

Research Article | Araştırma Makalesi

Deterrence in Inter-State Communication: International Signaling Strategies Devletlerarası İletişimde Caydırıcılık: Uluslararası Sinyalizasyon Stratejileri



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Abstract

In the era of global Great Powers, it may prove to be more expensive for nations to either participate in conflict or cooperate. Nevertheless, deterrence becomes a significant point of reference for nations desiring to avoid war while also influencing the decisions and behaviors of their rivals. Discouraging an adversary's willingness to fight is not only less expensive than actual warfare, but also provides greater prestige and credibility for safeguarding national interests. In order to communicate deterrence policies to the other side, states often resort to signaling. Sometimes these signals are explicit, sometimes partial and ambiguous. Signaling can also sometimes be exclusively harsh and sometimes cooperative. Signaling studies, which pertain to a multidisciplinary literature spanning international relations to political communication and psychology, are increasingly critical in debates on state behavior. This is not only due to their academic significance but also their practical utility for actors. This study will examine the historical progression of deterrence and current deterrence theories utilizing various types of deterrence. The next section will discuss the use of signaling as a means of deterrence, analyzing the types of signals and the motivation of states to communicate with their adversaries in order to achieve their objectives. Following this, the literature on signaling will be reinforced with significant examples from international politics. Lastly, this study will conclude by discussing the transformative processes of deterrence and signaling debates in the modern era, taking into account emerging trends.

Key Words: International Deterrence, Signaling Strategies, New Trends.

Öz

Büyük Güçler çağında aktörler için bazen çatışmaya bazen de işbirliğine gitmek daha maliyetli olabilir. Ancak aktörler savaştan kaçınmak istiyorsa ve buna rağmen yine de rakiplerinin kararlarını etkileyip davranışlarını şekillendirmek istiyorsa caydırıcılık önemli bir referans merkezidir. Karşı tarafın savaşa isteğini caydırmak hem savaşa göre daha az maliyetlidir hem de çıkarlarını korumak açısından daha büyük prestij ve itibar sağlar. Devletler, caydırıcı politikaları karşı tarafa iletebilmek adına genellikle sinyal gönderme yöntemine başvururlar. Söz konusu sinyaller bazen açık bazen de kısmi ve belirsiz nitelikler taşıyabilir. Yine sinyaller bazen yalnızca sert bazen de işbirlikçi unsurları bünyesinde barındırabilirler. Uluslararası ilişkilerden siyasal iletişime ve siyasal psikolojiye kadar çok disiplinli bir çalışma literatürüne karşılık gelen bu sinyalizasyon çalışmaları, yoğun bir akademik ilgi alanı olduğu kadar pratikteki aktörler açısından oldukça işlevsel olması sebebiyle de devlet davranışı tartışmalarının her geçen gün biraz daha merkezine oturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada da öncelikle caydırıcılığın tarihsel gelişimi ve farklı caydırıcılık türleri üzerinden güncel caydırıcılık teorisi üzerine odaklanılacaktır. Ardından caydırıcılığın uygulama alanı olan sinyalizasyon tartışmalarına geçilecek ve devletlerin hangi sinyal türleriyle ve nasıl bir motivasyonla karşı tarafla iletişim kurup arzu ettikleri sonuca ulaşmaya çalıştıkları analiz edilecektir. Akabinde ise ele alınan sinyalizasyon literatürü uluslararası politikadaki önemli örneklerle pekiştirilmeye çalışılacaktır. Son olarak da yükselen yeni trendler üzerinden hem caydırıcılığın hem de sinyalizasyon tartışmalarının yeni dönemdeki değişim süreçleri tartışmasıyla çalışma tamamlanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası Caydırıcılık, Sinyalizasyon Stratejileri, Yeni Trendler.



Introduction

In contemporary international relations, the topic of deterrence has arisen again as a central theme in defense policies aimed at preventing states from undertaking unwanted actions, particularly military aggression. In Europe, the United States and its allies are striving to deter “gray zone” activities in the context of possible Russian adventurism in the Baltic states, as well as persistent aggression below the threshold of a major war. In Korea, the United States and South Korea are collaborating in deterring not only direct aggression, but also various provocations by North Korea. Meanwhile, in other parts of Asia, the United States and its allies are managing gray zone crises in areas subject to Chinese aggression and territorial disputes. The United States is contending that it currently confronts a more pressing demand for effective deterrence than at any other time since the conclusion of the Cold War, across the globe and in diverse arenas. Even from a non-Western perspective, the risks of engaging in a major war appear to be higher than ever before, given that numerous potential adversaries of states are now significantly more capable than they were a decade or more earlier. As a result, conflict deterrence has become even more critical (Becca Wasser, 2023)

Much of the literature on deterrence tends to rely on conventional deterrence methods within the traditional strategic environment. However, changes in the global security environment have altered the context for deterrence and are likely to challenge long-standing policies. For instance, although the post-hegemonic era is being discussed, the United States, the leading Great Power in the world, is currently engaged in a multi-front competition. The United States, which previously struggled against singular rivals such as the Soviet Union, now faces the challenge of battling both China and Russia, as well as rising regional powers. After China’s informal statements asserting its ability to defeat the US in a potential war, the US security sector faced a significant crisis. As a result of extensive evaluations, a new warfare style emerged based on the idea that conflicts would no longer occur at convenient times, locations, or according to favored methods. While potential conflicts, that may occur at unpredictable times and locations, are currently exemplified by the recent Palestinian-Israeli tension, many global actors, including the United States, prioritize deterring all conflicts in this new uncertain era as the most critical policy (Ochmanek, 2017)

