

“Deterrence” Then and Now: Mapping the `Deterrence` in the Contemporary Digital-Epoch

ABSTRACT:

The concept of deterrence has fundamentally changed in the contemporary digital age, as it is now geographically embedded in evolving social dynamics. Historically, deterrence operated primarily at a different level, aiming to deter adversaries from action through military or political power. In contrast, modern deterrence has expanded to include areas such as cyberspace and information operations. With state and non-state actors using social media to project their power and influence, it has become an essential platform for these new forms of deterrence. Additionally, as new challenges emerge, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify and target specific individuals. Many countries also face considerable difficulties in controlling the flow of information and combating disinformation. This study examines the pros and cons of deterrence in the digital age and suggests new strategies to achieve effective deterrence in the current environment.

KEY WORDS:

Deterrence, Social Media, Disinformation, Deepfakes, Cyber-security

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Introduction

The rise of social media has introduced new complexities and challenges to the concept of deterrence,. It has opened channels of warning through which governments and other actors can allow potential adversaries to perceive threats beyond mere actions. However, it also provides adversaries with opportunities to engage in disinformation and spread false messages, which can inhibit effective deterrence. This challenge is a major hurdle to active deterrence in the social media age, as the very nature of social media makes it difficult to confirm the source and reliability of information. Propaganda and fictitious falsehoods are abundant on these platforms, making it hard to distinguish them from the original content conveyed by governments or other authoritative sources. Social media can be exploited by adversaries to spread misinformation among certain populations (Gu et al., [2017](#)), thereby undermining deterrence. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of social media presents an additional challenge. Classical deterrence messages are typically prepared and transmitted over time, allowing both parties to deliberate and adjust their approaches. In today's social media era, however, messages can spread quickly and widely, often being misunderstood or having unexpected effects (Aïmeur et al., [2023](#)). Nevertheless, there are opportunities to improve deterrence through social media. Governments can establish direct channels of communication with the public, increasing speed and efficiency. Social media could also be used for government forums where deterrence policies are communicated for public understanding and support. This presents a case for the modern deterrence era in relation to social media. While engaging citizens more directly via social media has its advantages, it also raises questions about how government actors will assess the truthfulness of content and combat misinformation (West,

2017). As a result, governments and other actors are compelled to create deterrence mechanisms that are sensitive to the realities of the social media environment (Nothhaft et al., 2018).

Deterrence: Meaning & Early History

Deterrence prevents an adversary from acting a given way by increasing the perceived costs of, and decreasing the perceived advantages for, such behavior. The first deterrent strategy is to threaten punishment for retaliatory action to encourage an opponent to refrain from certain behaviors. Military deterrence, economic deterrence, and legal deterrence are the types of deterrence (Mazarr, 2018). *Ceteris paribus* with regard to the geopolitics in play, upholding a bulky vertical militia and establishing readiness for the usage of force when required is a deterrent against invasion by other countries. Similarly, law enforcement organizations may threaten rigorous punishment if certain behaviors are carried out, to discourage such actions bringing punishment. This is founded on the belief that competition is rational and weighs the implications of their actions. The effectiveness of deterrence being founded upon the credibility of a threat, the likelihood of the threatened reaction occurring and the ability of the adversary to absorb or mitigate the costs associated with the threatened response. A plausible threat of punishment deters an opponent. Deterrents can basically be divided into two types: nuclear deterrence that relies on nuclear retaliation for deterrence and mutually assured destruction-MAD; this holds that if one nation utilizes nuclear armament, then the other would respond with equivalent or greater capacity, thereby destroying both nations. Nuclear deterrence is generally stated to as pertaining to the mid twenty century and the U.S.-Soviet armament race (Drell & Goodby, (n.d) Conventional deterrence invokes military action if attacked; this is based on a concept under which, with a sufficiently strong military and demonstrated willingness to use it, some state would be deterred from waging war against another. Conventional deterrence has many applications as the prevention of aggression from appearing in regional wars, as well as the protection of the civilian population from terrorist assault (Harvey, 1997).

