

The Velvet Gauntlet: A Theory of Defense Diplomacy

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Abstract: Defense diplomacy, also known as military diplomacy, is the nonviolent use of military forces through activities like officer exchanges and ship visits to further a country's international agenda. Despite existing in various forms for centuries, strikingly little scholarly attention has been paid to this practice or its use as a tool of statecraft. My essay seeks to resolve this oversight by critically examining the concept of defense diplomacy itself. In particular, I endeavor to resolve the conceptual ambiguity that has plagued the term "defense diplomacy" since it was first used by the British government in the 1990s. Breaking with the existing approaches to defense diplomacy, I identify the concept as a variant of soft power which is used to co-opt the strategic thinking of another state. By linking defense diplomacy to the concept of soft power, my work not only encapsulates the practices as it is currently used by governments today, but also illustrates the underlying mechanism that makes defense diplomacy an effective geopolitical tool.

Introduction

In 2003, when U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was asked for his views on soft power, he glibly replied that he didn't even know what soft power was (Nye, "Think Again" 16). A scant four years later, Rumsfeld's successor, Robert Gates, not only knew the meaning of soft power, but declared the concept to be a core tenet of American security in the 21st century. Speaking in his home state of Kansas in 2007, Gates stated that the trials faced by the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq were evidence that military strength alone was insufficient to triumph in modern conflicts. Rather, in the Global War on Terror and the conflicts to come "success will be less a matter of imposing one's will and more a function of shaping behavior – of friends, adversaries, and most importantly, the people in between" (Gates n. pag.). Gates, breaking with the lineage of his office, recognized that such objectives could not be achieved through military coercion alone. Instead, he championed the cause of not only strengthening America's capacity to use soft power, but the necessity of integrating soft power with the hard power mechanism that had come to dominate American foreign policy (Gates n. pag.). For Secretary Gates, the capability of America's military to redress the trials of the modern age lay not in its capacity to drop bombs, but rather in its ability to look beyond the use of violence and embrace alternative means of promoting its interests.

Defense diplomacy has emerged as one of the most important tools of military statecraft amid this effort to move past the use of force. Although the exact definition of defense diplomacy, sometimes labeled military diplomacy, remains uncertain, it is generally considered the nonviolent use of a state's defense apparatus to advance the strategic aims of a government through cooperation with other countries.^[1] Typically used as an umbrella term, activities as diverse as officer exchanges, ship visits, training missions, and joint military exercises have all been denoted as practices of defense diplomacy. However,

the elasticity with which the term has been employed belies the importance of the underlying concept and its increasing salience in world affairs. Cognizant of the limits of violence to achieve one's objective in global affairs, every major world power, including the United States, France, China, and the United Kingdom, has in turn adopted defense diplomacy as a core mission of their military doctrine and a primary component of their global strategy.

Despite its burgeoning prominence in world affairs, the formal study of defense diplomacy remains in its infancy and has been beset by a number of conceptual flaws. Most significantly, defense diplomacy continues to be plagued by a conceptual ambiguity that has made deeper analysis of the issue virtually impossible. The term "defense diplomacy" was first used by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense (MOD), but not as an intellectually distinct concept, but rather as a means of consolidating a series of cooperative military activities being conducted by the MOD under a single heading. As a consequence of this original envisioning, efforts to define defense diplomacy have centered on being expansive enough to encompass all of the activities currently classified as "defense diplomacy" rather than developing an understanding of what defense diplomacy actually is. Defense diplomacy not only lacks a meaningful definition, but has been contorted and stretched to the extent that it is now both descriptively vacuous and analytically hollow.

