.S. Statutes at Large 75 (1961), 424–65.

34. Walt W. Rostow, draft, "Basic National Security Policy," March 26, 1962, 110–11; and Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

As throughout the Cold War, atomic weapons remain a critical component of integrated deterrence. Yet, like in the past, today's challenges from China and, to a lesser degree, Russia require conventional forces to form the core component. Leaders must integrate these conventional forces into not only American nuclear deterrence capabilities but also into NATO and other allied forces. Economic sanctions on Russia and financial and logistical support to Ukraine have proven incredibly important in stemming the Russian "special operation." Further integration with EU, NATO, and US equipment will be critical for the Ukrainians to expel their Russian invaders. Despite failing to prevent the Russian invasion, the credible threat of an overwhelming NATO response—conventional or nuclear—has contained the war. Like integrated deterrence, flexible response promised to deter because the United States had capabilities prepared and calibrated for a spectrum of possible adversary actions. Flexible response relied on a "universal security perimeter" that was a veritable line in the sand but promised to deter any action—from nuclear attack to subversion and guerrilla warfare.

During the Cold War, the Army felt lost in the competing demands of preparing for myriad forms of conflict. Trying to prepare for atomic warfare with the near-peer and irregular warfare elsewhere proved taxing and gave the institution little focus. A lack of focus might also be contributing to a curriculum shift at the United States' senior service colleges today. Students learn less about irregular warfare and more about deterrence and geopolitical competition. According to Professor John A. Nagl, US Army War College students spend just one out of 200 class days dedicated to irregular warfare.³⁵ Likewise, these different concepts create demands on different elements of the Department of Defense in ways that make each service feel it must justify itself. Justification is essential for the United States in the Pacific as the various services are recalculating their capabilities for a potential war with China. As Secretaries Antony J. Blinken and Austin have said, American allies and partners are "force multipliers," critical to achieving US foreign policy goals, and integral to deterring China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia. Thinking of allies as partners in deterrence is why the Departments of State and Defense have made updating and renewing partnerships a vital part of American foreign policy going forward.³⁶

35. John A. Nagl in "Hindsight and Foresight: A Twenty-year Retrospective on Irregular Warfare and Counterinsurgency," in *The Irregular Warfare Podcast*, Julia McClenon and Louis Tobergte, August 11, 2023, presented and produced by the Modern War Institute at West Point, podcast, MP3 audio, 18:09, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/irregular-warfare-podcast-a-twenty-year-retrospective-on-irregular-warfare-and-counterinsurgency/>.

36. Antony J. Blinken and Lloyd J. Austin III, "Opinion: America's Partnerships are 'Force Multipliers' in the World," *Washington Post* (website), March 14, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/03/14/americas-partnerships-are-force-multipliers-world/>.

Cyber, irregular warfare, and gray-zone activities should constitute a focus akin to Kennedy-era counterinsurgency. Like deterrence, successful irregular warfare sometimes means undermining an adversary without having to fight at all. As other scholars have noted, Russian misinformation operations and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative offer essential examples of irregular warfare in the twenty-first century. In today's world of asymmetric power, adversaries are even more likely to rely on irregular warfare to avoid direct confrontations.³⁷

Neither the New Look nor flexible response was wholly successful in deterring all conflicts. Where they were successful—in integrating national power and forcing the US Army to redefine itself and reconfigure its force—the early Cold War offers important lessons for today's Joint force. The United States, NATO, and the rest of their partners and allies must also continue to frame multiple options across the spectrum of responses and well outside those that military hard power can provide. From the economic sanctions imposed on Russia to a more robust Peace Corps response to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, the United States and NATO must wield hard and soft power together. Continuing to use all elements of national power and those of Allies and partners is vital. The United States, NATO, and their partners must transmit the values of free and open democratic societies worldwide to be beacons of peace and prosperity backed up with credible military capabilities. Ideas are essential for maintaining a free and open liberal international order that is predicated on deterring war with China and escalation of the war in Ukraine.

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37. Elena Pokalova, "Teaching Irregular Warfare in the Era of Strategic Competition," Modern War Institute (website), November 7, 2022, <https://mwi.usma.edu/teaching-irregular-warfare-in-the-era-of-strategic-competition/>.

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