

BOOK REVIEW

PERFECT DETERRENCE

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<i>Subject</i>	<i>Deterrence</i>
<i>Authors</i>	<i>Frank C. Zagare and D. Marc Kilgour</i>
<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom</i>
<i>Year of Publication</i>	<i>2000</i>

Frank C. Zagare and D. Marc Kilgour's classic work titled "Perfect Deterrence" is a major addition to the existing scholarly literature on deterrence. The authors have advocated perfect deterrence instead of classical deterrence whose importance has receded after the demise of the Soviet Union. Through their deep insight and innovative research work both scholars have logically, scientifically and empirically proved that the theory of classical deterrence has inherent flaws. A nuclear state's deterrence may vary from time to time because of its intangible factors. Practically, deterrence is an idea in which an inferior force could deter a more powerful adversary by virtue of its stock piles of destructive weapons. Zagare and Kilgour are renowned international relations theorists. They are recognized as experts in conflict processes, interstate crises and escalation of war, alliance dynamics and game theory. Their writings have not only influenced the decision makers but also the experts of rational deterrence.

The international scholars like Henry Kissinger, Bill Perry, George Shultz and Sam Nunn have advocated that nuclear weapons are an extreme source of risk. Their theses revolve around the presupposition that the risk of accidents, misjudgments and unauthorized launches may be the major cause of faulty nuclear doctrines as political, cultural and religious fault lines exist in every society. The terrorists may steal, buy or built a nuclear device. On this

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supposition, the veto powers have framed new legislations from time to time to control nuclear proliferation. A foremost example was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, which had certain clauses that are beyond the jurisdiction of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Nonetheless, the terms and conditions included in JCPOA were the most stringent in the history of NPT.

The book under review provides deep analysis of patterns of deterrence particularly in Cold War era. It offers new approaches, assumptions and empirical analysis by applying a model of non-cooperative game theory. Peeping deep in the nuclear deterrence historicity, the authors have focused on relationships of threats and capabilities. During the Cold War era, the operational theory of deterrence comprised 3Cs i.e. Capability, Credibility and Communication. For this purpose and to avoid eventuality, after the Cuban missile crisis, a hotline was established between the two super powers i.e. the US and the former USSR. The book has distinctive approach and develops surprising conclusions i.e. incredible response threats can sometimes promote peace. Most of the theories developed during Cold War era became non-operational and irrelevant after the disintegration of Soviet Union. In this book, the authors articulately developed a general theory of deterrence which is time free, incident free and is applicable in contemporary circumstances as well as in future.

The basic analytical tool used in the book is non-cooperative game theory. There is no denying fact that the perfect deterrence theory is not perfect in all aspects. Perfect deterrence theory makes use of the rationality postulate and is in accordance with the empirical record. The book has been divided in four parts. In the book, nuclear strategy from 1945 to 1964 has been discussed in detail when there were only five members of nuclear club. In 1969, NPT became operational and after that it became hard to signatories to develop a nuclear device being a member of NPT. North Korea withdrew from NPT in 2003 and developed and tested nuclear device. Iran reportedly breached the NPT regime being a signatory of NPT so it signed JCPOA.

The perfect deterrence framework presented and explained in the book modifies deterrence techniques not theory. Further, the authors explain why policymakers avoid proliferation. Perfect deterrence lays stress on development strategies like massive retaliation and flexible response. In a nutshell, the book is classic piece of research which is relevant to the contemporary international

environment. Technical appendixes attached at the end are helpful to students of deterrence.

The authors are well equipped with contemporary methods of inquiry and research. Their deep insight and empirical findings are prescriptively applicable to the contemporary world order. During Cold War era the rivalry between the two super powers resulted in piling up of nuclear weapons. These nuclear devices influenced and stimulated the nature of relationship between the Capitalist and Communist blocs. As the Cold war has ended, it is easier, in the author's view, to study deterrence as a universal phenomenon.