As the context of deterrence develops, it becomes increasingly crucial to consider its implementation. The extensive literature on signaling since the Cold War is undeniable. States who seek to avoid conflict continue to develop methods to demonstrate their resolve to fight and shape the decisions and policies of opposing parties. What is the most effective method of signaling resolve to convince opponents, and how can this method be assessed moving forward? This question has been one of the most critical research topics in the past and continues to be so in the future. While military operational issues used to dominate this field, it now incorporates a broad range of interdisciplinary literature, including political communication and psychology. Signaling preferences, as demonstrated by the approaches of the traditions that inform mainstream IR theories like realism, liberalism, and constructionism, are increasingly important in State behavior debates. The concepts that characterize these theories are reflected in signaling practices, making it an indispensable element of such discussions. In contrast to realists’ preference for overt and costly signaling, the arguments of bargaining liberals have garnered increased interest in the literature. These arguments incorporate elements of cooperation and suggest that a mixed approach may be the best way forward despite continued

criticism. However, despite the existence of varying claims regarding the appearance of signaling, a significant consensus remains on the importance of signaling behavior. Even those who are unconvinced about deterrence do not engage in a critical discourse on the significance of signaling in state behavior (Pettyjohn, 2021)

As the importance of deterrence has become central in the context of the changing new strategic and security environment, this study will first examine the logic, evolution, and types of deterrence. Subsequently, it will focus on signaling, which is known as the most important tool in the implementation of deterrence, and the mixed signal debates will be evaluated along with costly, partial, ambiguous signals as well as cooperative elements included in the signal literature. Examples of signaling that have a critical impact on international politics will be examined by analyzing various state behaviors and comprehending them in the present political context. The conclusion will address the future of signaling literature based on emerging trends.

The Evolution of Deterrence Theory

In the latter half of the 20th century, deterrence became closely linked to Cold War expressions, concepts, and strategies like massive retaliation and containment as a result of the intense rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such terms suggested nuclear associations and evoked images of nuclear war for both laypeople and policymakers. However, deterrence theory does not exclusively belong to the Cold War era. In the latter half of the 20th century, the theory that supported tensions and ideological rivalries, as well as the characteristics of deterrence, extended beyond the bipolar Cold War paradigm. As such, it is necessary to outline the theory of deterrence advocated by some of the Cold War's most notable strategists and academics before evaluating case studies. Most of the research conducted on deterrence occurred between 1949 and 1989, with the majority of the significant work emerging in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. Despite holding the position as a nuclear power for merely four years, the ideological tensions that ensued gave way to what some scholars describe as the golden era of strategic studies. While several theorists, including Bernard Brodie and Herman Kahn, made significant contributions to this field, Thomas Schelling's ideas have proven to be the most enduring in the literature (Schelling, 1960).

Deterrence is the practice of preventing or restraining a state from engaging in undesirable actions, namely armed attack. It aims to avoid or thwart an action, in contrast to the closely related but distinct concept of "coercion", which seeks to compel an actor to take a specific course of action. Michael Keane's "Dictionary of Modern Strategy and Tactics" provides a concise definition of deterrence as "the prevention or inhibition of action motivated by fear of its consequences". In his extended definition, Keane posits that deterrence is a state of mind resulting from the credible threat of an unacceptable counteraction, and necessitates rational decision-makers (Keane, 2005). Alternatively, Schelling's focus is on preventing the other party from acting through fear, as deterrence - which has a negative purpose - requires the targeted actor to refrain from action. In Schelling's view, military power and its ability to harm others constitute the basis of deterrence. While Schelling emphasized the importance of the ability to harm an opponent in military power, he argued that its true value lies in determining the opponent's reactions to avoid it (Schelling, 1960). According to Schelling, using force to inflict harm would be a strategic failure, but if the enemy perceives that violence can be anticipated and avoided through compromise, this violence then holds coercive value (Schelling, 1966). While Thomas Schelling published "Weapons and Influence" in 1966, at a time when nuclear tensions

were at their highest, Lawrence Freedman notes that the harm Schelling described was not necessarily related to nuclear weapons (Freedman & Freedman, 2013). Schelling's framework for coercion revolves around influencing an opponent's behavior through threats, rather than controlling it. Schelling then summarized the spirit of deterrence in the "four terms": a deterrent threat must be effective, credible, communicated, and calculated (Schelling, 1966).

The historical development of deterrence seems to have originated with the systematization of the US deterrence strategy by the administration of US President Dwight Eisenhower. This decision was made after assessing the strategic environment following the Korean conflict, where the Soviet Union held superiority in conventional forces and the US nuclear arsenal was growing. This new strategy, first articulated by the US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1954, conveyed a direct and unrestricted nuclear response on a massive scale in the event of communist aggression, targeting the enemy's economic centers. National Security Policy Document 162/2 formalized this view and underscored the need to maintain a strong military posture that emphasizes offensive striking power and the capacity to inflict massive retaliatory damage. The Massive Retaliation strategy enabled the United States to nullify the Soviet Union's numerical advantage by demonstrating both the capability and the resolve to exact an unendurable cost upon the Soviet Union or other potential adversaries (Huth, 1991).

As the Soviet Union achieved nuclear parity with the United States and both nations continued to advance their arsenals and capabilities, the effectiveness of the US deterrence policy was reevaluated. The Great Retaliation was rebranded as "Mutually Assured Destruction" (MAD), although critics deemed it a geopolitical suicide pact that restricted the government's ability to manage the escalation of all potential crises. Retired Chief of Staff of the US Army, Maxwell Taylor, strongly condemned the employment of nuclear deterrence by the US to prevent and retaliate against limited types of warfare. Due to the shifting strategic environment, the country ought to modify its military strategy for improved deterrence (Mearsheimer, 1983).