My research seeks to resolve the conceptual ambiguity surrounding defense diplomacy by formally integrating the practice into the broader study of power and international statecraft. As noted earlier, present efforts to define defense diplomacy have centered on how the term is currently used by foreign policy practitioners and have endeavored to include all of the activities which are currently labeled as defense diplomacy. I break from this practitioner-centric approach and instead examine the concept from the broader question of how states pursue their interests in world affairs. By focusing on how defense diplomacy is used to help governments achieve their international objectives, I identify the practice as a variant of soft power. Specifically, programs like officer exchanges and training exercises are used by one government to help mold the strategic thinking of another state in a manner that is beneficial to the practitioner. By grounding my approach in international relations theory rather than tethering it to specific activities, my definition accurately describes how defense diplomacy is used as a tool of statecraft. Furthermore, by engaging this larger theoretical context, the definition I propose is not confined to a specific activity, actor or era, thus allowing for a comprehensive analysis of defense diplomacy.

What Is Defense Diplomacy?

The term "defense diplomacy" first gained prominence in the 1990s following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. Immediately following the end of the Cold War, the nations of Eastern Europe posed a unique challenge to their Western counterparts. Western governments feared that the large Soviet-style armies of former Warsaw Pact countries would be major obstacles in the delicate transition to democracy. Not only could unreformed militaries derail the transition process, but they could also reignite historic

grievances which had been suppressed by Soviet domination (Mearsheimer 5-53). The fear that Eastern Europe would sink into chaos led Western governments to embrace a bold strategy which utilized their own military forces to help reconstruct the armed forces of former Warsaw Pact countries. Through nonviolent activities like officer exchanges and educational programs, Western governments mobilized their own defense establishments in order to reform the militaries of Eastern Europe. Programs like NATO's Partnership for Peace were implemented in order to help instill democratic norms of civil-military relations and to integrate Eastern Europe into existing collective security organs like the European Union and NATO. These efforts highlighted the evolution of the armed forces as a tool of statecraft beyond its capacity for violence. The success of Western efforts to reform the militaries of Eastern Europe was predicated not on the capacity of Western forces to impose their will, but rather their ability to constructively engage their Eastern brethren and use cooperation to bring about a mutually desirable outcome. The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense (MOD), in an attempt to bring clarity to the wide variety of cooperative programs and activities undertaken by its military during the transition of the 1990s, sought to consolidate these new military missions under a single conceptual framework. They called it *defense diplomacy* (MOD, "Strategic Defense Review" 70).

Defense Diplomacy Activities:

- Bilateral and multilateral contacts between senior military and civilian defense officials.
- Appointment of defense attaches to foreign countries.
- Bilateral defense cooperation agreements.
- Training of foreign military and civilian defense personnel
- Provision of expertise and advice on democratic control of armed forces, defense management and military technical areas.
- Contacts and exchanges between military personnel and units, and ship visits.
- Placement of military or civilian personnel in partner countries' defense ministries and armed forces (exchanges).
- Deployment of training teams.
- Provision of military equipment and other material aid.
- Bilateral or multilateral military exercises for training purposes.

Source: Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster, "Adelphi Paper 365: Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance." (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Defining Defense Diplomacy

Since International Security Studies emerged as a field of academic inquiry after World War II, it has been dominated by the study of the use or threatened use of political violence.[2] To date, those studies which have looked at the defense diplomacy have largely been of a historical variety and centered on the use of security assistance programs by great powers. These works have specifically focused on the Cold War when both the Soviet Union and the United States identified arms sales and military training programs as a means of winning the favor of foreign governments. Scholars like William Mott and Duncan Clarke have attempted to document how the rival super powers utilized these "security assistance" and gauge what impact this military aid had on world affairs (see e.g. Mott; Clarke et al; Joshua). Patricia Sullivan, Brock Tessman, and Xiaojun Li (2011) go beyond simply recording the details of military aid programs and assess whether such

initiatives have produced recognizable diplomatic gains. Though these works offer keen insights into individual programs and time periods, they examine the defense diplomacy in specific episodes rather than examining the practices as a geopolitical tool.

