

# SECURITISATION OF DETERRENCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC STABILITY

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## Abstract

*The post-Cold War international strategic environment transformed into one characterized by high level of certainty and complexity. This challenged the concept and practice of deterrence, which had remained the mainstay of the Cold War strategic environment. This research employs securitization theory to evaluate the actions that nuclear-armed states (particularly the US, Russia, China, UK, and France) took in response to this shift. The research finds out that the nuclear-armed states responded with de-securitization, re-securitization and wider securitization of deterrence. By doing so, as a concept and practice, deterrence has entered into a high and extraordinary phase of politics, resulting in the construction of a response (deterrent posture) that pervades across different sectors of society/national power, including politics, society and industry. However, the research notes that this posture is based on a high risk of escalation and competitive impulse driving states into a relentless arms race. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of this posture depends on how consistent nuclear-armed states are and will be in maintaining such a posture.*

**Keywords:** *Deterrence, Securitisation Theory, Emerging & Disruptive Technologies, Three-staged Deterrent Posture*

## Introduction

The international strategic environment transformed immediately after the Cold War primarily due to the dissolution of bipolarity and the emergence of new conditions for multi-polarity; however, it was recast with the overall widespread development and acquisition of emerging and disruptive technologies (EDT). However, the absence of bipolarity in post-Cold War does not restrain states from engaging in a geopolitical rivalry that reinforced the idea that stalemate is not enduring in international politics. Hence, the competitive acquisition of technology for security would continue. Nuclear-armed states are motivated to

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compete for technological advancements since nuclear weapons that are secure today might not be so in the future.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, this has challenged the concept and practice of deterrence that remained a mainstay of the Cold War strategic environment.

During Cold War, deterrence was generally characterised by the reliance of superpowers on an enormous quantity of nuclear weapons to destroy each other's nuclear arsenal before the war and strategic nuclear weapons on high alert constantly; reliance of smaller nuclear-armed states on sufficient arsenals as well as counter-value targeting; reliance on threats of retaliation more than on defences for deterrence; reliance on standing conventional forces to deter low-intensity attacks; and the emergence of unilateral and collective efforts to manage security via deterrence. Besides the fact that nuclear weapons have not revolutionized international politics, nuclear deterrence is the best strategy that served Cold War and nuclear weapons are the ultimate instruments of deterrence. Nonetheless, it is becoming susceptible to technologies capable of disarming strike capabilities.<sup>2</sup> With emerging technologies, an adversary could create chaos without seizing territory, generate confusion and threaten or undermine a country's norms, values and international order.<sup>3</sup> Deterrence based on Cold War relics does offer some solutions such as limited retaliation, crisis stability, or something leaving to chance; however, adversary today is smarter enough to undercut those deterrence solutions. With new technologies, non-military tools (such as cyber and information) have dominated military tools to influence security and strategy. New threats and tools required nuclear-armed states to design creative deterrent posture. The current deterrent policies of nuclear-armed states are a step in this direction.

It is argued that the nuclear-armed states responded to the post-Cold War strategic environment by de-securitising, re-securitising, and expanding the securitisation of deterrence in accordance with the securitization theory's desecuritisation process<sup>4</sup> and Sperling and Webber

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<sup>1</sup> The technology remained a key factor during the Cold War in driving superpowers to compete. see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Charles L. Glaser and Steve Fetter, "Should the United States Reject MAD? Damage Limitation and U.S. Nuclear Strategy toward China," *International Security*, 41, no. 1 (2016): 49–98.

<sup>3</sup> Julian Jang-Jaccard and Surya Nepal, "A Survey of Emerging Threats in Cybersecurity," *Journal of Computer and System Sciences*, 80, no. 5, (Aug 2014): 973-993.

<sup>4</sup> Ole Waever, "Politics, Security, Theory," *Security Dialogue*, 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 465-480.

model's dynamic and reversible process.<sup>5</sup> The de-securitisation of deterrence occurred in the absence of Soviet threat and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, followed by nuclear reductions and arms control negotiations. With the end of the Cold War, the interest in nuclear weapons reduced; however, after 9/11, the threat of nuclear terrorism loomed large in deterrence calculus and has "consumed significant military leadership and intellectual bandwidth," especially in the US.<sup>6</sup> This enhanced the salience of nuclear weapons in military doctrine. The new technological advancements have created conditions integrating conventional and nuclear forces; however, the current understanding of nuclear forces is another challenge.

The new threats and technologies drove nuclear-armed states to re-securitize and widen the securitization of deterrence at three dimensions – foreign policy, societal and industrial integration, and technological integration. This entails fusing deterrence with foreign policy baseline, industrial and societal resilience, and military modernization. This is evident in concepts like integrated deterrence, full spectrum deterrence, and multi-instrument deterrence that rely on ambiguity and resilience. Due to this fusion, deterrence has entered into an extraordinary phase of politics where securitization has extended to other sectors of national power, demonstrating societies' obsession with meeting enhanced security demands. Moreover, the fusion/integration of deterrence with foreign policy, industrial and societal resilience and military modernization across different nuclear-armed states validates this new deterrent posture as a "just and good way of life."<sup>7</sup>

This research studies how nuclear-armed states in different regions securitize deterrence at individual and group levels, that deepens and widens into societal and industrial level and military modernization resulting in shifting and institutionalising deterrence into high/extraordinary politics. In doing so, this research contributes to and extends existing limited literature on securitization and deterrence to provide better a understanding of deterrence practices in the post-Cold War world. It presents a framework that argues how deterrent threats and responses can be mobilized deeper and broader within a society with more deeper and wider consequences of securitization across national power sectors.

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<sup>5</sup> James Sperling & Mark Webber, "NATO and the Ukraine Crisis: Collective Securitisation," *European Journal of International Security*, 2, issue 1 (2016): 19-46.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Peters, Justin Anderson & Harrison Menke, "Deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Integrating Nuclear and Conventional Force," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 12, no. 4 (2018): 15-43.