Every state of last resort in the 18th century devised precautions in preparation for its possible invasion. An invasion could be prevented when a potential aggressor was persuaded that the repercussions had negative consequences that were more than any of his advantages in carrying them out. A few cases of such deterrence in the 18th century are as follows: One important technique used in the 18th century was the careful usage of balance of power; the purpose of this was no single nation could find itself too powerful by creating alliances with other nations. England, Austria and the Netherlands established the Grand Alliance in 1701 against the French expansion (Ostwald, 2015). Fortifications were another important deterrent in the 18th century. Countries would make their borders as impenetrable as possible to invasion. The historic French Vauban fortifications of the 17th to early 18th centuries, for instance, were cutting-edge and proved very effective for their period. Another important manifestation of deterrence in the 18th century was the power of the navy (Underwood, Pfaff, & Hechter, 2018). The countries with solid marine forces would more feasibly protect their trade routes against invasions. For example, the Royal Navy of Britain was one of the greatest forces in the world, which helped to deter other nations from invading British territory. Although not having nuclear weapons at that time, deterrent techniques from the 18th century would be conceptually comparable with nuclear deterrence. The threat of nuclear weapons was intended to prevent the aggravating effects of nuclear war on other nations from being triggered. This idea, originated in the 18th idea of mutually assured destruction, was first hitched in the Cold War in the twentieth century. An important aspect of deterrence was in the 18th century as a way to avoid war and protect nations from invasion. Principles which are current in deterrence today can be traced back to the strategies of this time. All strategies, policies, and acts of major international powers in the nineteenth century to deter others from aggression or war can collectively be called "deterrence." As nations begin to have the growing stretch in an actively and fast-changing world in terms of maintaining their influence, concern for the deterrent factor became more important within international relations. Leading European powers at the end of the 19th century were Britain, France, as well as Russia.

Nations given end up in a tangle of wars, alliances, rivalries and disputes, Real war was generally a possibility, so countries tend to scale down war because of the loss and expenditure it incurred and hence resorted to deterrence that acts as preventive against these petty wars. This time, naval power determined deterrence. Britain was building a mammoth navy that would extend its power globally. Port blockages, capture of trade, and destruction of coastal sites formed the primary deterrence measures of the British navy. The balance of power concept framed deterrence in the 19th century. This notion stated that the balance of power in the globe should be maintained by all means because a certain country would become too powerful and provoke war. Therefore, all countries were under military alliances, diplomatic initiatives and military buildups to avoid rising too dominant. However, war has been avoided or postponed through diplomacy in the 19th century. For example, in 1815, the convention usually known as the “Congress of Vienna” convened to reorganize the boundaries of European Community and avert another great war (Thellier, 2019). Finally, military alliances were a very solid deterrence in the 19th century. Many countries allied their powers to prevent the rise of one or discourage its aggressive behavior. For example, the Triple Entente was formed by the members of Britain, France and Russia to oppose the ever-growing military strength and influence of Germany (Tsygankov, 2012). Deterrence was an important, rather complicated, and developing concept during the 19th century, which made it useful for any kind of peacekeeping and stability in the world. In the name of 'peace and stability', powerful navies, diplomacy, military alliances, and the balance of power concept were attempted towards getting the semblance of peace and stability in the world. In short, an adversary could be discouraged from doing something or from undertaking any activity by giving a threat or penalizing them. Some deterrents from the 19th century include: The British Royal Navy was the furthestmost controlling and sophisticated navy around the globe in the 19th century. This left other countries with almost a negligible index of threat to British maritime interests. The presence of the Navy in the Black Sea thru the Crimean War (1853-1856) made it impossible for Russia to attack British forces with naval strength (Anderson, 1972). For over a century, the might of the French army on land deterred invaders. Other responses to the huge, well-equipped, and well-trained French army were where most of the other countries of Europe were not declared against attacks from France. The German army had scraps of success winning the Franco-Prussian Combat (1870-1871) (Carroll, 1926).

Military power of the United States to prevent aggressors during 19th century, when it was powerful on the globe. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded to the United States most of the territory of Mexico as a result of the military superiority of the Americans after the war. Russia then safeguarded its interests in the face of a diplomat threat. In the late 19th century, during the game of Great Power in meeting with Russia: diplomatic pressure held the British from going further toward expansion. Military power, in the nineteenth century, prevented the neighbors from invading Austria-Hungary. The Prussian army was better at technology and tactics compared to that of Austria's and defeated the latter in the Austro-Prussian War (Wawro, 1996). Various governments utilized in the nineteenth century quite a number of deterrence strategies which formed their own impact on international relations to avert wars and protect their own interests.