It is only in the past fifteen years that scholars have broken with this historical approach and endeavored to provide a comprehensive analysis of defense diplomacy. Of particular note is the Adelphi paper written by Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster which examines the shift in defense diplomacy's use following the Cold War (2004). Cottey and Forster argue that while the Soviets and Americans used defense diplomacy to pursue narrow national interests, the end of this balance of power struggle saw the same practices adapted in order to promote cooperation and peaceful coexistence. This notion of different forms of military diplomacy being adapted to meet different objectives is also seen in See Seng Tan and Bhuhindar Singh's introduction to a special edition of *Asian Security* dedicated to the uses of defense diplomacy in Asia (2012). Tan and Singh assert that there are two facets of defense: pragmatic and transformative. The pragmatic form of defense diplomacy seeks to maintain conditions as they presently exist between two countries or within a region while transformative defense diplomacy seeks to substantively alter existing conditions. Tan and Singh conclude that in Asia, the majority of defense diplomacy is actually of a pragmatic nature as South Asian countries seek to preserve peaceful coexistence, but not regional integration.

As promising as this new wave of scholarship appears, it is still beset by the same basic problem that has haunted the study of defense diplomacy since the term first gained prominence in the late 1990s. Specifically, defense diplomacy has been plagued by a conceptual ambiguity that has hindered the further study of the subject matter. Since defense diplomacy was first employed to encompass a bevy of preexisting activities, it has never been developed as a conceptually distinct idea. Rather, it has continued to exist as an umbrella concept used to corral a loose collection of nonviolent military programs under a single title. Consequently, like terrorism and unconventional warfare, defense diplomacy has become an expression without a fixed meaning and only the vaguest wisps of conceptual coherence. Without conceptual boundaries, it has become virtually impossible to say what constitutes an act of defense diplomacy. Instead, researchers either posit their own definition or simply adopt U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's colloquialism on obscenity – we may not be able to define defense diplomacy, but we know it when we see it.

The British effort to encapsulate the peaceful undertakings of the UK military in Europe during the 1990s not only gave rise to the term defense diplomacy, but also inaugurated the effort to define the concept. Instead of detailing specific programs, the MOD focused on what they hoped to achieve through the use of defense diplomacy. Specifically, the provision of forces: "to meet the varied activities undertaken by the MOD to dispel hostility, build and maintain trust and assist in the development of democratically accountable armed forces, thereby making a significant contribution to conflict prevention and resolution" (MOD, "Defence Diplomacy" 2). By focusing on the proposed objectives of defense diplomacy, rather than its underlying mechanics, the characterization offered by the MOD intrinsically limits this definition to the British

worldview of the 1990s. Notably, while the development of democratically accountable armed forces is in line with the post-Cold War, Western agenda, it cannot be applied to the activities of countries like China or eras like the Cold War and War on Terror where the promotion of democratic norms has been secondary to more immediate concerns. Furthermore, the MOD definition does not specify how the armed forces are supposed to achieve these objectives. While the phrase “varied activities” does allow for a vast array of tasks to be deemed as defense diplomacy, it sheds little light on how the armed forces are to peacefully translate their martial capabilities into assets of conflict prevention and resolution.

Cognizant of the limitations in the United Kingdom’s conception of defense diplomacy, several scholars have attempted to offer their own definitions. Unfortunately, these efforts still suffer many of similar disadvantages. Specifically, in an effort to encompass a myriad of current activities, scholars have defined the term so broadly that it loses any descriptive utility. This is particularly evident in the expansive definition offered by Andre Cottey and Anthony Forster who posit defense diplomacy as “the peacetime use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defense ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy (5-6).” Martin Edmonds echoes this approach, defining modern defense diplomacy as “the use of armed forces in operations other than war, building on their trained experience and discipline to achieve national and foreign objectives abroad” (106). While these authors do emphasize specific activities like military assistance in their respective works, simply stating defense diplomacy exists as the use of the military as a foreign policy asset in an operation other than war does little to enrich our understanding of the concept. Conceivably, such a definition would mean that activities like gunboat diplomacy, peacekeeping, foreign disaster relief, and the building of military bases abroad would all be classified as defense diplomacy.

