State-sponsored terrorism, perhaps not as prominent today as during the height of the Cold War, remains a vexing national security problem for the United States government. Considering the intractable regional security dilemmas that exist today it is not inconceivable that state-sponsored terrorism, often an asymmetric tool employed by weak states, could once again dominate the future diplomatic relationships of the United States. Yet with reductions in the size and reach of the United States’ military and a strained national economy, long-term military-centric responses to state-sponsored terrorism may not be economically or militarily sustainable. This paper argues that countering state-sponsored terrorism in the future requires adopting a strategy of diplomatic coercion, which optimizes outcomes by balancing inducements with military force. Informed by a new typology, or schema, this strategy should frame state-sponsored terrorism in a way that adds precision and transparency to the United States’ national counterterrorism policy.
### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING SF 298

1. **REPORT DATE.** Full publication date, including day, month, if available. Must cite at least the year and be Year 2000 compliant, e.g., 30-06-1998; xx-08-1998; xx-xx-1998.

2. **REPORT TYPE.** State the type of report, such as final, technical, interim, memorandum, master's thesis, progress, quarterly, research, special, group study, etc.

3. **DATES COVERED.** Indicate the time during which the work was performed and the report was written, e.g., Jun 1997 - Jun 1998; 1-10 Jun 1996; May - Nov 1998; Nov 1998.

4. **TITLE.** Enter title and subtitle with volume number and part number, if applicable. On classified documents, enter the title classification in parentheses.

5a. **CONTRACT NUMBER.** Enter all contract numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. F33615-86-C-5169.

5b. **GRANT NUMBER.** Enter all grant numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 1F665702D1257.

5c. **PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER.** Enter all program element numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. AFOSR-82-1234.

5d. **PROJECT NUMBER.** Enter all project numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 1F665702D1257; ILIR.

5e. **TASK NUMBER.** Enter all task numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 05; RF0330201; T4112.

5f. **WORK UNIT NUMBER.** Enter all work unit numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 001; AFAPL30480105.

6. **AUTHOR(S).** Enter name(s) of person(s) responsible for writing the report, performing the research, or credited with the content of the report. The form of entry is the last name, first name, middle initial, and additional qualifiers separated by commas, e.g. Smith, Richard, Jr.

7. **PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES).** Self-explanatory.

8. **PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER.** Enter all unique alphanumeric report numbers assigned by the performing organization, e.g. BRL-1234; AFWL-TR-85-4017-Vol-21-PT-2.

9. **SPONSOR/MONITORS AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES).** Enter the name and address of the organization(s) financially responsible for and monitoring the work.

10. **SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S).** Enter if available, e.g. BRL, ARDEC, NADC.

11. **SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S).** Enter report number as assigned by the sponsoring/ monitoring agency, if available, e.g. BRL-TR-829; -215.

12. **DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT.** Use agency-mandated availability statements to indicate the public availability or distribution limitations of the report. If additional limitations/restrictions or special markings are indicated, follow agency authorization procedures, e.g. RD/FRD, PROPIN, ITAR, etc. Include copyright information.

13. **SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.** Enter information not included elsewhere such as: prepared in cooperation with; translation of; report supersedes; old edition number, etc.

14. **ABSTRACT.** A brief (approximately 200 words) factual summary of the most significant information.

15. **SUBJECT TERMS.** Key words or phrases identifying major concepts in the report.

16. **SECURITY CLASSIFICATION.** Enter security classification in accordance with security classification regulations, e.g. U, C, S, etc. If this form contains classified information, stamp classification level on the top and bottom of this page.

17. **LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT.** This block must be completed to assign a distribution limitation to the abstract. Enter UU (Unclassified Unlimited) or SAR (Same as Report). An entry in this block is necessary if the abstract is to be limited.
FUTURE WAR PAPER

Coercive Diplomacy: An Alternative Response to State-Sponsored Terrorism

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF OPERATIONAL STUDIES

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Jon D. Griese, USA

AY 2013-14

Mentor: Dr. Bradly Meyer
Approved: Bradley J. Meyer
Date: 16 May 2014
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER ............................................................................................................................... iii

INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 1

BUILDING A TYPOLOGY—A SCHEMA FOR ANALYSIS ...................................................... 1

COERCION AND DETERRENCE—THE YIN AND YANG OF STATECRAFT ................. 4

COERCIVE DIPLOMACY—AN ALTERNATIVE MILITARY RESPONSE ....................... 5

BUILDING A COERCIVE DIPLOMACY STRATEGY ......................................................... 7

COERCIVE DIPLOMACY—TWO HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES ........................................... 9