<sup>7</sup> Huysmans, "The Question of the Limit," 569-89.

The article is divided into three sections. Section one reflects upon the limitations of different theories in explaining the gradual widening scope of deterrence by nuclear-armed states in the post-Cold War world. Section two assesses to what extent the securitization theory is applicable and what add-ons can be introduced to create an analytical space that can help explain deterrence travelling through three stages. This is followed by section three, which offers a stylised framework of comprehensive securitization of deterrence to illustrate how the three stages of desecuritisation, resecuritisation and widening securitization of deterrence occur in post-Cold War era.

## Deterrence and International Relations Theory

Realist assumptions about states competing in an anarchic world through the accumulation of power relative to the adversary and alliance formation to maintain a balance of power and preserve the status quo<sup>8</sup> or to attain a hegemonic position in the international system<sup>9</sup> could help explain the power dynamics of Cold War. The presence of external threats and scarce resources encouraged states (especially adversaries tied in security dilemma) to acquire nuclear weapons as an ultimate deterrent and security provider.<sup>10</sup> The possession of diverse nuclear weapons in massive quantity helped maintain peace during the Cold War. However, the realists' assumptions could not fully explain the state's behaviour in the post-Cold War world. For instance, the Kargil war between India and Pakistan and the deployment of Indian air power against Pakistan's mainland in the 2019 Pulwama-Balakot crisis negate the realist proposition of deterrence.

The structural-realist argument renders significant automaticity to nuclear weapons while arguing that nuclear weapons enable the possessor state to deter others.<sup>11</sup> The realist paradigm is limited in explaining state behaviour because key factors such as interdependence,<sup>12</sup> domestic politics,<sup>13</sup> and norms<sup>14</sup> are not emphasized in this paradigm. The post-Cold

<sup>8</sup> Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*: 2.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited," *International Security*, 25, no. 3 (Winter 2000-01): 128-161.

<sup>10</sup> Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, "Is Nuclear Zero the Best Option?" *The National Interest*, no. 109 (2010): 92.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Waltz, "More May be Better," in Kenneth Waltz and Scott Sagan, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (NY: W. W. Norton, 2003): 5.

<sup>12</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977): 86-109.

<sup>13</sup> James D. Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and the Theories of International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 1 (1998): 289-313.

<sup>14</sup> Audie J. Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

War world is characterized by multipolarity, the emergence of new nuclear-armed states, rogue states, non-state actors and technological progression where realism is less relevant.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the ideological motives behind non-state actors acquiring nuclear weapons have complicated the idea of mutually assured destruction.<sup>16</sup>

Liberalism, an alternative paradigm, holds that people are good-natured, logical, and motivated to pursue their rights and freedoms.<sup>17</sup> International institutions such as the League of Nations are essential to safeguard those freedoms at the state level. However, its demise raises questions about the veracity of liberalism. This led to the emergence of neoliberalism, which proposes that states can cooperate in an international system characterised by security competition.<sup>18</sup> Institutions based on collective decision-making promote cooperation through increased interdependence,<sup>19</sup> reduce insecurities,<sup>20</sup> and render military power or use of force redundant.<sup>21</sup> As a result, international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and alliances and partnerships such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) security pact are established that do not fully embrace liberal ideas.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the NATO operations in the Balkans “was a muddled compromise that lacked strategic purpose” because a humanitarian crisis in Bosnia did not threaten NATO allies’ “core national interests”; therefore, the intervention did not necessarily “ameliorate the situation on the ground”.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, the US invasion of Afghanistan and calling Iran, Iraq

<sup>15</sup> William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security*, 24, no. 1 (1999): 5-41; Stephen J. Cimbala, “Nuclear Proliferation in the Twenty-First Century: Realism, Rationality, or Uncertainty?” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 11, no. 1 (2017): 129-146.

<sup>16</sup> Sagan and Waltz, “Is Nuclear Zero the Best Option?” 88; William W. Newmann, “Hegemonic Disruption: The Asymmetric Challenge to US Leadership,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 5, no. 3 (2001): 67-101.

<sup>17</sup> Michael W. Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 12, no. 3 (1983): 206-207.

<sup>18</sup> Tore Fougner, “The State, International Competitiveness and Neoliberal Globalisation: Is There a Future Beyond ‘The Competition State’?” *Review of International Studies*, 32, no. 1 (2006): 165-185.

<sup>19</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, “The Promise of Institutional Theory,” *International Security*, 20, no. 1 (1995): 45.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> The military power is less important in state of complex interdependence. Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*: 24-26.

<sup>22</sup> Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Lastman*: 282.

<sup>23</sup> Stefano Recchia, “Protecting Civilians or Preserving NATO? Alliance Entanglement and the Bosnian Safe Areas,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/01402390.2022.2044315

and North Korea as the axis of evil, and generating notions such as rogue states have demonstrated American imperialist powers and its failed policies resulted in more violence and chaos across the world.<sup>24</sup> It can be argued that international regimes to control trade, human rights, and environmental issues are essential to promote liberal order; however, they have come under threat from growing political unrest, economic insecurity, and political polarisation in the western industrial world, raising concerns about the regimes' liberal instrumentality.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the ostensibly liberal regimes/alliances to regulate international security lack the substance to cope with changing world. Therefore, to address threats and challenges that emerged in the post-Cold War world, engagement among states through norm building is argued to have an impact<sup>26</sup> - a constructivist paradigm.