Other scholars have revisited the approach initially taken by the United Kingdom and focused on the goals of defense diplomacy as their defining characteristic. These efforts have attempted to correct for the bias in worldviews present in the British definition by identifying general goals which defense diplomacy can be used to achieve. Tan and Singh describe defense diplomacy as “the collective application of pacific and/or cooperative initiatives by national defense establishments and military practitioners for confidence building, trust creation, conflict prevention, and/or conflict resolution” (221). K.A. Muthanna likewise relies on this objective centered approach and envisions defense diplomacy as constructing “sustainable cooperative relationships, thereby building trust and facilitating conflict prevention; introducing transparency into defence relations; building and reinforcing perceptions of common interests; changing the mind-set of partners; and introducing cooperation in other areas” (3). Though both definitions are significant improvements over the one initially offered by the British MOD, they still focus on what defense diplomacy is supposed to achieve – namely fostering cooperation and preventing conflict – rather than how it is supposed to get there. Following this logic would be akin to defining war as all actions taken to achieve victory or trade as measures used to acquire wealth. The emphasis on peaceful means to achieve these aims is important, but only rules out the use of violence as a form of defense diplomacy rather than shedding light on mechanisms that make defense diplomacy work. Perhaps more

importantly, these objective-based definitions fail to explain why elements like cooperation and transparency are important and worth obtaining. Notably, are these goals an outcome or are they a means towards achieving something else?

The existing definitions of defense diplomacy either describe what it looks like (peaceful use of military force) or what it hopes to achieve (cooperation and conflict prevention) without explaining what defense diplomacy actually is. The absence of this theoretical depth is evident throughout the literature as descriptive studies detail the ways that countries practice defense diplomacy, but fail to link these enterprises to the broader study of international relations and statecraft. Rather, each study of defense diplomacy exists within a vacuum – detailing a specific instance or case while doing little to deepen our understanding of the concept.

A Theory of Defense Diplomacy

In order to resolve the conceptual ambiguity that has plagued defense diplomacy, I revisit the origins of the term and correct the error of its original formulation. Particularly, whereas the UK's Ministry of Defense, Anton du Plessis, Cottey and others began with a collection of individual activities and attempted to build a concept around them, I will begin at the theoretical level with how states pursue their interests in world affairs and then move on to the idea of defense diplomacy. This approach not only resolves defense diplomacy's conceptual problems, but also formally bridges the gap between the nonviolent use of military force as a tool of statecraft and international relations theory. The new, intellectually coherent definition I propose not only accurately captures defense diplomacy as it is currently practiced, but also illustrates the underlying mechanisms that fuel it.

The initial premise of international statecraft is that the world exists in a state of anarchy in which countries are responsible for protecting and promoting their own interests (see, e.g., Morgenthau). The challenge in this largely self-help world is the following: having identified what outcome would best serve the interests of your country, how do you make this objective a reality? While countries may share the same or similar interests, the unique characteristics of each state, as Hans Morgenthau notices, produce different agendas that often conflict with one another. In international relations, the ability to get others to do what you want is called power and statecraft is the process through which a country wields power in order to shape the conduct of others in a manner that favors its interests.