After his presidency began in 1960, John F. Kennedy developed a tactic called "Flexible Response" that aimed to offer diverse military and non-military solutions to counter provocations. Eventually, "Flexible Response" transformed into "Flexible Deterrent Options", which currently represent a constituent of modern military doctrine. Joint Publication 5-0 defines this term as "pre-planned, deterrence-oriented actions designed to signal and influence the enemy's actions". The aim of Flexible Deterrence Options is to employ all aspects of national power to mitigate emerging crises and evade inciting widespread conflict. Though both Flexible Response and Flexible Deterrence Options acknowledge that deterrence tactics should encompass more than the possibility of nuclear destruction, neither adequately tackled nontraditional threats (Byman & Waxman, 2002).

During the Cold War, the US strategy effectively deterred large-scale conflicts between great powers and prevented hostile rivalries from escalating into war. Some argue that a more modern approach to deterrence is necessary. However, it is debated whether these strategies remain appropriate in the current era, as technological advancements and geopolitical shifts have altered the strategic landscape (Walt, 1987). Cold War-era strategies may not have a significant impact under the new conditions. As a response to the changing strategic environment, the United States is currently developing a new

deterrence perspective to potentially combat China and Russia on multiple fronts. Similar efforts are underway in Western Europe, Scandinavia, and Far East Asia, with notable contributions from the United Kingdom, to create deterrence concepts that are pertinent to this new era. It is timely to reassess strategies for promoting deterrence and ensuring its relevance in the 21st century (Wasser, 2023)

When examining types of deterrence, the classical literature outlines two main approaches: deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Deterrence by denial strategies prevent an action by making it unfeasible or eliminating the possibility of its success. On the other hand, deterrence by punishment aims to prevent an action by threatening severe retaliation for any aggression taken. This approach removes the potential aggressor's confidence in achieving their objectives, exemplified by deploying adequate local military forces in extreme locations to prevent invasion. These strategies pose a significant risk of catastrophic losses for potential aggressors. Deterrence by denial entails the intention and effort to defend a commitment. The ability to deny equates to the ability to defend. While distinction exists analytically between deterrence and defense, they are highly interdependent in practice. The effectiveness of a deterrence threat rooted in denial capabilities is often quantified by examining the immediate balance of power in the disputed region. However, as will be further elucidated, local balance of forces is not always the sole or even primary determining factor. It should be acknowledged that deterrence through denial cannot be reduced to military power balances exclusively (Freedman, 2004).

Second, the use of punishment in deterrence involves imposing severe penalties, such as the development of nuclear weapons or harsh economic sanctions in the event of an attack. These penalties are interconnected with both local conflicts and global affairs. The goal of punitive deterrence is not to directly defend a disputed commitment, but rather to increase the costs of an attack through the use of broader threats of punishment. While classical research indicates that denial strategies are more reliable than punishment strategies, steps taken to deny, such as placing significant military capabilities directly in front of the attacker, are assertive and clearly stated. On the other hand, the aggressor might question the defender's determination to enforce punishment and might even persuade themselves the defender will hold back on issuing punitive warnings due to the potential consequences, such as an increased level of deterrence. If an aggressor is not willing to flee in such circumstances, as noted by Schelling, in the context of threats that a state would prefer not to carry out, a deficiency in deterrence may arise if the aggressor believes that the defender will ultimately be hesitant in carrying out its threats. In this regard, credibility and reliability are central to the issue when it comes to threats (Freedman, 2004).

In another deterrence classification, there are two types of deterrence used to prevent attacks. The first is direct deterrence, which aims to prevent attacks on a state's territory. The second, extended deterrence, focuses on deterring attacks on third parties, including allies or partners. During the Cold War, direct deterrence aimed to discourage a potential Soviet attack with nuclear weapons on the US. In contrast, extended deterrence focused on preventing a conventional Soviet attack on countries belonging to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although both forms of deterrence were challenging, extended deterrence was more difficult to establish. The primary operational reason for this difficulty was a greater reliance on military resources. Deterrence of attacks far from home is challenging, such as when it involves deploying military force to a location

thousands of kilometers away, often well within the aggressor state's territory. This challenge is heightened by credibility concerns. While the aggressor can rely on a state to defend itself, there may be doubts about fulfilling a promise to protect a third party. During the Cold War, there were debates regarding the credibility of the US pledge to "sacrifice New York for Paris" (Mazarr, 2018).

A third classification is made in deterrence policy by time. General deterrence refers to sustained and persistent efforts to prevent undesirable actions in the long term and non-crisis situations. Immediate deterrence, on the other hand, represents shorter-term and immediate attempts to prevent a specific, imminent attack, particularly during a crisis. For several decades, the United States employed general deterrence by advertising its promise to defend Western Europe and carry out punitive measures if the Soviet Union persisted in attacking. In times of emergency, such as when the United States was apprehensive about an imminent Soviet assault against Berlin, it undertook a related but distinct task of immediate deterrence. According to the majority of classical research, general deterrence is evidently simpler than immediate deterrence. A potential aggressor can go long periods of time without being tempted to commit aggressive acts. Deterrence is most at risk at certain moments when aggression seems particularly tempting or desperately needed, and these moments require very aggressive and immediate efforts to reinforce immediate deterrence. Success during crises can be especially challenging as attackers can become so committed to their plan of action and so averse to backing down that deterrence becomes nearly impossible. Thus, the overall goal of deterrence should include reducing the need for immediate reactions while promoting deterrence planning and habits that lead to attack hesitancy (Morgan, 1977).

One perspective on deterrence that diverges from others concerns scope. Narrow deterrence argues that states should rely solely on military means to prevent adversary states from taking action. Broad deterrence, on the other hand, maintains focus on threats and expands the scope to include non-military actions. This view contends that states can also use threats of economic sanctions, diplomatic exclusion, or information operations to deter adversaries. These two approaches align with the fundamental definition of deterrence as "deterrence by threat." Technical term abbreviations, such as 'deterrence by threat,' are explained when first used. This can stem from "defensive capability that deprives the adversary of immediate objectives" or "the threat of severe punishment in a larger struggle." The text adheres to common academic sections with a balanced perspective. In either case, they aim to influence the calculation of risk and cost by threatening the potential success or other interests of the aggressor. The language used is formal, objective, and value-neutral with consistent technical terms (Mazarr, 2018).