LABELS MATTER—WHEN POLITICS, PRECISION, AND TRANSPARENCY COLLIDE ........................................... 12

CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................................ 14

NOTES ........................................................................................................................................... 16

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................................................................................... 17
DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED WARFIGHTING OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT
Introduction

State-sponsored terrorism, perhaps not as prominent today as during the height of the Cold War, remains a vexing national security problem for the United States government. Considering the intractable regional security dilemmas that exist today it is not inconceivable that state-sponsored terrorism, often an asymmetric tool employed by weak states, could once again dominate the future diplomatic relationships of the United States. Yet with looming reductions in the size and reach of the United States’ military formations and a strained national economy, long-term military-centric responses to state-sponsored terrorism may not be militarily feasible or economically supportable. Given these conditions, policymakers must think beyond expensive and often inconclusive military-centric responses to state-sponsored terrorism. This paper argues that countering state-sponsored terrorism in the future requires adopting a strategy of diplomatic coercion, which optimizes outcomes by balancing inducements with military force. Informed by a new typology, or schema, this strategy should frame state-sponsored terrorism in a way that adds precision and transparency to the United States’ national counterterrorism policy.

Building a Typology—A Schema for Analysis

Typologies offer a useful way for conducting multi-dimensional analysis. Long used in the social sciences as a means of providing qualitative bases for comparison of compound attributes, typologies can be useful analytical tools for complex statistical analysis and modeling. However, for the purposes of this research, a typology will be applied in its simplest form—as a method of classifying an object by its characteristics for analysis.

Using a typology that relies on a single dichotomous question for something as complex as how states support terrorism fails to capture variations in the relationships or manners of support. For example, if one establishes a simple baseline criteria for designating a state as a
sponsor of terrorism and tests a state against that threshold, the only possible outcome is either “yes” or “no”. With a construct that generates an “all or nothing” outcome, essentially the basis of the United States’ current national counterterrorism strategy, it’s entirely possible for a weak state that tolerates terrorists operating within its borders out of fear to share the same categorization of a state that maintains direct control over an international terrorist organization. Alternatively, a weak state that acquiesces to terrorists may not meet the current policy threshold of a state-sponsor of terrorism, which it may not be, but its internal security and to a greater extent, its national sovereignty, have clearly been compromised.

The lack of coherent distinction highlights a key shortcoming of the United States’ current counterterrorism policy. In application, the policy is terribly ineffective because it places national decision makers in a conundrum; they can’t effectively employ the instruments of national power to achieve favorable outcomes against a broad range of relationships that are separated on simple yes-or-no terms. Indeed, counterterrorism expert Paul Pillar notes that “pinning a single label on what is actually a mixed bag has the drawback of promoting uniformity of policy when customization is needed.”

The lack of conceptualizing and ultimately understanding the nature of state sponsored terrorism beyond a single yes/no dimension is a recurring theme found in critiques of United States counterterrorism policy. Pillar himself proposes creating three broad categories (sponsors, enablers, and cooperators). Similarly, in his critique of the United States’ current counterterrorism strategy, Steven Metz from the United States Army War College proposes a similar three tier model. Like Pillar, Metz posits that these variations should drive different counterterrorism responses. In another critique, Major Jeremy Reeves, United States Air Force,
offers perhaps the most compelling typology, one that assesses the level of involvement between state and terrorists and the method of support provided to terrorists.

Reeves arrays five descriptive categories along a spectrum of possible relationships between states and terrorists. Bracketing this spectrum are states incapable of countering terrorism at the low end (categorized as “Incapacity”) and at the upper end, states that directly control and employ terrorists as matter of national policy (Direct Control). Advancing in level of involvement from Incapacity are states that tolerate terrorism (categorized as “Toleration”), states that provide tangible support to terrorism (categorized as “Support”), and finally, states that exert influence over terrorists (categorized as “Sponsorship”). Using the same spectrum type approach, Revees identifies four principal means of support states provide terrorists: financing, government services, logistics, and safe haven.5

Developing a typology into a useful analytical tool is a matter of asking a series of interrogative questions, interpreting empirical data, and making logical conclusions about the state, the terrorists, and the level of involvement and method of support between the two. The object here is to create a typology most representative of real-world conditions, recognizing, however, that this assessment will be just as vulnerable to all the pitfalls inherent in trying to understand any distant complex phenomenon with imperfect information.

