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**Think Tank Advocates DoD Dissuasion Initiative**

The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments today released its newest report, *Dissuasion Strategy*, coauthored by Andrew F. Krepinevich and Robert C. Martinage. The report analyzes the concept of dissuasion; highlights its differences with deterrence; offers insight on how it can be operationalized; and solutions for overcoming possible impediments.

According to the Report, dissuasion involves actions taken to increase a rival's perception of the anticipated costs or decrease its perception of the likely benefits from developing, expanding, or transferring a military capability that would be threatening or undesirable from the US perspective. Robert Martinage observes, "We must view dissuasion as pre-deterrence—altering adversaries' cost-benefit calculation in such a way as to discourage them from even embarking on creating capabilities. This may be accomplished through a wide range of economic, diplomatic, military instruments."

Sporadic attempts at dissuasion have been made in the past, and a number of examples are cited in the 54-page Report. For example, from the 1980 to mid-1990s, the United States tried to influence Muammar Qadhafi's perception of the economic and diplomatic costs of continuing to develop chemical weapons. In the 1970s, the United States pressured Taiwan to abandon its clandestine nuclear programs by threatening to withdraw support for its civilian nuclear power program and the commitment to defend the island against Chinese aggression. For part of the Cold War, the United States intentionally engaged Moscow in areas of the military competition that imposed disproportionate costs on the Soviet Union. The result was the diversion of Soviet resources from more threatening capabilities.

"Given the intensity of the threats we face today—WMD, irregular warfare, and terrorism, asymmetric competition, anti-access and area-denial capabilities—developing and prosecuting dissuasion strategies should become a core element in U.S. strategic planning," states coauthor Andrew Krepinevich.

The authors recommend that a Senior Dissuasion Strategy Group (SDSG) be created within the Defense Department to implement dissuasion strategy. "Ultimately, the development and application of dissuasion strategies should be the province of the secretary of defense, a small number of senior defense decision-makers, and a small analytic staff," according to Krepinevich. The group, according to the Report, should comprise the most senior defense leaders, including the secretary of defense, deputy secretary of defense, the undersecretaries for policy, intelligence and acquisition, and the chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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