Signaling Strategies as an Implementation Method of Deterrence

The central aspect of deterrence is based on the notion that engaging in warfare is not favorable. If it were desirable, no communication strategy to prompt this conduct would be necessary. However, deterrence, which centers around avoiding anticipated expenses, requires the capacity to control the behavior of the opposing side without resorting to violence. Coercion and threats are utilized to influence the decisions and behaviors of the other party through various methods. The credibility and reputation of the actor are crucial considerations. If the actor being threatened believes that the threat is unfounded, it can be challenging to influence their behavior and decisions. In terms of achieving deterrence, your reputation at the international level and in the eyes of the opposing party is paramount (Fearon, 1997) whether in the realm of grand strategy or crisis

diplomacy. Leaders might either (a. However, this article concentrates on communication strategies that convey signals of coercion and threat. The focus is on the signals instead of reputation. These signals can be categorized into three types: Costly Signals, Ambiguous Signals, and Mixed Signals.

Costly signaling has become popular in academic circles. Many believe that states must rely on clear and expensive threats to achieve their goals. The literature frequently emphasizes this notion. This tactic, also known as sunk costs, involves paying a price that cannot be recuperated when the signal is sent. The costs discussed, which according to game theory are theoretically unrecoverable, suggest that you are demonstrating your determination by expending a sizable sum of money. These signals often take the form of military displays of strength, such as troop deployments, arms transfers, military exercises, and increases in defense spending, which can synchronize a significant expense on the one hand, while preparing for the costs of war on the other (Quek, 2021).

Indeed, the ability of states to threaten in this way is often seen as a necessary condition for preventing miscalculation that could lead to war. Threat diffusion has been recognized as so important that research has focused primarily on the means by which such threats can be effectively communicated. In this regard, the threats that one wishes to communicate to one's adversary, whether through domestic audience costs (Fearon, 1997) whether in the realm of grand strategy or crisis diplomacy. Leaders might either (a, through military maneuvers or cost reductions in wars, through diplomatic credibility (Sartori, 2002), or a combination of all of these (Guisinger & Smith, 2002), have spawned a large literature on signaling. Some of the most sophisticated work in the field of international security has focused on these issues, resulting in one of the fastest growing bodies of work in the field.

Another important aspect of costly signaling is the credibility of the signals being sent. This is partly based on the intuitive link between credible threats and preventing war. When the goal is ultimately to drive the enemy out of war, it is crucial to use signals that are persuasive and threatening enough to make them confident in their determination to fight. Therefore, issuing credible threats can prevent a war sparked by enemy suspicion regarding the signaler's ultimate resolve. Achieving credibility involves imposing costs on the threats, which must be explicit and costly in order to distinguish between willing states. Failure to execute the threat with greater determination than bluffers can cause doubts about the leadership's motives and harm credibility. Thomas Schelling, who popularized the metaphor of "burning a bridge," has been a highly influential figure in the study of credibility. Schelling believed that simply crossing a bridge was not enough for a unit facing an enemy on the other side; he argued that the way back should be destroyed by burning the bridge and that the enemy should be given a clear message that the only option is to fight. Thus, the adversary, who will have no doubt about your commitment to combat, will be compelled to reassess the prospect of engaging in hostilities (Schelling, 1966).

In addition to the conspicuous method of costly signaling, another signaling logic pertains to partial and uncertain signals. Such signals of partial or ambiguous nature could be defined as signals that are supported at a lower cost compared to the clear signals. These low-cost signals remain ambiguous when the reputation of the leader or state is at stake and partial when the signal involves a display of strength. For example, signals that generate costs that deliberately limit the actor's ability to back down, known as tying hands, do not require a large expenditure of money, but can come at a huge cost in terms

of both reputation and credibility if you break your word at a time when you need to do what you promised (Fearon, 1997) whether in the realm of grand strategy or crisis diplomacy. Leaders might either (a. An example here is the Biden administration, which has long pursued a policy of strategic ambiguity towards China. It has declared that it would support Taiwan in case of potential Chinese intervention. If the administration fails to keep its promise after such a commitment that limits its options, it may suffer damage to its reputation in the international community and a decline in credibility. In other words, a signal that seems costless in the first place will become more costly when you try to backtrack.

Schelling emphasized the use of partial and ambiguous signals and coined the term “threats that leave something to chance” as a means for leaders to make compelling threats. According to Schelling, leaders who lack decisiveness can enhance the credibility of their threats by surrendering some degree of control over the final outcome. He posited that engaging in a limited war could increase the possibility of an accidental escalation to an “all-out” conflict, therefore increasing the credibility of threatening to initiate an “all-out” war (Schelling, 1960). Alternatively, the science of rational deterrence has proposed a machine similar in principle to a game of Russian roulette, which would trigger an all-out nuclear conflict with a probability set by the user. Engaging would enhance the credibility of the threat by elevating the chances of an “all-out” war. Although the leaders would not execute the threat of an “all-out” nuclear conflict even if the adversary neglected to comply, Schelling’s “threats that leave things to chance” partially lift the final decision under the full control of the threat. Through the increased likelihood of accidental occurrence of unthinkable events, leadership can augment the probability of prevailing in the crisis. Therefore, Schelling argues that partial and uncertain signals can play a critical role in winning (Schelling, 1960).