While helpful, Reeve’s typology by itself is really only a minor evolution of the United States’ current approach to defining the relationships between states and terrorists. While adding depth to classification is important to expanding our understanding of the problem, perhaps just as important is recognizing that these classifications aren’t absolute or immutable or, in and of themselves, policy objectives. The real value of developing a system of typologies, as Pillar notes, is realizing that these entities “operate along a single spectrum, with mixtures of conflict
and cooperation all along it. For Pillar, the shortcoming of a yes/no approach to countering state-sponsored terrorism isn’t solved by simply adding distinctions. Thus, an effective future counterterrorism strategy should make relationship distinctions for a purpose: to synchronize transparent policy responses that move these relationships in directions that are congruent with national security priorities.

At first glance, Reeves’ typology may seem overly simplistic. But its simplicity matters less than its potential as a means to gain a better understanding of complex relationships. To this end, the model is both logical and suitable and serves its intended purpose; it advances our understanding of the problem by illuminating opportunities where cooperative engagement or coercion can achieve a decisive effect against states that maintain relationships with terrorists. Yet as Pillar suggests, typologies by themselves are not particularly useful when they aren’t mated to an effective policy apparatus for implementation. Pairing typologies with coercive diplomacy, which this author assesses as a more viable, cost effective alternative than the heavy reliance on military intervention to combat state-sponsored terrorism, may offer a more effective alternative to the current approach.

Coercion and Deterrence—The Yin and Yang of Statecraft

Coercion and deterrence are complementary tools of statecraft that seek to manipulate the cost-to-benefit variables of an adversaries’ decision making through the threat of force. Explained by Robert Pape in *Bombing to Win*, deterrence seeks to maintain the status quo of a given relationship, while coercion seeks to change the behavior of the adversary to create a new condition within the relationship. Thus, in application, deterrence’s aim is preventing a particular adversarial action before it occurs, whereas coercion threatens the use of force as an ultimatum to modify existing conditions and to change future behavior. However, as Pape notes,
despite their complementary properties, the application of coercion is more difficult because “threats that deter may not coerce.” Pape’s observation suggests that the problem with coercion is the erosion of the credibility of the threat. Since the threat of force to deter an act was insufficient, a state must now recalibrate its promise of future force to meet the higher costs the adversarial state is willing to pay to achieve its goals. The implication here is that a successful coercion strategy must incorporate a variety of tools including sanctions and inducements to reinforce the threat of force.

Highlighting the limitations and complexity of coercion is important considering the recommendation in this paper is to pursue a strategy of coercive diplomacy. This is not to say that deterrence is not a component of that strategy. On the contrary, this proposal adopts Pape’s perspective that coercion and deterrence are really two sides of the same coin moving in conjunction with each other along the same plane. However, in a strategy to counter state sponsors of terrorism, deterrence has less utility and yields to coercion as the dominant mechanism. Deterrence remains a contributing component of the strategy, but by the title of this approach alone, coercive diplomacy suggests that a given state committed some disagreeable act, establishing a relationship with terrorists for example, and has thus crossed a threshold that deterrence could not prevent.

Coercive Diplomacy—An Alternative to Military Response

So, what is coercive diplomacy and what is its potential for resolving state sponsored terrorism? Coercive diplomacy (also called coercive persuasion) is not a new concept. Rather, it has been in practice in various form throughout the age of international conflict. Alexander George explains that a strategy of coercive diplomacy is employed to seek the most economical resolution during a time of conflict between two states. Its goal is to avoid a costly all-out war
by de-escalating conflict in order to restore a favorable peace. It seeks to persuade the adversary
to cease his belligerence and reverse an action by imposing a threat of punishment greater than
the benefit of continued aggression.\textsuperscript{10} Making coercive diplomacy work requires that one think
about outcomes in different terms than simply victor and vanquished. One must accept the idea
that this is a bargaining strategy and that the coercing state will likely not achieve every one of
its political goals. Whether one sees this approach as taking a weakened stance against terrorism
depends largely upon what's at stake—both domestically and abroad. But if the goal is
preventing state-sponsored terrorism from moving toward all-out war, coercive diplomacy is an
approach to find a new and acceptable stasis between states.

