

THE ARMY'S CONTRIBUTION TO INTEGRATED DETERRENCE VIA CWMD READINESS

OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE READINESS

LT. COL. SEAN CARMODY

"If deterrence fails, we will field a force that is resilient and prepared to prevail in a CBRN contested environment."

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, *Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 29SEP23

RESILIENT ARMY FORCES GENERATE INTEGRATED DETERRENCE

The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) departs from our previous strategies, most notably, by making the concept of integrated deterrence central to what the Department does. While the ideas and concepts underpinning Integrated Deterrence are not new, they will increasingly focus the Department on activities central to deterrence, key among them Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD).

Integrated Deterrence entails working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, all instruments of U.S. national power, and our network of Alliances and partnerships. Tailored to specific circumstances, it applies a coordinated, multifaceted approach to reducing competitors' perceptions of the net benefits of aggression relative to restraint. Integrated deterrence is enabled by combat-credible forces prepared to fight and win, as needed, and backstopped by a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.¹

Additionally, this Strategy openly acknowledges our primary threat actors' intentional pursuits of WMD capabilities.² The Department anticipates increasingly complicated escalation dynamics given advances in technology including advanced Chemical-Biological Weapons (CBW) and non-strategic nuclear weapons.³

As the Services reorient to these realities, the demand to synchronize policy, strategy, and concepts with Combatant Command (COCOM) activities is increasingly salient to successfully implement the Defense Strategy. Integrated deterrence demands collaborative and shared responsibilities by COCOMs and Services to demonstrate resilient posture and forces ready to operate in the face of WMD.

THE CWMD STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE IS CLEAR

The NDS defines the ways of deterrence as by denial of effect, resilience of the Joint Force, and direct & indirect cost imposition.⁴ Given the Services' functions to build, man, train, and equip the force; they play the predominant role in resilience. The Army creates resilience through the supporting concept of denial of benefits. The Army denies benefits of aggression by demonstrating, "the ability to withstand, fight through, and recover quickly from disruption."⁵ The tailored approaches to deterrence required by the NDS factor the problem, competitor, and setting to include resilience by, "improving conventional forces' ability to operate in the face of limited nuclear, chemical, and biological attacks so as to deny adversaries benefit from possessing and employing such weapons."⁶ The Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) continues by directing that the U.S. will demonstrate, "the resolve of the United States to both resist nuclear

coercion and act as a responsible nuclear power.”⁷ To deny benefit of nuclear employment specifically, the NPR clearly articulates that,

When engaged in conventional operations against a nuclear-armed adversary the Joint Force must be able to survive, maintain cohesion, and continue to operate in the face of limited nuclear attacks. This form of resilience sends a distinct deterrence message to an adversary – that limited nuclear escalation will not render U.S., Allied, and partner forces incapable of achieving our warfighting aims. It is also critically important that the Joint Force can fight and win in a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN)-contaminated environment.⁸

The recently published Strategy for CWMD extends this logic stressing the importance of resilience in one of the strategies six ways as, “Build a Joint Force that can campaign, fight, and win in a CBRN environment.”⁹ As noted, the Services uniquely, and the Army in particular, are essential to this way given that the preponderance of WMD effects in any conflict would be shouldered largely by the land component. The strategy establishes four key priorities; Defend the Homeland from WMD attack, Deter WMD Attacks, Prevail in a CBRN Environment, and Prevent New WMD Threats.¹⁰ To prevail, the Total Force must demonstrate readiness to fight, win, and reconstitute.

“If potential adversaries perceive the Joint Force or Allied and partner capabilities to be vulnerable to severe degradation by WMD employment, they will be more confident in escalating with WMD use to gain advantage or prevent defeat. A resilient Total Force is better able to contain and defeat threats away from the homeland, operate through disruption and WMD scenarios in the homeland, strengthen deterrence credibility, and provide options to prevent proliferation.”¹¹

The strategy further cements the importance of resilience to diminish adversary advantages and deny benefit of WMD employment. As important as the resilience itself, the strategy emphasizes the messaging of that resilience to achieve the deterrent effect. “U.S. denial and resilience activities domestically and internationally send a distinct message that a strategy reliant on WMD escalation on the battlefield is not a conduit to victory. The inability to achieve desired outcomes may encourage a decision-maker to view off-ramps more favorably.”¹²

ARMY SUPPORTING CWMD STRATEGIES

While pre-dating the latest DoD Strategy, two Army Strategies directly support and enable the Army’s ability to implement a resilient force that can prevail in the face of WMD; *Army Strategy For Integrating Nuclear Implications Into Conventional Operations and The Army Biological Defense Strategy* (ABDS).