Contemporary Outlook of Deterrence & Cold War

This cold war was a stand-off between the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc, with Soviet orbit countries on single adjacent and the USA and other countries on the contrary. Military strategy and foreign policy during that period were affected by concept theory, according to which a military might prevent possible intervention or action by an opponent. The other kind of nuclear deterrence prevalent during the Cold War would prevent mutual kindred amongst the Washington and the USSR from turning into hostile ones as a result of launching nuclear strikes by either of them. In keeping with the MAD concept, there would be a great nuclear build-up on both sides and any nuclear attack would create an equally heavy devastating counterattack (McDonough, 2015). Nuclear war was theorized as being so devastating that no side would attack unless absolutely necessity called for it. It concentrated on the creation of a power balance that would make every party concerned feel secure rather than threatened and

thus hostility could be avoided. The two parties engaged in an ever-widening arms and technological race, competing to achieve supremacy without provoking an open confrontation.

During the time of the Cold War, America and its allies used many different techniques for deterrence, such as: Any attack by the Soviet Union nullified retaliation-your attack has been countered by an all-out nuclear response. This way of thinking in early 1960 facilitated operations by conventional infantry and tactical nuclear weapons during a Soviet invasion of a country. The MAD plan purported to avoid nuclear confrontation through the annihilation of both parties. This idea confined the arms of both parties from shooting and, hence, avoiding nuclear war. During the mid of 20th century, the USSR and its satellites used a number of deterrent techniques, including massive retaliation, to deter attacks from the United States and its allies. This idea has maintained that a few nuclear bombs could win a nuclear war. The USSR deployed the anti-ballistic missiles, or ABM defense systems, to shield against incoming nuclear missiles. Agreement for limitation of arms would lessen the probability of a nuclear skirmish among the Washington and the Soviet. Deterrence was overarching consideration in military and foreign policy of both the Washington and the USSR during the Cold War. This prevented outright war between the superpowers, but it created a dangerous arms race with the specter of nuclear annihilation.

Large-scale development of nuclear arsenals was common practice during the Cold War days and was adopted by both the Soviet and the Washington. MAD was envisaged to lessen the chances of any first strike from either side. The absence of nuclear weapons at this point proved to be a successful deterrent. In 1962, the USSR threatened to start nuclear war in contradiction of the Washington by placing nuclear arms in Cuba. Kennedy threatened military action and instituted a naval blockade of Cuba to empty it of missiles. The Soviet Union agreed to take its missiles from Turkey in return for the non-use of US weapons against Cuba (Kahan & Long, [1972](#)). By deterrence, Israel is safe from its hostile surroundings. To the possible assailants, it serves as a deterrent that announces Israel would hit back hard. Israel's preemptive military action resulted in its victory against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War (Lamm, [2007](#)). Moreover, "Deterrence" refers to NATO's ability to prevent a Soviet invasion of Western Europe during the Cold War.

The military transformation is the deployment of more combined arms along the Soviet borders, combined with the development of advanced weapons hardware such as cruise missiles and stealth aircraft. Operation Desert Storm by the USA in 1990 to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi military occupation is a deterrent action. The threat of severe retaliation was a significant contributor to the successful executions of this operation. After the war, the United States maintained troops in that area to show deterrence to Iraq (Tilford, [1993](#)). Reducing Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles, Deterrence has been used to prevent proliferation of nuclear armaments thru the globe. For instance, the countries are threatened with economic sanctions or military action for violating agreements. This, however, is the concept that made Iran sign a nuclear agreement under such threats in 2015 (Munayyer, [2015](#)). Deterrence was responsible for keeping the peace and averting war during the 20th century. The answer to this question, yes, mostly.

Deterrence & 21st Century

One has always used deterrence throughout history to prevent some conflict by persuasion with a would-be invader that the potential rewards of invading are outweighed by the risks of doing so. While its place has changed, deterrence remains as critical to the international whole in the twenty first century. The shape of deterrence changes in the 21st century due to asymmetric threats and non-state actors. Nation-states did not attack each other because of the risk of mutually assured destruction. In the present global security environment, national security is endangered by terrorist organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and cybercriminals. These criminals could be evasive or difficult to track; thus, traditional deterrence strategies may not apply. Thus, deterrence strategy or strategies, in the twenty-first century, aim at keeping the opponent from having success through economic, political, and eventually military means. It may be possible to undermine non-state organizations without military action by applying economic sanction, cyber operations, and covert activity. Many of these threats are global; thus,

it will require international cooperation and coordination for prevention. Because new technologies are crucial for deterrence and because old deterrence methods are fast becoming ineffective in transforming a conflict, artificial intelligence, robotics, and other technologies would be needed here.