Coercive diplomacy is an odd moniker and may strike some as the coupling of two
incongruent notions. Those in the diplomatic corps may wonder how or even why diplomacy
needs to be coercive if a diplomat's worthiness is typically measured by his or her mastery of the
art of peaceful negotiation. Similarly, military officers and practitioners of national security may
wonder how diplomacy itself could ever force someone to do something they do not feel
compelled to do. Neither has cause to worry. As an alternative strategy to a military centric
response, coercive diplomacy still employs the time-tested tools of foreign policy, just in
different ways. Rather than military actions dominating the strategic interplay as a conflict
escalates, force plays the backbeat to diplomacy's measured rhythm. This is not to imply that
military force assumes an inconsequential role during conflict. On the contrary, coercive
diplomacy still relies on the real and viable threat of military force and when appropriate,
demonstrates it in discrete and measured ways with the promise that it is capable of exerting
even more force if the targeted state does not alter its behavior (what George calls the "limited
exemplary use of force").\textsuperscript{11} By virtue of its flexibility and aim to steer conflict away from all-out
war by achieving an agreeable peace in the most economical way available, coercive diplomacy has real application potential against states that sponsor terrorism.

**Building a Coercive Diplomacy Strategy**

As a conflict presents itself, one of the initial estimates that should be considered is assessing the prospect that applying coercive diplomacy can achieve a favorable outcome. Analyzing the factors that influenced the outcome of a variety of conflicts, George identified certain conditions that, when present, tend to increase the possibility of a favorable outcome.¹² These conditions, along with simple questions to assess their presence, are:

- **Clarity of the objective**: What is to be achieved?
- **Strength of motivation**: Based on the cost and what is at stake, is the state motivated to act?
- **Asymmetry of motivation**: Does each side know what is at stake and is the coercing state more motivated to achieve its objectives?
- **Sense of urgency**: Is the coercer able to convey a sense of urgency in a way that encourages compliance?
- **Strong leadership**: How much control does the opponent exert over the state?
- **Domestic and international support**: Are common interests clearly at stake?
- **Unacceptability of threatened escalation**: Is there a way to make the opponent feel that the situation is escalating out of his control?

After assessing the likelihood of achieving a favorable outcome, one should assess the optimal outcome possible vis-à-vis the opposing state. When an action threatens change to an acceptable status quo or some action has created a new disagreeable status quo, George explains that coercive diplomacy seeks three possible outcomes: 1) for an opponent to stop short of
reaching a goal, 2) for an opponent to undo an action, or 3), an opponent persuaded to make changes to his own government (which George notes is the hardest of all possible outcomes to achieve). Much like the earlier typology discussion, these outcomes are not three rigid possibilities but rather a range of possible outcomes along a spectrum. Classification of these options simply provides the practitioner a conceptualization of the desired endstate. With the endstate in mind, one now needs to think through the logical steps toward achieving that outcome.

The sequencing of which policy tools are applied, and when, is totally dependent upon the circumstances of the incident. However, in all cases, the coercing state's first action is to respond with some demonstration of force to establish credibility and to convey to the targeted state how motivated and willing the coercing state is to reinstating a status quo on its terms. This initial posturing is important as it sets the stage for future negotiations. George is also keen to point out that a hard-nose, all-or-nothing position taken early on by the coercing state as an initial bargaining position offers no real incentive for the targeted state to negotiate. Framed as a losing proposition, the targeted state, with possible gains out of reach and losses certain, is likely to assume even higher risks, which will accelerate the conflict closer toward war. At this point one can begin to see the important role that calibrated military force plays at the front end of the conflict and how important it is for diplomacy to establish a bargaining framework to manage escalation.

Conceptually, coercive diplomacy is about providing viable off-ramps for de-escalating a conflict. The threat of force is one way to achieve this, but another is to offer positive inducements to adjust the targeted state's incentive schema. This variant of coercive diplomacy is commonly referred to as the "carrot and stick" approach. But identifying the correct
combination of carrots and sticks that will resolve a crisis in a favorable manner can be a formidable obstacle for policymakers, particularly in urgent situations. Getting this right is immensely important. History is replete with examples of states muddling through conflict until policymakers either found the right combination of carrots and sticks that work (such as the 1962 Cuban missile crisis), or simply failed and were forced to retreat at great cost to their national credibility and pride (such as the withdrawal of US peacekeepers from Somalia in 1993).

Muddling through is not a flawed approach so long as it leads to an acceptable outcome, but the period of trial and error can be hastened, perhaps even largely eliminated, by developing a working typology as the conflict emerges. Developing such an analytical tool at the front end of the conflict and identifying where all the tools of statecraft—economic sanctions, foreign aid, embargos, inducements, etc.—can be most economically applied should increase the odds of achieving a favorable outcome.