The third approach to international relations is constructivism that argues that anarchy is constructed through interaction among states.<sup>27</sup> The constructivists assume that human relations as well as international relations are based on inter-subjective ideas and thoughts that are shared across.<sup>28</sup> Those ideas and thoughts then define identities and interests. For instance, state sovereignty is a collective social institution that does not have any material reality but exists because people of the state collectively believe in it.<sup>29</sup> The material power and state's interests are defined through a social and ideological lens.<sup>30</sup> Within this approach, the social norms against the use of nuclear weapons are the causal variables instead of the destructive capability of nuclear weapons at the heart of deterrence.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the treaties to control nuclear proliferation, arms control and nuclear disarmament such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

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<sup>24</sup> Michael C. Desch, "It is kind to be Cruel: The Humanity of American Realism," *Review of International Studies*, 29, no. 4 (2003): 421-422; J. Mearsheimer, "Realists as Idealists," *Security Studies*, 20, no. 3 (2011): 424-430.

<sup>25</sup> G. John Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs*, 94, issue 1 (Jan 2018): 7-23.

<sup>26</sup> Desch, "It is kind to be Cruel": 415-426.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, 46, no.2 (1992): 391-425.

<sup>28</sup> Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism," 171-200.

<sup>29</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, no.4 (2001): 391-416.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 20.

<sup>31</sup> Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 38-43.

(START), were negotiated and enforced demonstrating shared understanding among states that due to destructive capability of nuclear weapons the states must work together to reduce not only nuclear risks but also towards nuclear disarmament eventually. On the other hand, reliance on nuclear deterrence as a status symbol and tool to address security threats that cannot be dealt with by inferior conventional strength has become a norm.<sup>32</sup>

This research contends that ideas and concepts (ideational factors) underscore power (material and structural elements) and interdependence (security and economic cooperation) to investigate deterrence in the post-Cold War. This argument helps understand the framework of interaction among foreign policy baseline, societal and industrial resilience, and military modernisation/technological progression that help in the re-securitisation of deterrence. In this way, the framework considers non-discursive practices such as alliance patterns and technological advancements along with concepts, approaches and doctrines explicated in official documents (e.g., white papers, strategic reviews, nuclear posture reviews). The research further argues that deterrence is based on the threat of retaliation, but it is no more limited, like security,<sup>33</sup> to the military domain, but rather integrated into different sectors of life or, in other words, the threat of retaliation is socialised with other sectors. This research grounds its arguments with securitisation theory that relates to speech act theory,<sup>34</sup> theory of governmentality,<sup>35</sup> and social constructivism.<sup>36</sup> Here, the emphasis on speech act gives security a performative character with an ability to transform social reality not just

<sup>32</sup> Nina Tannenwald, James M. Acton and Jane Vaynman, "Meeting the Challenges of the New Nuclear Age: Emerging Risks and Declining Norms in the Age of Technological Innovation and Changing Nuclear Doctrines," *American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (April 2018). <https://www.amacad.org/publication/emerging-risks-declining-norms>

<sup>33</sup> David Mutimer, "Beyond Strategy: Critical Thinking and the New Security Studies," in Craig A. Snyder (ed.) *Contemporary Security Studies* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997): 90.

<sup>34</sup> Michael C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization in International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly*, 47, no. 4, (2003): 511–31.

<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, translated by Graham Burchell (NY: Picador, 2009); Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: SAGE, 2010): 30.

<sup>36</sup> Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Thomas Risse, "Let's Argue! Communicative Action in World Politics," *International Organization*, 54, no. 1 (2000): 1–40; Charlotte Epstein, *The Power of Words in International Relations: Birth of an Anti-Whaling Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

describes the contextual world and is context-specific.<sup>37</sup> The securitisation theory provides necessary theoretical framework to address questions that are key to this research. Questions like what makes an event a security issue? How does a particular event permeate into a society/audience and establishes as a threat? What kind of responses are required? What are the consequences of socialisation around an event to declare it a threat?

## Relevance of Securitisation Theory

The securitisation theory (ST) gained prominence in international relations with Copenhagen School's research that securitises non-traditional security issues.<sup>38</sup> In parallel to the original ST, Floyd<sup>39</sup> presents moral right or just version of securitisation theory that allows both traditionalist and Critical security studies (Welsh School) to conduct morally right securitisation. However, with regard to the securitisation of security issues, scholars study the construction of security in the non-democratic political system for different political purposes, including deterrent threats,<sup>40</sup> and argue adding norms, identity formation,<sup>41</sup> and emotion (especially collective fear appraisals)<sup>42</sup> into the analysis broadens the relation between securitisation and security doctrine with identity being a critical factor in securitization process.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Scholars have argued that this performative character could be intrinsic and independent of audience or could be acquired when used by particular actors in particular contexts. See Ole Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization" in Ronnie D. Lipschitz (ed.), *On Security* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1995): 46-86; Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European Journal of International Relations*, 11, no. 2 (2005): 171-201; Matt McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security," *European Journal of International Relations*, 14, no. 4 (2008): 563-87.

<sup>38</sup> Buzan, Waever and Wilde, *Security*: 21; B. McSweeney, "Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School," *Review of International Studies*, 22 (1996): 81-93.

<sup>39</sup> Rita Floyd, "Can Securitization Theory be used in Normative Analysis? Towards a Just Securitization Theory," *Security Dialogue*, 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 427-439.

<sup>40</sup> Vuori, "Illocutionary Logics and Strands of Securitization," 65-99.

<sup>41</sup> Roxanna Sjostedt, "The Discursive Origins of a Doctrine: Norms, Identity, and Securitization under Harry S. Truman and George W. Bush," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 3, no. 2 (2007): 233-254.

<sup>42</sup> Eric Van Rythoven, "Learning to Feel, Learning to Fear? Emotions, Imaginaries, and Limits in the Politics of Securitization," *Security Dialogue*, 46, no. 5 (2015): 458-475.

<sup>43</sup> Jarrod Hayes, "Identity and Securitization in the Democratic Peace: The United States and the Divergence of Response to India and Iran's Nuclear Programs," *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, no. 4, (2009): 977-999.