A newer strand of literature emphasizes mixed signaling that involves various combinations, in addition to costly or limited-cost and clear or ambiguous signaling. These ideas, which advocates of bargaining behavior in conflict and war studies consider central, can be defined as mixed signaling strategies that combine elements of costly threats and cooperation. The negotiators’ approach to mixed signaling suggests a different argument compared to explicit signaling strategies that rely solely on costly threats. It has been empirically demonstrated that the most effective deterrent policies involve combining threats and cooperative elements. The main reason for these findings is the necessity of cooperative elements to make compliance more acceptable to the adversary. Although overt and costly threats can be a solution, Snyder and Diesing propose that an actor’s incentive to give an honorable exit to the opponent is related to avoiding unnecessary anger (Sneyder & Diesing, 1977). Similarly, Huth argues that incentives make the status quo more acceptable to the challenger. In this context, bargainers argue that the primary goal is to prevent conflict from escalating further by giving the opponent a way to save face despite harsh threats (Huth, 1999).

The bargaining argument’s weakness is its failure to specify the signaler’s motivation for offering cooperative elements like incentives, carrots, or agreements. Although some strategists contend that cooperation-based strategies assist states in avoiding war, they do not explain why governments motivated by the desire to win the prize would opt for such signaling strategies over those aimed at preventing war. Thus, Huth suggests that analysts face the theoretical challenge of creating models wherein defenders provide enough positive incentives to make not using force acceptable to potential aggressors

while still safeguarding vital security interests and credibility (Huth, 1999). In this context, combined strategic signaling behavior may serve as a more effective approach for those who regard costly threats as adequate and for those who think that costly threats ought to be accompanied by cooperative elements.

Regardless of the signaling tradition, all traditions have identified uncertainty about an opponent's determination as one of the enduring causes of war. Blainey argues that war is caused by states' irrational misperceptions (Blainey, 1988), while Fearon considers uncertainty as a necessary condition for rationalist explanations of war (Fearon, 1995). Without uncertainty, states would not misjudge each other's resolve or willingness to fight. They would resolve disputes at the end of the conflict on the terms they had reached before the conflict, thus saving themselves the costs of war. However, achieving certainty in a world where actors possess private information about their own willingness to fight is challenging. In this uncertain context, it is argued that states have a higher likelihood of making incorrect decisions due to the incentive to bluff or lie about their decisions. This bluffing incentive causes the opposing side to doubt the true level of their opponent's resolve, which, per Fearon, can result in escalating tensions and eventual war. In this regard, the key to peacekeeping is widely recognized as limiting suspicion through reducing uncertainty (Fearon, 1995).

A recent addition to the signaling debate in the context of bargaining literature is the emergence of "strategic secrecy." Its aim is to explore how states, which typically detect and determine misconduct in a way that opposes their own interests, exert a form of coercive power over the perpetrator that is not adequately accounted for in existing coercion theories. Some states with greater leverage over offenders may be incentivized to conceal the wrongdoing of the guilty party. Concealment can enhance the coercer's bargaining position and increase the chances of successful coercion. In contrast, states with secret evidence of guilt who doubt their ability to coerce the guilty party may be more likely to publicize it or share it privately with other states or institutions. In this context, states do not only conceal their allies' crimes and expose their foes' misdeeds. They also employ secret evidence to directly or indirectly coerce criminals, rather than simply covering up wrongdoing to defend norms or safeguard intelligence sources and methods. These debates all find expression in states' signaling behavior (Nutt & Pauly, 2021).

Cases of Signaling in International Politics

If we start our examination of signals utilized in international politics with costly signals, we must examine actions that a state takes in a costly manner to effectively communicate its authentic intentions, power, or commitments to other states or actors. These instances are meant to display genuine intentions or capabilities that often correspond to actions that other states or actors may find challenging to imitate or would be hesitant to imitate. Some examples are military deployments to border areas, military exercises, high military expenditures, defense commitments, economic sanctions, international cooperation and agreements, diplomatic actions, and more. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 serves as a prominent illustration of costly signaling in academic literature. To balance the US nuclear missiles located in Türkiye and protect Cuba, the Soviet Union deployed their own nuclear missiles to the island, thereby demonstrating their dedication to military action. This action sent a potent signal to the United States that the Soviet Union was making a serious commitment and that the US should respond to safeguard against the perceived threat. The United States responded strongly to the Soviet Union's action by

implementing a naval blockade, nearly leading to a nuclear war. However, the United States and Soviet Union ultimately came to a resolution, in which the Soviets agreed to eliminate their Cuban missiles while the United States agreed to abolish their missiles in Türkiye. This event demonstrated that the implementation of a potent “costly signal” in international relations can result in significant repercussions (Sylvan & Thorson, 1992).

In 1983, the deployment of Pershing II nuclear missiles in the region served as a powerful “costly signal” to the Soviets. This historical example effectively illustrates the concept of costly signaling, which emerged during the Cold War and remains a relevant topic in current academic debates. During the Cold War, the United States and NATO responded to the Soviet Union’s security offset in Central Europe by modernizing their nuclear weapons. In 1983, the deployment of Pershing II nuclear missiles in the region served as a powerful “costly signal” to the Soviets. In 1983, the deployment of Pershing II nuclear missiles in the region served as a powerful “costly signal” to the Soviets. This was because these missiles provided a quick nuclear response capability against the Soviets. This demonstrated that NATO had a strong defense capacity and was committed to its security agreements. The action caused tensions between the parties but effectively sent a “costly signal” underscoring NATO’s seriousness. Similarly, NATO’s expansion during the 1990s and 2000s after the Soviet collapse exemplifies “costly signals.” By seeking membership in NATO, Eastern European countries aimed to reduce Russia’s regional influence and bolster their own security. Joining NATO necessitated significant political and economic reforms to prove their sincerity. This signalled to other aspiring members that NATO was looking for dependable partners, while also communicating to Russia that there might be consequences for its growing regional presence (Leng, 2000).