However, stating that power is the ability to produce your preferred outcome in world affairs by getting others to do something that they otherwise would not do leaves unanswered the question of precisely how power works or the forms it takes. Joseph Nye has developed a concept of power and identified both its different variants and the modes in which they are applied. In his seminal works on the subject, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1991) and *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone* (2003), Nye identifies three specific varieties of power: hard power, economic power, and soft power. Each of these three

forms of power illustrates a unique mechanism which allows one country to shape the actions of another. Of these three, hard power is the most established and concerns the use of pressure to coerce a government into submitting to will of another country. Syria's willingness to give up its chemical weapons stockpiles in order to prevent American air strikes is an apt illustration of hard power as it was the threat of a military attack which compelled Syrian President Bahsar al-Assad to surrender his chemical arms. Economic power is the ability to incentivize compliance by offering some form of reward to a country for its support. For example, since the end of the Chinese revolution in 1949 the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) have used economic aid in their competition to be recognized as the legitimate government of China. The Pacific country of Nauru, for example, has repeatedly switched between recognizing Beijing and Taipei based on which faction offered the greater economic aid package (see, e.g., Dorling). Among Nye's three forms of power, soft power is the most nebulous and hardest to discern. Soft power relies on the concept of co-option and the ability to simply convince a country and its leaders to do what another country wants. Through such elements as the attractiveness of a country's ideas or the strength of its culture, it is possible to mold the thinking of other governments in a way that produces favorable outcomes for a country. The European Union (EU), though an organization rather than an individual country, has deftly exercised soft power during its Eastern expansion. The appeal of being "part of Europe," has served as one of the EU's key selling points and encouraged many reluctant countries to undertake significant, and often painful, institutional reforms in order to join the organization (see Michalski; Lloyd).

The Types of Power:

Type of Power	Mechanism	Illustration
Hard Power	Coercion	Country B does what Country A wants because Country A would harm B if it does not comply
Economic Power	Incentive	Country B does what Country A wants because Country A will reward Country B for complying
Soft Power	Co-Option	Country B does what Country A wants because B is convinced that what A wants is best.

Since Nye first proposed this three-headed conception of power, an unfortunate rule of thumb has developed linking each version of power to a specific power resource. Rather than focusing on the mechanisms of each form of power, the terms have been used as synonyms for the aspect of a country most readily identified with the individual practice. Hard power has ceased to be an independent concept but has become identified with any use of the military. For their parts, economic power has become tied to financial resources and soft power to the influence of culture or popular opinion. This blurring of forms of power with different power resources not only conflates the possession of a power resource with the application of power, but also incorrectly binds specific institutions to

types of power. Just as the military's potential to use violence has skewed our perception of its capacity for nonviolent action, the mistaken link of the military as an institution to hard power as a practice has blinded us to its capacity to be used in other ways.

In recent years, this flawed heuristic attachment of specific types of power to particular resources has come under assault from Nye and scholars like Mai'a Cross and Zaki La ĩ di (Nye, *Future of Power*, 3-25; Cross, 692-694; La ĩ di 18-28) who assert that there is no intrinsic link between a type of power and a particular power resource.[3] Instead, the three forms of power simply describe the manner in which a resource is applied to a target in order to change its behavior. Consequently, any type of power resource, be it military strength, financial wealth, natural resources, culture or moral bearing can be used as a source of hard, economic or soft power. For example, the use of international sanctions on South Africa in the 1980s served as a clear use of financial resources as a tool of hard power employed to coerce South Africa into ending apartheid. Likewise, the economic prosperity of the Federal Republic of Germany served as a tremendous source of soft power throughout the Cold War and, through stark contrast with the German Democratic Republic, highlighted the limits of the communist system.

What then does this distinction between a power resource and how it is applied mean for the use of the military as a tool of statecraft? While the link between the armed forces and hard power is fairly well established, the use of a country's defense apparatus as a source of economic or soft power remains largely unexamined. In terms of economic power it is easy to envision how the offer of arms transfers or security guarantees could be used to incentivize another country into a desired course of action. Notably, America's offer to include allies like Japan, South Korea, and Australia under America's nuclear umbrella has served as an important inducement for non-nuclear allies to forgo acquiring nuclear weapons of their own and thus limiting the spread of nuclear arms.