Coercive Diplomacy Applied—Two Hypothetical Examples

Identifying appropriate inducements (carrots) and threats (sticks) is very context dependent; there is no single “approved solution” for the right mixture and types of inducements and threats that can ensure success in even the most similar of circumstances. However, it can be useful to work through and conceptualize some general ways these tools can manipulate an adversary’s incentive structure if given certain basic circumstances. The following two hypothetical cases examine how inducements (cooperation on counterterrorism, favorable trade incentives, military training and aid, etc.) and threats (economic sanctions, travel restrictions, trade embargos, etc.), can affect a probable outcome. They apply the basic framework of the previously established typology. In these scenarios, State X sponsors terrorism and State Y tolerates terrorism.
State X: Based on the typology, a “Sponsor” is a state that exerts some degree of influence over a terrorist organization within its borders. This influence falls just short of direct control but is greater than providing just tangible support. For context, a prime example of this type of state is Pakistan’s and its long history of manipulating homegrown militant Islamist groups to advance its regional goals. Under these circumstances, the goal of the coercing state is persuading the opponent to change the relationship it has with the terrorist organization. The interplay begins with the coercer’s response to some unfavorable change in the status quo. The coercing state conducts a limited demonstration of military action (positioning strike capabilities near its border as an example) to demonstrate resolve. All conflicts are context dependent, but at this early stage a state that actively sponsors terrorism would likely feel insufficient pressure to accept the coercer’s initial demands. Thus, the coercer must now apply a more direct demonstration of military force along with some amount of indirect force (immediate travel restrictions or seizing of state financial assets for example). At the same time, reward (inducements) are gradually introduced to encourage cooperation and acceptance of demands. In this case, State X is likely to leverage its sponsorship status to gain as many favorable inducements the coercing state is willing to offer before the cost of enduring additional coercive force becomes too great. Given the circumstances, achieving an acceptable outcome for both coercer and opponent is achievable only after the cumulative effects of indirect force (embargos, frozen financial accounts) set in and change the targeted state’s cost-to-benefit calculus. At the end of this lengthy period, the coercing state will likely not achieve all its goals, but rather accepts a new status quo that is still more economical and acceptable than the cost of escalating the conflict.
• **State Y.** This is a state that tolerates terrorist organizations operating from within its borders but without influence on these organizations (no association), and yet has the means to take action against the terrorist organization if it chooses to. Assuming some action has emanated from State Y that has triggered an unfavorable change in the accepted status quo, a military demonstration of force against the opposing state may not be the right type of initial move for the circumstances. Military force applied here could trigger a separate and unintended conflict between the coercer and the targeted state. Sanctions, immediately backed by the threat of taking military action against the terrorists themselves with or without the consent of the opposing state may be more appropriate. The coercing state would likely achieve some acceptance of what the target country perceives as modest and reasonable demands, but only if inducements provide some tangible benefit for cooperation.

While lacking the complexities of real-world circumstances and rapid, interactive diplomacy, the results of this hypothetical exercise are informative and help practitioners think through the application of coercive diplomacy. Yet apparent in both of these outcomes is the realization that coercive diplomacy has practical limitations. First, the circumstances of both cases produced an outcome that was different than the pre-conflict status quo. The implication here is that the coercing state must continuously assess what constitutes an acceptable outcome given the changing circumstances, and if this threshold shifts, new political goals must be adopted. Second, the legal or moral circumstances that support the justifiable use of military force against a state, as with State Y (Toleration), may not be present. This is highly problematic for any strategy that relies on the threat of military force as its principal coercive mechanism. An alternative here might be applying military force against the terrorists themselves while offering incentives to the opposing state to gain some form of mutual cooperation against the terrorist.
Third, lacking the pressure and urgency that the threat of war can bring, the opposing state may not feel compelled to fully cooperate. As with State Y, the more distant the relationship from state to terrorist organization (Toleration or Incapacity, for example), the more difficult the task of finding the right combination of carrots and sticks that can produce an acceptable outcome.

Coercive diplomacy is not a one-size-fits-all policy solution. It may not be the right approach given the circumstances or given what’s at stake. At its core, it’s a bargaining strategy that seeks to avoid the cost of war by pursuing favorable and acceptable outcomes. The hypothetical above exercise highlights these points. The exercise also highlights coercive diplomacy’s potential as a workable solution for resolving state sponsored terrorism. But perhaps what the exercise illuminates most is the value of having a working typology, a more stratified articulation of the means and circumstances surrounding the relationship between a state and a terrorist organization, so that practitioners are able to work through scenarios to find the ways to achieve a state’s political goals as the conflict unfolds.