A more recent instance can be seen in the 2015 negotiations concerning Iran’s nuclear program and the consequential nuclear bargain. Iran firmly pledged to present evidence to the global community that its nuclear program served peaceful objectives and to pursue a relaxation of sanctions. The deal comprised Iran restricting its uranium enrichment capacity, allowing for inspections, and consenting to work alongside the international community. These actions suggest that Iran is not seeking to obtain nuclear weapons and is willing to adhere to global standards. Additionally, the 2018 US exit from the Iran Nuclear Deal could also be interpreted as a costly message in the realm of international politics. The United States’ withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal was interpreted as a signal of a more aggressive policy towards Iran and a steadfast refusal to accept any violations of the agreement’s terms. This decision caused significant tension both domestically and internationally. The United States’ withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal was interpreted as a signal of a more aggressive policy towards Iran and a steadfast refusal to accept any violations of the agreement’s terms. The United States’ withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal was interpreted as a signal of a more aggressive policy towards Iran and a steadfast refusal to accept any violations of the agreement’s terms. The withdrawal was viewed as a costly measure intended to underscore American national security priorities and demonstrate a stronger position towards Iran (Payne, 2017).

There are examples of actors such as Russia and China sending costly signals against the US-led West. For instance, Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 could be considered a costly signal in international politics. Russia responded to Ukraine’s westward orientation and its relations with NATO. The annexation of Crimea alerted the international community and western powers to a serious challenge. This can be interpreted as a costly signal of Russia’s aim to retain its regional power and safeguard its interests (Payne, 2017).

Likewise, China's changing South China Sea strategies since the 2010s have conveyed a robust costly signal to its regional neighbors and the global community concerning its efforts to manage the islands and establish military bases therein. With these actions, China has emphasized its claims to the region and expressed its determination to alter the regional balance. Such moves could be viewed as a costly signal of China's aim to advance as a regional power and its pursuit of regional dominance (Wuthnow, 2017).

If we are to cite examples of costly signal debates involving Türkiye, the noteworthy acquisition of the S-400 Missile Defense System in 2019 would suffice. The purchase of such system from Russia had effectuated a costly signal impact on Türkiye's ties with NATO members and more specifically the United States. By making such purchase, Türkiye had underscored not only its intention to pursue an autonomous foreign policy, but also its national security interests. However, the signal was deemed expensive and raised concerns about integration into NATO's defense system and led to significant tensions with the United States (Hintz & Banks, 2022). Similarly, Türkiye's actions regarding maritime rights and energy exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean contain costly signals, particularly in the context of disputes with Greece and Cyprus. Türkiye's emphasis on natural resource and maritime jurisdiction claims within the region, accompanied by military missions, underscores their commitment to regional leadership and maritime rights. This sends a significant signal about Türkiye's influence in the region (Tertrais, 2021).

Examples of low-cost or free signals that states can often use to guide relations with other states and actors, influence negotiations, or achieve strategic objectives include leaders' public commitments, international agreements or alliances, and economic sanctions. It is important to note that these signals can sometimes be ambiguous or incomplete. The crucial aspect here is that by sending the signal, or "tying hands," the actor is making a substantial commitment. Backtracking on this commitment could result in significant losses in terms of both domestic politics and international reputation and prestige. Examples of such commitments made by leaders on certain issues are prevalent in international politics. Public signals, ranging from US commitments to Central and Eastern European security against Russia to commitments of support by countries like Taiwan and the Philippines against potential Chinese aggression, demonstrate both extended deterrence and reputational risk signaling. Similarly, Russia's persistent commitment to intervene in Ukraine amidst NATO expansion and the potential nuclear threat to Eastern European countries if needed constitutes a significant deterrent, despite being not without ramifications (Gressel, 2022). Similarly, China's unambiguous warnings to all nations, particularly the United States, that may encroach on its interests in ocean policy, specifically in the South China Sea, corresponded to ambiguous but dissuasive threats. Likewise, Türkiye's unwavering resolve to confront all adversaries that intend to obstruct it, primarily in the Eastern Mediterranean area during energy excavation, could be categorized similarly (Perot, 2021).

Costly economic sanctions are utilized as a means for countries to exert economic pressure on others and prompt a change in policy. Such sanctions have recently been implemented as a signaling tool to make it challenging for targeted countries to back down. In the context of economic sanctions and trade agreements, one can consider the US and Western world's enduring sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, as well as the economic sanctions imposed on Russia after the Ukraine Crisis, the economic sanctions against the Assad Regime following the Syrian Crisis, and most recently, the technological

and trade sanctions against China's escalating military power (Crawford, 2021). Similarly, trade and support agreements signed by Russia and China as a response to Western sanctions, Iran's agreements with countries like Russia and China, and statements threatening Western trade routes and joint decisions that compromise energy market stability can be cited as examples in this regard. In the case of Türkiye, the US did not provide F-35 planes despite their payment, and the Halkbank case was used as a tool for economic sanctions. Additionally, threatening statements made by Western leaders on foreign capital inflows can be considered. On the other hand, Türkiye's nuclear energy capacity, air power technology, and agreements signed with China can also be evaluated in this context (Dwyer & Mclean, 2015).

The alliance policies developed represent the most significant example in this context, although cooperation against perceived threats should also be considered. For instance, while the new frameworks established by the US and its Western allies to create NATO against the Soviet threat can be analyzed along this line, the new alliances formed against the perceived Chinese threat in Asia, such as QUAD and AUKUS, along with the involvement of all actors from India to Australia and Japan who view China as a threat, are viewed as sending a powerful message to China. From organizing international organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, to foster cooperation among actors like China and Russia and counter Western policies, to joint action on selected issues in international institutions, such as the UN, numerous transformative behaviors can be contemplated using this framework. Türkiye has utilized its NATO membership as a balancing mechanism for actors including Russia for an extended period of time (Johnson & Joiner, 2019). In recent years, Türkiye has also employed a strategy of anti-Western balancing by publicizing its membership in international organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, in order to mediate evaluations. Furthermore, Türkiye's decision to veto Sweden's NATO membership, despite it being against their own interests as a NATO member, along with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's frequent use of the phrase "the world is bigger than five," could be interpreted as statements that promote a revisionism within the system, if not outright anti-systemic behavior (Aral, 2019).