The former, referred more commonly as Conventional-Nuclear Integration (CNI) Strategy, sets out to achieve a range of end states ensuring the Army can, “Dominate operations in and through a nuclear environment; Exploit its resiliency advantage; Provide conventional operational support to nuclear operations, if requested; and Execute post-strike recovery at anticipated scale to continue mission.”¹³ The CNI Strategy outlines the contributions the Army must make, as a non-nuclear service, to face a nuclear-armed adversary. Uniquely, the Strategy’s implementation ensures a force resilient, not only to employment of adversary nuclear weapons, but to ensure conventional operations integrate and are resilient to friendly employment which further advances the credibility of the nuclear deterrent.

The ABDS, also a predecessor to the recently published DoD Biodefense Posture Review, addresses the pervasive threat of biological hazards by expanding biological defense knowledge; enhancing comprehensive biological defense situational awareness; modernizing the Army biological defense enterprise; and enabling effective planning, preparation, and training to protect the force in competition, crisis, or conflict.¹⁴

THE ARMY IMPLEMENTS CWMD POLICY & STRATEGY THROUGH CAMPAIGNING

The Army’s way to implement its role in integrated deterrence is through campaigning. As part of the Army’s approved Campaign Plan for 2030, Objective 10B “Enhance CBRN Readiness,” the Army will increase lethality, survivability, and readiness of maneuver formations to deter WMD use and, if necessary, operate in a CBRN environment during large scale combat operations (LSCO).

The Army’s enhanced CBRN Readiness Campaign is a multi-phase effort, with Phase 1 spotlighting CBRN readiness in EUCOM via a Proof-of-Concept. 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division conducts the Proof-of-Concept to increase personnel, equipment, and training readiness to fight and win in a CBRN LSCO environment. The unit successfully demonstrated its readiness during a National Training Center

rotation and will receive a final assessment during a Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) rotation stimulated by realistic CBRN events including adversary use of limited nuclear escalation. This demonstration supports theater strategic communications designed to deter adversary WMD employment against US and Allied forces.

Phase 2 includes a Pilot unit enhancing readiness in USARPAC while Phase 3 and beyond enhances readiness of Priority Divisions. Future Phases of the Campaign emphasize implementing best practices by enhancing additional priority units to ensure both the Army today and of 2030 is CBRN ready.

In addition to the unit focused demonstrations of CBRN readiness, the Campaign Objective aligns over 30 distinct enhancements across the DOTMLPF-P spectrum to reform and generate enduring CBRN readiness for the future. These enhancements include integration of Professional Military Education (PME) subjects; concept development; doctrinal reforms; and a range of training & policy activities.

The key to early, and anticipated successes, of Objective 10B is consistency in campaigning. The steady and increasingly comprehensive strategy and policy landscape allows the Army's Campaign Plan, and Objective 10B specifically, to chart a predictable and effective course. This was a historical challenge in the CWMD space, noted in the NDS, that, "rather than exacerbate risk by isolating and stove-piping CWMD as a separate effort and having sporadic emphasis that occurs only in the midst of immediate hostilities, engaged leaders must integrate CWMD into all phases of efforts and planning."¹⁵

COCOMS EMPLOY ENHANCED CBRN READINESS FOR INTEGRATED DETERRENCE

The Services building ever more resilient forces to WMD employment is laudable, but insufficient. COCOMs' posture, training, plans, and messaging ultimately deliver that resilience to the point of application from competition, through crisis, into conflict. Each COCOM works daily to reform and improve CWMD posture; increase the frequency & quality of CWMD training in exercises; and layer CWMD operations into plans. Additionally, each COCOM messages their efforts for deterrence of adversaries and assurance of Allies & Partners. The traditional barriers between operational and institutional authorities and priorities are eroding by the day, allowing

for improved force design and development that meets the needs of planners and Commanders to take on the WMD challenges of today and tomorrow.

"Although DoD will deepen specialized expertise within the CWMD enterprise, the WMD problem set is a problem for the entire Department. This will require breaking down barriers between conventional and CWMD communities to understand how CBRN weapons can influence or undermine plans and operations. Only when these barriers have been eliminated can DoD maximize its ability to prevail in CBRN environments. This will include leveraging Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) and Total Force education, continuing education, and enhanced training."¹⁶

As the Army continues to implement its campaign for enhanced CBRN readiness, greater synchronization with COCOM efforts will allow for the formation of tailored deterrence approaches demanded of the NDS.