The securitisation theory allows an understanding of why and how securitisation happens and the effects of this process on the politics of a state or community. The literature on ST mainly offers insight into state-centric and non-governmental actors' securitisation,<sup>44</sup> and is largely biased towards democratic political systems, especially in the European context, where security issues moved out of normal politics to avoid democratic procedures rather legitimizes extraordinary measures.<sup>45</sup> However, Vuori has studied the construction of security in the non-democratic political system for different political purposes including deterrent threats.<sup>46</sup> Besides Vuori, Berling<sup>47</sup> and Lupovici<sup>48</sup> have made notable contribution towards the study of the relation between securitisation and deterrence. This research builds on these studies to present a framework considering the emergence of new and fluid challenges/threats and emerging disruptive technologies in post-Cold War as a precipitating event or disruption threatening normal deterrence practices. Hence, there is a need to appreciate the adoption and institutionalisation of deterrence strategies in response to threats and challenges.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, this framework further

<sup>44</sup> Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 71; Jef Huysmans, "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38, no. 5 (2000): 751-777; Claire Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School on tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable outside Europe?" *Security Dialogue*, 38, no. 1 (2007): 5-25; Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Non-traditional Security and Infectious Diseases in ASEAN: Going Beyond the Rhetoric of Securitization to Deeper Institutionalization," *Pacific Review*, 21, no. 4 (2008): 507-525; Jocelyn Vaughan, "The Unlikely Securitizer: Humanitarian Organizations and the Securitization of Indistinctiveness," *Security Dialogue*, 40, no. 3 (2009): 263-285; Tine Hanrieder, and Christian Kreuder-Sonnen, "WHO Decides on the Exception? Securitization and Emergency Governance in Global Health," *Security Dialogue*, 45, no. 4 (2014): 331-348; Gabi Schlag, "Securitization Theory and the Evolution of NATO," in Mark Webber and Adrian Hyde-Price (eds), *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance* (NY: Routledge, 2016): 161-182.

<sup>45</sup> Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," 46-86; Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," 171-201; Juha A. Vuori, "Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders," *European Journal of International Relations*, 14, no. 1 (2008): 65-99.

<sup>46</sup> Vuori, "Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization."

<sup>47</sup> Trine V. Berling, "Science and Securitization: Objectivation, the Authority of the Speaker and Mobilization of Scientific Facts," *Security Dialogue*, 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 385-397.

<sup>48</sup> Amir Lupovici, "Towards a Securitization Theory of Deterrence," *International Studies Quarterly*, 63, no. 1 (2019): 177-186.

<sup>49</sup> Amir Lupovici, "Securitization Climax: Putting the Iranian Nuclear Project at the Top of the Israeli Public Agenda (2009-2012)," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12, no. 3 (2016): 413-432.

reasons that in order to respond to this event or disruption, deterrence undergoes three-dimensional securitisation by nuclear-armed states across time and space involving a wider audience. The audience here comprises domestic, adversary, or target audience and international audience, including other nuclear-armed states. Here, the securitising actor is a nuclear-armed state; the referent object is new entities and technologies that are threatening. Another referent object is deterrence, which, as a security policy is threatened, the audience includes societies, industries, and other nuclear-armed states, and the context is post-Cold War.

The process of securitisation is initiated or triggered by a precipitating event or disruption in the external environment, such as pandemic, immigration etc.<sup>50</sup> The existentiality of threat is defined and interpreted through speech act, which is then subject to securitization to build inter-subjective understanding that calls for an urgent and exceptional response.<sup>51</sup> The speech act is an important element that works around securitising actor, the language signifying a securitising move and the history associated with the threat.<sup>52</sup> Regardless of the significance of speech act, the securitising actor cannot excessively rely on semantics of threat instead needs to engage with what role culture, norms, contextual factors, power relations, identity and audience play in securitisation.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, the rhetoric is an important feature of securitization that a securitising actor uses to take an issue out of “normal politics”,<sup>54</sup> however, for speech act, it is important to engage with practical policy.<sup>55</sup> Together, this will allow the securitising actor to give sufficient salience to threat for audience’s endorsement.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Lousie Bengtsson and Mark Rhinard, “Securitisation Across Borders: The Case of ‘Health Security’ Cooperation in the European Union,” *West European Politics*, 42, no. 2 (2019): pp. 346-368.

<sup>51</sup> Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 491; Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization”: 55.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 32-33; Floyd, *Security and the Environment*: 13.

<sup>53</sup> Williams, “Words, Images, Enemies”: 511-531; McDonald, “Securitization and the Construction of Security,” 563-587; Lene Hansen, “The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29, no. 2 (2000): 285-306.

<sup>54</sup> Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, *Security*: 24-25; Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Power*: 491.

<sup>55</sup> Rita Floyd, “Extraordinary or Ordinary Emergency Measures: What, and Who, Defines the “Success” of Securitization,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29, no. 2 (2016): 684.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 52-54.; Adam Cote, “Agents without Agency: Assessing the Role of the Audience in Securitization Theory,” *Security Dialogue*, 47, no. 6 (2016): 541-558.

The audience's endorsement allows the threat to permeate deeply and widely and authorizes an actor to use necessary resources to prepare a response. For an issue to be securitised, it is important to have an audience accept it "as such",<sup>57</sup> which requires political interaction and bargaining between actor(s) and audience to reach an agreement on what constitutes a threat.<sup>58</sup> In this way, an active audience not only helps explain policy choices but also provides legitimacy.<sup>59</sup> The entanglement of actor and audience also allows the audience to demand securitisation, but it is the state that authorizes the securitisation process through a common language, meaning and policies. The actor and audience in deterrence securitisation are entangled; this mitigates the concern that actor (state) has access to resources that places it in an advantageous position over the audience (public, interest groups), who tend to be more constrained in political mobilisation.