The question of the military's use as a tool of soft power is a bit more difficult and requires us to revisit the actual process through which soft power is applied. With the other two forms of power, a clear causal pathway exists: "do what I want or face the consequences of hard power" and "do what I want and you'll profit for economic power," respectively. But with soft power the actual pathway is more obscure and harder to grasp. Scholars acknowledged that ideas and governing philosophies do play an important role in shaping world events, but several have challenged the concept of soft power and underlying causal mechanism as being "soft" (see, e.g., Gray; Hyde-Price; Joffe). The challenge lies in identifying a clear and effective manner of using government resources to co-opt the thinking of another country and get a foreign government to acquiesce to your wishes.

In *The Future of Power* (2011), Nye addresses this challenge by identifying two causal pathways through which soft power can be used to influence government policy. The first method, known as the *indirect model*, relies on one country (the practitioner) cultivating support for a preferred position within the general public of another country (the target). Once the general public of the target country is convinced to support the preferred position of the practitioner, they will then mold the political atmosphere of the target country in a manner that benefits the interests of the practitioner. This can occur when a population asserts pressure on their government officials either through democratic

processes (where they exist), forms of civic engagement like street protests, or the creation of conditions which limit the policy options available to leaders (Nye, *Future of Power* 94-97).

Indirect model:

Resource → Public → Shape Political Atmosphere → Elite Decisions

The study of the indirect model of soft power focuses largely on the use of public diplomacy where governments use education, development and social programs to communicate directly with foreign populations as a means of gaining their support. Radio Free Europe and other activities of the United States Information Agency fall into this category as they seek to engage the populations of other countries and promote an American worldview.

Nye's second method of soft power application is the *direct model* with a government directly appealing to the governing elites of another country in an effort to get the leaders of that country to embrace a favored position.

Direct model:

Resource → Governing Elites → Elite Decisions

Traditional practices of diplomacy such as state visits and international conferences fall into this category of soft power as they are direct government-to-government measures designed to produce a preferred outcome. Such dynamics often take on a personal quality with friendship between leaders being used as a means of achieving an objective. Indeed, the personal ties between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill proved an important factor in sustaining the Allied war effort through World War II and in shaping the post-war order (see Meacham).

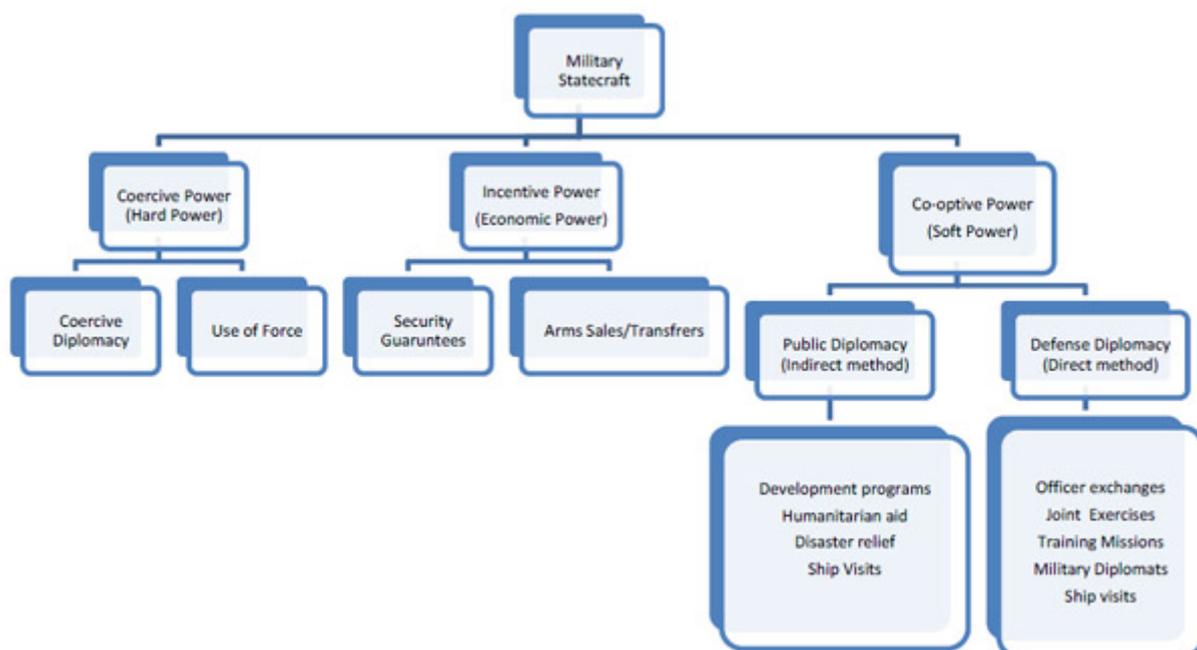
Returning to the initial question of the military as a source of soft power, it is easy to see how the military has adopted an indirect approach with military-public diplomacy and publicity missions emerging as important operational components. Missions like disaster relief, development assistance, and humanitarian aid are not simple acts of charity but a way of developing favorable relations between the military and a foreign country. These efforts to use military forces and development projects to win public support have been particularly prominent within the counterinsurgency literature and the ubiquitous efforts to win "hearts and minds." A notable case of the military utilizing this indirect method of soft power, in a non-counterinsurgency context, was the Berlin Airlift of 1948-1949. The willingness of American and British pilots to risk their lives in defiance of the Soviet blockade in order to aid suffering Berliners helped heal the wounds of World War II and unite Germany's western sectors behind the Western cause in the nascent Cold War (see Reeves; Cherny).