DEMONSTRATING CWMD POSTURE & RESILIENCE COMPLETES THE CIRCLE OF INTEGRATED DETERRENCE

A fallen tree with no witness is unheard, and so too is CWMD deterrence.

"Central to tailoring deterrence is the ability to communicate clearly that an explicit WMD threat will not coerce or prevent the United States from protecting its vital national interests. An actor that does not receive and understand U.S. intent is less likely to be deterred. As a result, the Defense Department, in concert with other U.S. departments and agencies, must carefully consider when and how to deliver a message to enable deterrence effectiveness."¹⁷

Building a resilient, capable, trained, and ready force is insufficient but necessary. "To improve the CBRN operational readiness of the Joint Force, Combatant Commands, Military Departments, and the Services must commit to integrating CBRN considerations into individual and unit level training, readiness standards, and apply these acquired skills in associated unit and theater exercises."¹⁸ Across Warfighting Functions, the Army is increasingly tailoring training scenarios and objectives to the specific demands of the theaters and plans Army units are most likely to support. This increase in tailored training is mirrored in the Army

Campaign Objective 10B efforts to enhance the quality and frequency of CWMD training by venue and echelon.

Shaping an effective theater CWMD posture too is insufficient but necessary. The Army is advancing efforts to enable Service Components to posture forces and resources for rapid transition to crisis, and if necessary, conflict. These efforts are mirrored in the Campaign Objective 10B by enhancing theater armies' ability to build and sustain WMD resilient forces and stationing. "CWMD activities that strengthen resilience and support force deployment from the homeland are key to reducing risk and provide additional tools, often unique to chemical and biological threats. These activities also help shape an actor's decision calculus at the operational level by diminishing the potential advantage gained from WMD use."¹⁹ Demonstrating those posture, plans, and resilience through effective messaging ensures the fullness of the deterrent effect.

"To have a deterrent effect on an actor's decision-making, the Department must communicate the Joint Force's ability to operate effectively in a CBRN environment. This includes the proactive release of information tailored to a specific threat and context to deter potential adversary WMD use. As such, the Department will enhance its ability to provide clear, credible information to our Allies and partners, other U.S. Government departments and agencies, the U.S. population, and potential adversaries. U.S. messages will be deliberate and support the open release of sufficient information to counter an adversary's disinformation campaign."²⁰

ARMY WMD RESILIENCE, INTEGRATED WITH THEATERS, AND MESSAGED FOR DETERRENCE

The Services are not islands. The COCOMs are not sequestered. CWMD is not divorced from the core defense strategy. Effective CWMD readiness necessitates collaborative campaigning and deliberate demonstrations by Services and COCOMs alike to achieve integrated deterrence. While the Army is well positioned and making significant strides on the backs of our strategies and Campaign Objective, much work remains to habituate the CWMD mindset, advance training methods, and educate the force. It's a policy. It's a strategy. It's a campaign...if we can keep it! ■

LT. COL. SEAN CARMODY

is the Army Campaign Integrator at the U.S. Army Nuclear & CWMD Agency, in Fort Belvoir, VA. He has a B.S. in Astrophysics from the University of Michigan, a M.S. in Environmental Science from Webster University, and a M.M.A.S in Theater Operations from the School of Advanced Military Studies. He was previously assigned as the Commander of the 22d Chemical Battalion, Fort Bliss, TX. His email address is sean.t.carmody2.mil@army.mil.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of Defense, "2022 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America," 2022, 1.
2. Ibid, hereafter NDS, 2-3.
3. Ibid, 6.
4. Ibid, 8-9.
5. Ibid, 6.
6. Ibid, 10.
7. U.S. Department of Defense, "2022 Nuclear Posture Review," 2022, 2.
8. Ibid, 10.
9. U.S. Department of Defense, "Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction," 20223, viii.
10. Ibid, hereafter CWMD Strategy, 7-8.
11. Ibid, 8.
12. Ibid, 8.
13. U.S. Army, "Army Strategy For Integrating Nuclear Implications Into Conventional Operations," 2022, 5.
14. U.S. Army, "Army Biological Defense Strategy," 2021.
15. NDS, 14.
16. Ibid, 14.
17. CWMD Strategy, 9.
18. NDS, 15.
19. CWMD Strategy, 7.
20. NDS, 15.