In the post-Cold War, the status-quo of threat, deterrence was based upon, dramatically changed with the conspicuous absence of threat (former Soviet Union), leading to nuclear deterrence off the security agenda; hence de-securitisation of deterrence occurred. This is evident from nuclear reductions by nuclear-armed states and arms control negotiations. However, the precipitating event is the gradual emergence of fluid threats such as non-state actors, rogue states, and challenges such as new nuclear-armed states, innovative deterrent postures and emerging disruptive technologies that blur lines between conventional and nuclear deterrence or disruption in the external environment. The new threats and challenges also challenged the collective identity of nuclear deterrence of states and norms governing interactions among nuclear-armed states and between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-armed entities; hence triggered re-securitisation by upgrading deterrence to extraordinary politics followed by widening securitisation of deterrence. The existing approaches of nuclear-armed states towards deterrence imply a conviction that the world at large, and nuclear-armed states in particular, is facing a combination of existential security threats and challenges in response to which extraordinary measures are being carried out.

Re-securitisation might be easier than securitisation because the grammar of speech act is already there that can help initiate securitisation move and engage the audience without resistance;<sup>60</sup> however, it could still face some strains from earlier established rules and norms. New realities

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<sup>57</sup> Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde, *Security*, 25.

<sup>58</sup> Wæver cited in Roe, Paul, "Is Securitization a "Negative" Concept? Revisiting the Normative Debate over Normal versus Extraordinary Politics," *Security Dialogue*, 43, no. 3 (2012): 255.

<sup>59</sup> Balzacq, Leonard & Ruzicka, "'Securitization' Revisited," 494-531.

<sup>60</sup> Juha A. Vuori, "A Timely Prophet? The Doomsday Clock as a Visualization of Securitization Moves with a Global Referent Object," *Security Dialogue*, 41, no. 3 (2010): 259.

that encourage re-securitisation could be more challenging and demanding. In case of re-securitisation of deterrence, existing norms of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear taboo, and dis-entanglement must be compromised. This is evident from the emergence of new nuclear-armed states (India, Pakistan, North Korea) and the developments of improved counterforce capabilities, offensive and defensive non-nuclear capabilities as well as asymmetric options that challenged Cold War relics of deterrence such as survivability, dis-entanglement and counter-value targeting. The development of permeable EDT further raised the ante for nuclear deterrence via integrating conventional, strategic and non-nuclear strategic weapons into the security calculus. The blur between conventional and nuclear deterrence and the EDT widens the securitisation of deterrence because nuclear-armed states rely on industrial (military and non-military) and societal resilience to prepare a response.

Moreover, the discussion on the audience in deterrence securitization relates to credibility. The issue of credibility is key in deterrence. This refers to one's ability to convince a challenger or adversary about the certainty of retaliation if the challenger or adversary refuses to follow the deterrent threat. There are different ways, such as improved second-strike capability, risk of uncontrolled escalation, controlled escalation, and uncertainty-based force posture through which a state can signal its deterrent credibility to make its challenger/adversary believe. Like Vuori,<sup>61</sup> the audience is a potential challenger or adversary. Besides convincing challenger/adversary (first-order audience), a state needs to make an international system including nuclear- and non-nuclear-armed states (second-order audience) believe in the credibility of one's control over its conventional and nuclear deterrent.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the credibility of retaliatory threats depends upon the willingness of the deterrent to sustain momentous costs/damage and ability to legitimize deterrent threats among the domestic audience.<sup>63</sup> Here, the engagement with foreign policy, society and industry, and military modernization is central in appealing to the domestic audience and building an intersubjective understanding that is both deep and wider about the existence and nature of the existential threat and the state's response. The depth and width of this inter-subjective understanding allow the actor to carry out exceptional measures that would help take deterrence out from

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<sup>61</sup> Vuori, "Illocutionary Logics and Strands of Securitization," 81–85.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 81; Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, *Security*, 30; Lupovici, "Towards a Securitization Theory of Deterrence," 177–186; Ole Wæver, "The Theory Act: Responsibility and Exactitude as Seen from Securitization," *International Relations*, 29, no. 1 (2015): 122–23.

<sup>63</sup> Cote, "Agents without Agency," 546; Lupovici, "Towards a Securitization Theory of Deterrence," 177–186.

its traditional normal practices to an extraordinary level and facilitate its sustainability of deterrence at that extraordinary level.

### Three-Dimensional Securitisation of Deterrence:

The emerging and disruptive technologies (EDT) have brought nuclear-armed states to an inflection point where their deterrence practice needs a concavity change. The EDT is an entourage of technologies including artificial intelligence (AI), semi-autonomous and autonomous machines such as unmanned aerial/underwater vehicles, hypersonic vehicles, Internet of Things involving integrated information systems, cyber operations, advanced telecommunication networks such as fifth-generation (5G) technology and quantum computing. Besides weapons capability and technology, deterrence depends on the threat's credibility, leaders/states' perceptions, and will that are affected by the autonomous nature, speed, precision and co-mingling of assets, and targets of EDT. The following table highlights emerging technologies with their potential impact on civil and military assets.

**Table 1: Impacts of Emerging & Disruptive Technologies  
on Civil and Military Assets**

Emerging & Disruptive Technologies	Impact
Semi- or fully- automated systems	Includes robotics, UAVs, swarms, lethal autonomous weapon systems etc. Can be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities</li> <li>• For data acquisition &amp; processing, exploring alternative courses of action</li> <li>• Affect operational strategy</li> <li>• Carry out precision strikes</li> </ul> Augment cyberwarfare and electronic warfare operations
Hypersonic vehicles	Hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs) and Hypersonic cruise missiles (HCMs) are capable of rapidly targeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-critical targets</li> <li>• Missile defense systems</li> <li>• Prevent a decapitating strike</li> </ul>
Quantum technology	(Although at experimental stage) involves advanced computing, sending and communication technologies could target military communications

	Attack military cryptography, inertial navigation systems
Cyber space weapons & directed energy weapons	<p>Cyber capabilities, laser weapons and high-powered microwave weapons can impact military &amp; civilian sectors</p> <p>Capable of targeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space installations including satellites</li> <li>• Navigation systems</li> <li>• Missile defence systems</li> <li>• Civilian &amp; military Communications</li> <li>• IoT devices</li> <li>• Smart cities operations</li> <li>• Critical infrastructure such as banking, power grids, information transmission systems etc</li> <li>• UAVs &amp; UUVs</li> </ul> <p>Sensor-based infrastructures</p>
Information technologies	<p>Distort adversary's perception or beliefs through deep fakes, spoofing etc</p> <p>Involve deception and concealment operations to target adversary's societal cohesion and resilience</p> <p>Target national will and resolve during crisis</p>

*Source: Compiled by the Author.*

These technologies centred on the use/manipulation of information, infiltration, speed, entanglement and precision capable of un-disciplining deterrence out of its traditional security/defence school to open up for integration of other disciplines/sectors of national power to prepare a three-stage deterrent posture.