But what of the direct model of soft power application? Here we return to the issue of defense diplomacy: the military-to-military activities which defense diplomacy was created to encompass are all characterized by the use of defense institutions to co-opt foreign government institutions. Military diplomats, officer exchanges, training programs,

joint exercises, and ship visits are not merely peaceful means of using military force, but efforts to directly communicate the ideas, worldviews, and policy preferences of one country to another. The ultimate objective of such endeavors is not just to foster cooperation as a universal good, but to build partnerships that are beneficial to the interests of the practitioners.

To understand this point, it is useful to revisit how the United Kingdom and the People’s Republic of China have used defense diplomacy as a tool of statecraft. Both countries have relied on defense diplomacy to construct close relations with foreign governments, but these partnerships mean strikingly different things to each of them. Whereas the UK employed defense diplomacy to build close ties with other European militaries as a means of maintaining peace on the continent, China has used similar methods to gain access to foreign markets and secure extraction rights to natural resources. In both cases, the defense establishments of each country are used to co-opt the governing elites of a foreign country in order to spawn international cooperation, but the very nature of that cooperation is intrinsically self-serving for the practitioner. From the diffusion of liberal norms integral to NATO’s Partnership for Peace to efforts by the Soviet Union to use training programs to spread Marxists ideology within foreign militaries, defense diplomacy has consistently been used as a means of directly engaging with foreign government agencies in order to produce a desirable outcome.

By approaching the concept of defense diplomacy from the perspective of statecraft rather than limiting our perspective to the defense diplomacy activities currently employed by governments, we can identify it directly as an exercise in the direct application of soft power. Consequently, it is possible to generate a definition of defense diplomacy that not only encompasses defense diplomacy as it is currently practiced, but also explains what defense diplomacy actually is: *defense diplomacy is the peaceful use of the defense institutions of one country to co-opt the government institutions of another country in order to achieve a preferred outcome.*



Conclusion

Defining defense diplomacy as an exercise of soft power practiced by the defense establishment of one country upon the government of another both accurately describes the phenomenon and resolves many of the limitations inherited from the concepts initial formation. The early usage of the term to encapsulate cooperative military practices had the unintentional effect of ignoring the characteristics of those practices beyond their nonviolent nature. Consequently, the concept of defense diplomacy and its various forms was reduced to a single dimension: nonviolence. Ensuing attempts to develop the concept have floundered largely because they remained beholden to this initial understanding of defense diplomacy as the nonviolent use of military forces. As a result, scholars have struggled to delineate between defense diplomacy and other forms of nonviolent uses of the defense establishment such as humanitarian assistance and gunboat diplomacy. Indeed, the attempts by Muthanna (2011) and Tan and Singh (2012) to define defense diplomacy by its objective are indicative of this effort to separate defense diplomacy from other nonviolent activities.