In the context of strategic secrecy, which is an emerging area of study in signaling literature, prime examples originate from the Cold War era. A case in point is the Soviet Union's detection of South Africa's underground nuclear testing activities, which resulted in the subsequent responses of both the US and USSR. Soviet satellites observed South Africans drilling deep wells in the Kalahari Desert, thus demonstrating the potential for covert nuclear development. The Soviet Union informed the United States of the evidence and US intelligence confirmed it. However, the two superpowers had differing opinions on whether to publicize South Africa's secret nuclear activities. American policymakers intended to approach the South Africans discreetly, without public mobilization. In response, the Soviet Union publicly declared that South Africa was close to testing a nuclear device. In the face of such publicity, the Soviet leaders did not trust the United States to pressure South Africa not to conduct a test. After South Africa's transgressions came to light, the United States was concerned about being labeled a hypocrite if it failed to uphold its promise to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the US took steps to control South Africa while the Soviet government employed indirect pressure. The Soviet Union directed its efforts towards the alteration of South Africa's

conduct by rallying the United States through the public revelation of evidence (Nutt & Pauly, 2021).

The divergence in US and USSR policies towards South Africa has been analyzed in terms of strategic secrecy and literature indicates that Great Powers may opt to reap benefits through this approach at the bargaining table instead of directly abandoning countries that depart from international norms they have established. Although the United States has announced to the international community the significance of other countries' development of nuclear power, it has not publicly disclosed the matter. This could be attributed to the nation's desire to weigh both its international prestige and bargaining interests. The recent controversy surrounding Strategic Secrecy stemmed from the escalating conflict between Israel and Hamas in Palestine. The United States contended that Iran played no part in the issue, essentially shielding Iran. Although Israel claimed that Iran was responsible for the attack from the outset of the heightened tensions, the US security establishment's sudden assertion that Iran had no involvement in the attack, particularly after the Wall Street Journal reported Iran's connection to Hamas, and reiterated the claim, elicited inquiries (Said vd., 2023). While the ongoing debate regarding the United States' protection of Iran continued, lifting the block on Iran's \$10 billion electricity purchase from Iraq added further depth to the discussion. Within the context of bargaining for strategic secrecy, there arises the question of whether the United States and Iran agreed upon an alternate road map. In this respect, there will continue to be a growing literature on how states can bargain with actors that violate certain norms through blackmail or coercion policies, leading to changes in their behavior and causing ambiguous signals.

Conclusion: Emerging Trends in Deterrence and Signaling

As the primary actors in global politics, states strive to influence the decisions and actions of their rivals to protect their interests, even when they do not seek military confrontation. For this purpose, they employ a deterrence strategy against their rivals through different signaling measures. Nevertheless, both the actors implementing the deterrence policy and the signaling practices utilized are subject to continuous modification due to evolving technologies. The prevalence of the internet and social media has a significant impact on the capacity of non-state actors to implement deterrence policies and on the proliferation of various signaling practices through social media. Many recent political events have shown that technological advancements are influencing decisions regarding the use of force, war, and diplomacy. Various actors are now able to gather intelligence to shape deterrent threats and diplomatic initiatives.

The behavior of many terrorist organizations on social media can shed light on non-state actors pursuing deterrent policies alongside states. For instance, DAESH's use of social media to bolster its influence in Iraq, particularly after 2014, shows that it is not a question of whether or when social media will influence repression. Instead of concealing its actions and plans through conventional military deception operations, DAESH openly took credit for its advances on social media and proudly announced its objectives. The Twitter hashtag "#AllEyesOnISIS" became the most popular hashtag on the Arabic version of the social media site, Twitter, with tech-savvy extremists reaching millions of followers. Indeed, as ISIS advanced further into Iraq, P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking referred to their social media campaign as an "invisible artillery bombardment" (Singer & Brooking, 2018).

The most compelling lesson from DAESH's use of social media in its Iraq attack is not its reach or narrative, but the physical effects achieved via cyberspace. DAESH's Mosul entry exemplifies this, with thousands of Iraqi soldiers and most of the city's police fleeing before DAESH arrived. The capture of cities by ISIS occurred prior to the start of fighting despite Iraqi government forces monitoring their advance through smartphones and computers. The majority of the 10,000-strong Mosul garrison was dissuaded from fighting due to the presence of only 1,500 ISIS fighters, resulting in a meager number of soldiers and police opposing the group.

A recent instance of social media's use as a deterrent to signal the other side and the global community is the renewed conflict between Hamas and Israel. The conflict's principal contribution to signaling literature is the seminal role of social media in Hamas's initial move on October 7th, Israel's subsequent response, the apparent engagement with the public, and the speed of their operations. The use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Pinterest, by both factions to communicate with their respective communities and the broader international community acted as a means of deterring the opposite side from spreading information. Moreover, it allowed individuals to align themselves with a particular perspective. Thomas Zeitzoff analyzed hundreds of thousands of tweets during Israel's "Operation Pillar of Defense" in 2012 and concluded that online activities had tangible, real-world impacts. When an online trend of sympathy for Hamas became evident, Israel decreased the frequency of its airstrikes by over 50% and intensified its online propaganda efforts. When tweets were scheduled according to a timeline, it was almost possible to predict what would happen next in the physical world. Clearly, Israeli authorities monitored social media as carefully as they monitored their own radio networks and battlefield surveillance systems. As a senior IDF information officer explained, in addition to the physical and cyber battle, this operation was able to become another fight in the "world of social networks" that transcended different domains (Zeitzoff, 2018).