### **Fusion with Foreign Policy**

The absence of strategic threat like the former Soviet Union liberated the deterrents of de-jure nuclear-armed states from the shackles of bipolarity, followed by reductions in strategic weapons, arms control negotiations, and augmented nuclear non-proliferation efforts.<sup>64</sup> This de-

<sup>64</sup> French *White Paper on Defence* 1994, <http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/pdf/le-livre-blanc-sur-la-defense-1994.pdf>; US *Nuclear Posture Review* 1994, <http://missilethreat.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/1994-NPR-News-Release-Slides-Clinton.pdf>; Britain, *Statement on the Defence Estimates*

securitised deterrence for a while; however, with the emergence of fluid threats and technological challenges, the foreign policy started leading defence reviews. Furthermore, the entanglement of symmetric and asymmetric threats in post-Cold War requires cooperation in deterrence through alliances and partnerships among states, as envisaged in collective-actor or pivotal deterrence, to promote general welfare.<sup>65</sup> However, this collective-actor decision-making regarding deterrence could work in the case of NATO and other alliances and partnerships; nonetheless, nuclear-armed states such as France, India, Pakistan and North Korea maintain their strategic autonomy. Regardless of the strategic autonomy, the fusion of foreign policy baseline with strategic deterrence posture is important (as evident from their national security policies and postures) primarily because of the nature of threats and responses needed to address those threats in today's world.

Among nuclear-armed states, the US strongly believes in partnerships and close cooperation with allies to deter asymmetric threats; however, its allies have diverse beliefs in the utility of alliances and rely on alliances to hedge against serious threats. Likewise, Britain's deterrent posture is dovetailed with the foreign policy baseline.<sup>66</sup> In contrast, France emphasizes maintaining its autonomy to avoid alliances' complex and lengthy decision-making as well as cooperating in small groups below the EU and NATO to fight against asymmetric threats.<sup>67</sup> This demonstrates the breaking of deterrent posture from its traditional rules and suspension of standard practices. At the alliance level, the recursive

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1995: *Stable Forces in Strong Britain*, (London: HMSO) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/273324/2800.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273324/2800.pdf); A. A. Pikayev, *The Rise and Fall of START II: The Russian View*, CEIP Research Report (1999) [https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12997#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12997#metadata_info_tab_contents)

<sup>65</sup> For a discussion on deterrence in post-Cold War see Patrick M. Morgan, "The State of Deterrence in International Politics Today," *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33, no. 1 (2012): 85-107.

<sup>66</sup> For instance, from 1997 onwards Britain conducted foreign policy-led defence reviews aimed at an assessment of Britain's national interests, overseas commitments and structure and deployment of armed forces to achieve those interests and commitments with an emphasis on continued possession of nuclear deterrence necessary for Britain's role and security against uncertainties in post-Cold War. The focus on foreign policy to deter is explicit in 2021 Britain's Integrated Review. Cabinet Office, "Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, July 2001. <https://www.gov.uk>.

<sup>67</sup> Government of France, "Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017," *DSN*, 2017, <https://www.dsn.gob.es/sites/dsn/files/2017%20France%20Strategic%20Review.pdf>

interaction among member-states led to the strategic reorientation of NATO post-2014 Ukrainian crisis and Russian invasion in 2022,<sup>68</sup> the building of AUKUS to counter China, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to intensify economic and security ties against China.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, Russia impresses upon lonely yet independent Russia with few allies and partners (notably India and China),<sup>70</sup> while China emphasizes upon peaceful co-existence and fostering Shanghai Cooperation Council and the ASEAN.<sup>71</sup> The emphasis on alliances and partnerships demonstrates securitization by a collective actor that pushed deterrence towards the extraordinary phase of politics.

## Societal and Industrial Support

With the emergence of new threats, from the mid-1990s onwards, the modernization programmes started in de-jure nuclear-armed states, evident from their official documents, which helped amplify the salience of nuclear weapons and facilitate the re-securitisation and wider-securitisation of deterrence. In order to justify the criticism (domestic and international) and, simultaneously, to gain endorsement from the audience (domestic and external), the nuclear-armed states used speech acts such as “sub-strategic,” “strict sufficiency,” “minimum deterrence,” “cross-domain deterrence,” “nuclear brinkmanship,” “full-spectrum deterrence,” “integrated deterrence.”

<sup>68</sup> The NATO's attitude towards its priorities changed in post-2014 environment that is characterized as “the most complex and unpredictable security environment since the end of the Cold War. The latest NATO's Strategic Concept 2022 emphasized upon a mixed and integrated deterrence posture. NATO, “NATO: Ready for the Future, Adapting the Alliance (2018-2019),” 2018-19.

[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2019\\_11/20191129\\_191129-adaptation\\_2018\\_2019\\_en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_11/20191129_191129-adaptation_2018_2019_en.pdf); NATO, “NATO Strategic Concept 2022.” June 29, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Patrick Wintour, “What is the Aukus Alliance and What are its Implications?” *The Guardian*, September 16, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/sep/16/what-is-the-aukus-alliance-and-what-are-its-implications>; Ed Griffith & Moises de Souza, “Quad Heralds New Era of Micro Alliances Against China,” *Asia Times*, June 2, 2022, <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/quad-heralds-new-era-of-micro-alliances-against-china/>.