Labels Matter—When Politics, Precision and Transparency Collide

Strategies informed by typologies demand precise terminology. Yet a review of the current Department of State list of states officially designated as sponsors of terrorism generates more questions than answers. Indeed, one cannot examine the current list and gain any appreciable understanding of the true nature of the problem as only four states populate that list: Cuba, Syria, Iran and Sudan. A good example of the list’s incongruence is trying to understand how Cuba has occupied a position on the list for over four decades whereas Pakistan, a state bedeviled by decades of terrorist sponsorship that have now spun into uncontrollable activity, remains absent. Paul Pillar explains that the list has become hijacked by a number of other competing political and diplomatic priorities. Rather than being a helpful source for
understanding and coordinating counterterrorism efforts, the State Department’s list has become a management tool for troubled diplomatic relations. States are removed or not considered for listing because of higher priority diplomatic or political considerations, regardless of actual conditions. If one assumes that this system remains the same well into the future, this corrupted approach limits the full utility of the future counterterrorism strategy recommended in this paper.

A strategy of coercive diplomacy requires a means of transmitting credible threats and inducements supported by an accurate understanding of the opposing state’s environment. However, barring a significant change in current political and diplomatic behavior of the United States, this author is not optimistic that the actions and practices of today will be any different in the future. Counterterrorism is but one aspect of a wide range of national security and foreign policy interests. It gets traded just like a commodity as costs, benefits and risks change. Indeed, it is foolhardy to envision some version of a future security environment where tailored counterterrorism strategies exist in some discrete environment, unopposed to the real challenges of the broader political and diplomatic environment.

This is not to suggest that the strategy recommended in this paper is incompatible with a system that is unlikely to change. On the contrary, it suggests that a future strategy must be flexible enough to adapt to imperfect systems. Multi-dimensional typologies are actually quite suited to incorporating a variety of system characteristics—they just become much more complex than the rather basic form used in this paper. This adaptability is an important feature of the strategy, but just as important to the success of this approach is maintaining the will and means to communicate clearly with the adversarial state—conditions that this author acknowledges will be determined by the nature of the circumstances.
Coercive diplomacy relies on the clear communication of intentions and expectations and assumes that the opposing state shares the same understanding of these conditions and the environment. In this regard, the US State Department’s list of sponsors of terrorism in its current form would be a significant impediment because of its inherent contradictions, lack of transparency, and lack of variance. In all likelihood, there are ways to mitigate each one of these aspects of the current system but this lies outside the scope of this paper. However, it is logical to assume that adept practitioners can find workable solutions and that in the aggregate, these discrepancies don’t prevent the application of a coercive strategy, just its full optimization.

Conclusion

Along the spectrum of conflict there are a range of possible outcomes that can be acceptable to both parties involved. The challenge is thinking through the steps that lead to these acceptable outcomes and mapping out strategies that employ the right mixture of coercion and inducements that lead to that terminal point. This paper examined one of those strategies—coercive diplomacy—and judges that it has real application potential for forming the basis of a flexible, adaptive strategy to combat states that sponsor terrorism.

Combining a tool for multi-dimensional analysis (typologies) with a bargaining strategy (coercive diplomacy) is simply forming a new way of solving a complex problem—in this case, state sponsorship of terrorism. As demonstrated, a strategy informed by typologies and implemented through coercive diplomacy can be an effective policy tool to counter state sponsored terrorism. Typologies advance our understanding of the true nature of complex relationships and coercive diplomacy acts as a means of implementation. This blended strategy employs all the tools of statecraft in measured tone at different times during conflict with the goal of reaching a favorable outcome and avoiding the steep economic costs of war. Yet, as
demonstrated, it's not a panacea—it has inherent limitations. Relying on a state's own self-restraint, coercive diplomacy has no inherent mechanism to prevent a crisis from escalating out of control; it can’t prevent war any more that it can guarantee peace. Likewise, at its core, coercive diplomacy is a bargaining strategy that may not achieve all of a state’s pre-crisis political goals. Its utility is finding the most economical point of acceptable stasis. Nevertheless, when properly applied with an appreciation of its limitations, it provides practitioners another viable way of solving a complex problem while potentially avoiding the heavy costs of military intervention.
Notes

Bibliography