As a result, in the context of deterrence, technology can have an impact on various areas ranging from Iraq to Gaza. It can influence how armies perceive threats and how states interact with non-state actors. Social media has played a significant role in deterring Iraq from fighting an enemy less than half its size and can be a crucial component in running a state's counterterrorism campaign. In this new environment, where even non-state actors can act as a deterrent, political goals can also play a crucial role in deterrence. In this context, the book "Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War" by Robert Pape prompts discussion on the deprivation of non-state actors from achieving their political goals (Pape, 2018). Although the reliability of transmitted signals and sender capabilities may vary, they will always have tangible effects in the physical world. In this regard, "Likewar" as described by P.J. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, will persist at the convergence point of emerging technologies and classical theories of deterrence (Singer & Brooking, 2018). Though state and non-state actors may exhibit distinct behavior when facing each other, the knowledge acquired can be employed in the implementation of extended deterrence. The "cross-domain" nature of deterrence has been repeatedly acknowledged, from Mosul to the streets of Gaza.

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Deterrence in Inter-State Communication: International Signaling Strategies

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Extended Abstract

In the context of contemporary international relations, the question of deterrence has once again become a central theme in the defense policies of various actors, with the objective of deterring states from taking undesirable actions, especially military aggression. In Europe, the United States and its allies are seeking to deter “gray zone” activities in the context of potential Russian adventurism in the Baltic states, as well as continued aggression below the threshold of a major war. In Korea, the United States and the Republic of Korea are engaged in efforts to deter not only direct aggression, but also various provocations by North Korea. Elsewhere in Asia, the United States and its allies are addressing gray zone crises in areas subject to Chinese aggression and territorial disputes. Globally and in numerous contexts, the United States is asserting that it now confronts a more pressing necessity for effective deterrence than at any time since the conclusion of the Cold War. From a non-Western perspective, the risks of engaging in a major war appear to be greater than ever, as many potential adversaries for states are far more capable than they were a decade or more ago. This makes deterring conflict even more imperative and places deterrence debates at the center of strategic studies.

The majority of the recent literature on deterrence continues to be characterised by the use of traditional deterrence methods within the context of the traditional strategic environment. However, changes in the international security environment have altered the context for deterrence and are likely to challenge long-standing policies. For example, although the post-hegemonic era is being discussed, the United States, the world’s foremost great power, is for the first time engaged in a multi-front competition. The United States, which previously confronted a single adversary in the form of the Soviet Union, is now contending with the dual challenges of engaging with China and Russia, in addition to rising regional powers. In the wake of China’s unofficial assertions that it had identified a strategy to prevail over the United States in a potential conflict, the U.S. security sector faced a significant challenge. In response to these developments, the U.S. military began to explore a new approach to warfare, recognizing that traditional assumptions about the nature of war were no longer valid. While the future wars, which are thought to take place at an unexpected time, in an unexpected place, and in an unexpected way, are perhaps best exemplified in practice by the recent Palestinian-Israeli tension, many actors in the world, including the United States, define the most critical policy in the new era as deterring all conflicts in this new uncertain environment.

Overt signaling, or costly signaling, has enjoyed a broad-based popularity that has generated an academic resonance. A common theme in the academic literature is the assumption that states need to base their strategies on clear and costly threats in order to be successful in achieving their objectives. This approach, also known as sunk costs, refers to a cost that is paid immediately when the signal is sent and cannot be recovered. These costs, which game theorists argue cannot be recovered, suggest that demonstrating resolve involves the expenditure of significant resources. Such signals, which frequently include military displays of force, such as troop deployments, arms transfers, military

exercises, and increases in the defense budget, can simultaneously impose a significant cost and facilitate preparation for war.

In addition to the conventional method of costly signaling, another signaling logic is related to partial and uncertain signals. Such partial or ambiguous signals can be defined as signals that are supported at a lower cost level than clear signals. These low-cost signals are ambiguous when the reputation of the leader or state is at stake, and partial when the signal involves a show of force. For instance, signals that deliberately limit the actor's ability to back down, known as "tying hands," do not necessitate a significant expenditure of resources but can result in significant costs in terms of both reputation and credibility if the actor breaches its word at a time when it is required to fulfill its commitments (Fearon, 1997). The Biden administration, which has been pursuing a policy of strategic ambiguity towards China for an extended period, has recently declared its intention to support Taiwan in the event of a Chinese intervention. It is evident that a failure to fulfill this commitment, which constrains the administration's ability to act, will result in a significant loss of reputation and credibility in the international community.

In addition to costly or limited-cost and clear or ambiguous signaling, a more recent emerging strand of the literature emphasizes mixed signaling involving different combinations. These ideas, which are central to proponents of bargaining behavior in conflict and war studies, can be defined as mixed signaling strategies that combine costly threats and cooperative elements. The bargainers' mixed signaling approach, which therefore corresponds to a different argument from explicit signaling strategies based solely on costly threats, has empirically demonstrated that the most effective deterrent policies are based on strategies that combine threats with cooperative elements. The main reason put forward for these findings is that cooperative elements make compliance more acceptable to the adversary, even though overt and costly threats help provide a solution. In this context, it can be argued that the primary objective of the bargainers is to prevent the conflict from escalating into a more serious situation by allowing the opponent to save face while also making harsh threats. These debates can be reflected in the signaling behavior of states. In this study, all this deterrence and signaling debates are discussed with examples in international politics and are then applied to practice. The conclusion will discuss how new trends such as the Internet and social media have altered the existing literature on deterrence and signaling.

Key Words: International Deterrence, Signaling Strategies, New Trends.

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