<sup>70</sup> Julian Cooper, “Russia's Updated National Security Strategy,” *Russian Studies Series* 2/21, July 19, 2021, <https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=704>.

<sup>71</sup> The People's Republic of China, *China's National Defence in the New Era*, July 2019, [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content\\_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html)



The audience approval can discern from political, societal, and industrial commitment within nuclear-armed states. For instance, the French deterrent is based on principles of sufficiency that endured cohabitation as well as changed international security environment.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, the deterrents of China and Pakistan also enjoy broad-based bureaucratic influence and political support and commitment regardless of their political systems respectively;<sup>73</sup> while Russian military analysts emphasize upon firm political control over the military force and its rules of engagement.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the anti-hegemonic and anti-imperialist remained a stable *raison d'être* of French and Chinese strategic deterrent throughout<sup>75</sup> that aided in accumulating audience's approval. Furthermore, the development of deterrents in the US and the UK faced domestic criticism and compromises.<sup>76</sup> British modernization of like-for-like Trident replacement programme and abandoning the policy of decreasing overall nuclear arsenal in the *2021 Integrated Review* effectively addressed operational, financial and political resistance to deterrent based on increased salience of nuclear weapons.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Bruno Tertrais, "The Last to Disarm? The Future of France's Nuclear Weapons," *Nonproliferation Review*, 14, no. 2 (2007): 258.

<sup>73</sup> Eric Heginbotham and et. al., *China's Evolving Nuclear Deterrent*, RAND Research Report RR-1628-AF, 2017; 97-120; A. Z. Hilali, "Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence: Political and Strategic Dimensions," *PERCEPTIONS: Journal of International Affairs*, 7, no. 4 (2002).

<sup>74</sup> Anya L. Fink, "The Evolving Russian Concept of Strategic Deterrence," *Arms Control Today*, 47, no. 6 (July/Aug 2017): 16.

<sup>75</sup> In case of China, the concept of People's war indicates integration of political, societal, industrial and military power to pursue China's national security that concurs with Beijing's foreign policy-led peace approach, (France 2013, 19-45; Chang 2022) *French White Paper on Defence 1994*: 56-57; *French White Paper on Defence and National Security, 2013*, [http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/pdf/the\\_white\\_paper\\_defence\\_2013.pdf](http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/pdf/the_white_paper_defence_2013.pdf); Vincent K. L. Chang, "China's New Historical Statecraft: Reviving the Second World War for National Rejuvenation," *International Affairs* 98, no. 3 (2022): 1053-1069.

<sup>76</sup> The UK's minimum credible deterrence based on fewer warheads, as stipulated in the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review*, "backed by a firm commitment to arms control" helps address criticism on country's nuclear deterrent. Government of Britain, "The 1998 Strategic Defence Review," *House of Commons Library*, 1998, para 8 and 55. Likewise, the Biden Administration cancelled submarine-launched nuclear cruise missile programme as well as retired gravity bomb to pacify critics, to an extent, on country's arms control commitments. Julian Borger, "Biden to Scrap Trump Missile Project but Critics Attack US 'Nuclear Overkill'," *The Guardian*, 27 October 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/27/biden-trump-missile-nuclear-posture-review>.

<sup>77</sup> Nick Ritchie, "Replacing Trident: Britain, America and Nuclear Weapons," *Contemporary Security Policy* 28, no. 2 (2007): 384-406.

Besides expanding their defence budgets, the nuclear-armed states are mobilising other sectors and spheres of national power, including society and scientific industry, allowing these sectors to socialize and build a consensual view about threat perception and response that facilitates building a strong and resilient audience endorsement of their deterrent postures. For instance, the French strategic posture is based on a comprehensive approach that incorporates the entire state apparatus from armed forces, civil defence, cyber defence, intelligence, and internal security forces to transportation, energy, and other resources of local authorities.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, Britain's full-spectrum deterrence incorporates diplomatic, military, economic, intelligence, cyber, legal and strategic communications' means to sustain denial posture.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the US 2022 National Defence Strategy aims at "working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theatres, the spectrum of conflict, all instruments of U.S. national power" and "network of alliances and partnerships" to ensure security against a broad spectrum of threats.<sup>80</sup> Even China uses multiple sectors of national power, besides the military, including economic assertiveness, diplomatic influence, and information management to uphold its deterrence.<sup>81</sup> Comparatively, Russia further broadened the scope of its national security beyond socio-economic development by declaring the protection of "the traditional spiritual and moral foundations of Russian society" a priority.<sup>82</sup> In this way, nuclear-armed states intend to build societies and industrial base that are more generative during peacetime as well as capable of adapting and growing in response to disruption. The linking of almost all elements of national power to deterrent posture demonstrates that deterrence dynamics have left their conventional practices and political ground to enter into extraordinary high politics.

## Military Modernization

The new threats and technological challenges in post-Cold War require nuclear-armed states to modernize their deterrent by improving their strategic arsenal's survivability, reliability, penetrability, and safety and incorporating new emerging and disruptive technologies (EDT) into

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<sup>78</sup> *French White Paper on Defence and National Security 2013*: 67-123.

<sup>79</sup> Office, "Global Britain in a Competitive Age."

<sup>80</sup> US National Defence Strategy 2022, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>.

<sup>81</sup> George Perkovich, "Engaging China on Strategic Stability and Mutual Vulnerability," CEIP Paper, October 12, 2022. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/10/12/engaging-china-on-strategic-stability-and-mutual-vulnerability-pub-88142>.

