

the perspectives of both the challenger and the defender if they are to understand the motives of the protagonists, the genesis of their policies, and their response to threats.

DEFINING A DETERRENCE ENCOUNTER

We define an immediate deterrence encounter as *a challenge to a commitment*. When the behaviour proscribed by the commitment occurs, deterrence has failed. When it does not occur, even if a limited probe of the commitment takes place, deterrence has not failed. Deterrence succeeds when the challenger chooses to refrain from the proscribed behaviour because the defender's efforts to buttress its commitment made the associated costs of the proscribed action appear to exceed the expected gain. This definition is derived directly from the most fundamental postulates of deterrence theory and therefore constitutes an appropriate test of immediate deterrence. It admittedly imposes a heavy burden on investigators to find evidence about the deliberations and decisions of a would-be challenger's leaders.

Table II starts from our premise that the defining characteristic of a deterrence encounter is a challenge to a preexisting commitment. The table classifies encounters on the basis of how initiators and defenders viewed the existence and significance of defenders' commitments. It identifies six possibilities, of which three are outside the scope of deterrence because there was no prior commitment or attempt at deterrence.

The first type of deterrence encounter is one in which the initiator fails to recognize that the defender has a commitment. We include in this category only cases where the defender has made a commitment and attempted to communicate its existence to the initiator. The other two categories of deterrence are the classic cases modelled by deterrence theories; in both, the initiator recognizes the defender's commitment. The challenger may refrain from action if the commitment is sufficiently credible and potent, or proceed with a challenge if its leaders doubt the defender's capability or resolve or believe that the costs of inaction are greater than the costs of action.