My approach to defense diplomacy corrects this initial error by recognizing that while the absence of violence is a key feature of defense diplomacy, it is not the sole unifying characteristic. At the heart of each instance of defense diplomacy has been an effort by one country to mold the strategic thinking and institutions of another in a manner that was amenable to the practitioner. Endeavors like NATO's Partnership for Peace were not undertaken out of a sense of international altruism, but served a strategic purpose – maintaining stability in Eastern Europe amid the transition to democracy. Programs like officer exchanges and training exercises helped to attain this goal by imbedding democratic norms into former Warsaw Pact militaries and integrating former enemies into preexisting collective security organizations. Defense diplomacy is thus not cooperation for its own sake, but actually the method of bringing the strategic thinking of one country (the recipient) into harmony with another (the practitioner). This nonviolent use of military institutions to convince officials from the recipient government that they actually want what the practitioner wants is the essence of soft power.

While understanding defense diplomacy as a form of soft power resolves the conceptual ambiguity that has shadowed the concept, it also opens the field for deeper inquiry. The process of cooption that is the center of defense diplomacy remains a little understood phenomenon in world affairs. Since Joseph Nye first identified the concept of soft power, it has been beset by questions concerning its ability to be utilized as a tool of statecraft and the conditions which determine its successful applications. Defense diplomacy has inherited these concerns as our ability to now properly identify it only reveals how little we actually know about the actual practice. For example, it is unknown how the different defense diplomacy activities produce different results or how defense diplomacy compares to other forms of soft power. Despite this uncertainty, what remains clear is that these questions are no longer purely theoretical. Rather, as leaders like Secretary Robert Gates emphasize, the use of defense institutions beyond the use of force, deepening our understanding of defense diplomacy as a tool of statecraft is no longer a choice, but a necessary component in our analysis of world affairs.

Gregory Winger is a doctoral candidate in the Political Science Department at Boston University. His dissertation examines defense diplomacy and the nonviolent use of military forces. In addition to his current work, Greg also specializes in the study of U.S. foreign policy and has written several pieces on the subject.

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1. The use of "defense diplomacy" or "military diplomacy" is typically determined by authors' preference. For example, K.A. Muthanna prefers "military diplomacy" while Tarak Barkawi uses "defense diplomacy." However, in recent years an argument has been advanced by Anton du Plessis that "military diplomacy" refers strictly to the actions of military diplomats like military attaches while "defense diplomacy" encompasses the entirety of a country's defense establishment. It is in sympathy with this line of argument that I have selected to use the term "defense diplomacy" as my preferred designation.

2. The 2013 International Studies Association (ISA) annual meeting, the premiere conference for international relations scholars, gives an apt illustration of how little scholarly attention has been allotted to the study of nonviolent uses of military force. Of the approximately 1,100 panels, round tables, and discussions held during the conference, a single panel concerned the nonviolent use of military force. By way of comparison, two panels were dedicated to outer space security including one focused entirely to the threat of earth being struck by asteroids or other extraterrestrial objects.

3. Nye, Cross, and La ĩ di also correctly point out that merely possessing a power resource is not in itself valuable. Rather, it is only through the effective application of a resource that a country can be deemed as powerful. As an illustration of this point, North Korea presently has the fourth largest military in the world (the largest if you include reserves), yet few outside of the Kim family would consider North Korea to be a leading world power.

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