<sup>82</sup> *Decree of the President of the Russian Federation On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation*, July 2, 2021. <http://actual.pravo.gov.ru/>

deterrent mix. The new technological attributes of speed, precision, autonomy, and entanglement undermined the deterrent's key pillars of survivability (hardening, concealment, and redundancy). The Cold War deterrence relied upon and provided states with flexible options and improved strike capabilities. States living under nuclear threat become accustomed to dangers and uncertainties therefore for such actors uncertainties inherent in deterrence might not be a deterrent rather adversary's war-fighting capabilities and flexible options that new technologies offer could be more convincing.<sup>83</sup>

In the post-Cold War, a nuclear-armed state must address the diminishing invulnerability of nuclear forces and keep offering risks to potential attackers to retain the deterrent status of its nuclear force. This indicates integration at two levels: 1) integration of conventional, non-nuclear, and nuclear forces and new technologies into the deterrent posture,<sup>84</sup> and 2) integration of increased salience of nuclear weapons and competition into deterrence. The integration of EDT (conventional and non-nuclear) into deterrence has entangled the expertise and resources of military and civilian/private sectors at every level. In this way, the same technological knowledge is put to use in both sectors; thus, more resources are available for war – a case for widening securitization of deterrence. Alongside risks, the integration would increase the significance of conventional/non-nuclear strategic weapons in the mix and allows states to tailor deterrence strategies for different contingencies.<sup>85</sup>

The EDT enhanced the sensitivity of deterrent posture to technology to a level where states, to strengthen deterrence, are eager to invest in whatever technology brings up. The new technologies offer improved accuracy, speed, autonomy, enhanced ambiguity, and precision that could reduce the yield and volume of nuclear force, potentially lower the threshold for escalation, encourage war fighting and coercive

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<sup>83</sup> The US prompt global strike (GPS) could provide "Washington to conduct a pre-emptive strike against Beijing without fear of retaliation" that "cuts to the heart of the concept that Washington seeks primacy at Beijing's expense." ; Lora Saalman, "Prompt Global Strike: China and the Spear," Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, April 2014: 3, <https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/>

<sup>84</sup> Gen John Hyten, commander of the US Strategic Command, noted, "We have adversaries that are looking at integrating nuclear, conventional, space and cyber, all as part of a strategic deterrent."; Cheryl Pellerin, "STRATCOM Commander Describes Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Deterrence," *DOD News*, 17 August 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1281946/>

<sup>85</sup> The 2018 NPR integrates nuclear deterrence strategies and operations with conventional strategies and operations, which allows civilian policy makers and military commanders to tailor deterrence strategies for present challenges. Peters, Anderson & Menke, "Deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," : 14-43.

activities, incentivise first-strike, provide perfect kill tendencies and mitigate the problem of fratricide.<sup>86</sup> These attributes would undoubtedly strengthen deterrence. However, deploying these technologies, for instance, machines wide and across different battlefields by all crisis/conflict participants could reduce the attractiveness of their advantages. Moreover, machines, for example, can then solve the problem of commitment; however, the chances of accidental launches increase. Furthermore, the ambiguity associated with entanglement or comingling of strategic and non-strategic (including the EDT) assets is challenging as it could exacerbate the risks of unintentional and/or uncontrolled escalation.<sup>87</sup> The challenge becomes further formidable when there is a low nuclear threshold.

Therefore, military modernization and integrating the EDT into deterrence mix is part of re-securitisation of deterrence in post-Cold War, and facilitated wider securitisation of deterrence. Evident from defence and security white papers of nuclear-armed states, geopolitical rivalry instead of stalemate is an enduring characteristic of international system therefore acquisition of technology for security would continue. The nuclear weapons that are secure today might not remain invulnerable in future hence nuclear-armed states have a good reason to engage in competitive technological acquisition.<sup>88</sup>

## Conclusion

This research demonstrates that deterrence, as a concept and practice, has entered into a high and extraordinary phase of politics. The study of deterrence through the lens of securitisation theory explains the transition of deterrence in post-Cold War from normal politics of de-securitisation characterized by arms reductions and arms control negotiations and agreements to the realm of high end of security where the nuclear-armed states, along with new nuclear-armed states, appear to side-step democratic practices in discourse and procedure resulting in re-securitisation and widen-securitisation of deterrence. The post-Cold War security environment played a key role in this process. The bipolarity of

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<sup>86</sup> James M. Acton, "Escalation through Entanglement: How the Vulnerability of Command-and-Control Systems Raises the Risks of an Inadvertent Nuclear War," *International Security*, 43, no.1 (2018): 56–99, [https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00320](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00320).

<sup>87</sup> The threat of EDT to nuclear infrastructure could risk escalation of a non-nuclear conflict among great powers to global nuclear crisis and war.

<sup>88</sup> As John J. Mearsheimer noted about the Cold War competition: "The continuation of the arms race was not misguided, even though nuclear superiority remained an elusive goal. In fact, it made good strategic sense for the United States and the Soviet Union to compete vigorously in the nuclear realm, because military technology tends to develop rapidly and in unforeseen ways," Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*: 231.

the Cold War that provided a coign of vantage to nuclear deterrence among security discourse and policies shattered with the emergence of multi-polarity, fluid threats and new innovative and disruptive technologies after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. This pushed nuclear-armed states to respond with an approach that aligns all elements of national power including foreign policy, societal and industrial resilience, and military modernization together to develop a deterrent posture. Two caveats are important with this kind of securitization of deterrence. One, this wider securitization allows deterrence to permeate deeper and wider into society; however, this posture is based on high and rapid risk of escalation and competitive impulse ensuing arms race. It is also possible that deterrence based on high and rapid risk of escalation could convince nuclear-armed states to engage in arms control initiatives but the trajectory of states developing their weapons and doctrines has put such a possibility in limbo. Two, the real test for the effectiveness of extraordinary deterrent posture of nuclear-armed states does not lie in their integration, investments and modernization plans that has widened and deepened securitisation rather in their consistency of maintaining such a posture.