Even since time immemorial, deterrence through persuasion of would-be aggressors has always been there to forestall invasion. Although the task it has always performed on behalf of deterrence has changed, deterrence is still deemed a very important instrument in international affairs in the twenty-first century. The nature of deterrence is changing because of asymmetric threats and non-state actors in the twenty-first century. For example, during the previous period, countries were deterred from attacking one another through the threat of mutually assured destruction. However, the new global security situation is in the field of national security being run by terrorist organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and cybercriminals. As such criminals can be evasive and very difficult to follow, the application of traditional deterrent strategies can prove to be ineffective. Hence, the aims of deterrence strategies for the twenty-first century would be to prevent opponents from achieving economic, political, and finally, military victory. It may be possible to destroy non-state organizations with economic sanctions, cyber operations, and covert activity without resorting to military action. Most of these threats are global and hence will require international cooperation and coordination for their prevention. The new form of deterrent is also technology, and deterrent methods of the older ones are becoming useless as conflict is transformed by artificial intelligence, robots, and other technologies. Most of these threats are global, so they would require international cooperation and coordination in prevention. New kinds of deterrents are emerging which are also technological (Khan, [2022](#)), while deterrence modes of the former are becoming obsolete as conflicts are redefining by artificial intelligence, robots, and other technologies. As this means persuasive function of an aggressor has always been there to intercept a potential invasion, so has transformation itself. As little has changed in the homogeneity of functions it serves within that scope, deterrence stands out distinct in 21st century international affairs. Because asymmetric threats and non-state actors influence the nature of above deterrence in the twenty-first century (Wahlert, 2007), this is of particular importance at the moment. The other one used to dissuade countries from attacking one another by means of the mutual assured destruction threats. However, the new global security scenario is about national security being run by terrorist organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and cyber criminals. As these criminals are very much evasive or too deep to find, it is easier for their action of deterrence not to be applied. Hence, the aims of deterrence strategies will be set for the twenty-first century not only to deter perpetrators from being successfully economically or politically but also military victory. It may possibly damage these non-state entities through economic sanctions, cyber operations, and covert action to a level it would not require military action. Most of these threats are global, so they would need international cooperation and coordination in their prevention. Most of these threats are global and so would require international cooperation and coordination in prevention. The new form of deterrence is also technological, while the deterrent methods of the old are becoming obsolete, as conflict is being redefined by artificial intelligence, robotics, and other technologies.

When autonomous weapons systems enter the fray, they shall make decisions just in time or even quicker than human beings (O'Neill, Cranny-Evans, & Sarah, 2024). But on the other hand, those autonomous systems would be extremely tough to control. Therefore, only the leaders of governments and militaries can assess the effectiveness of innovations in these areas vis-a-vis deterrence, so that appropriate responses are adopted. A measure of deterrence in the 21st century must also have within it such factors as the Chinese emergence tendency and also those of other countries as major powers. Furthermore, factors like global warming, global pandemics, and other risks must also feature in an all-encompassing deterrent strategy. New deterrent strategies putting cooperation and collaboration above military threats may be needed to respond to these issues. The twenty-first century has indeed seen some major changes in the field of deterrence, but it still constitutes to a significant extent an element of international security. New formats are however urgently needed to ensure a proper understanding of cooperation, coordination, and use of varied tools to avert conflicts caused by non-state actors. Developed technologies and

global issues have elicited varying different approaches in dealing with deterrence. Even at the present, nuclear deterrence is essential and very relevant with regard to international security from the time of the Cold War to the current period in which superpowers such as Washington, Russia and China and the small eastern neighbor of China named North Korea, brag about their nuclear arsenals. (Gericke & Wilt, [2024](#)). They have reliable nuclear deterrents which safeguard them and other countries allied to them, in this case, through suppressing their fear of violence motivated by understanding the possibility of nuclear retaliation.

North Korea has been effectively dissuaded by the United States to a good extent, where it uses nuclear weapons for other purposes. Various nations are now resorting to cyber deterrence in a bid to counter the increasing incidences of cyber-attacks; meanwhile, such countries may use threats to retaliate against cyber-attacks. It was cyber deterrence and the related alliance it made with the US that prevented Russia from meddling into the US territory to bring about interference in elections (Cabral, [2024](#)). Economic deterrence is now obviously becoming prominent in the twenty-first century. Earlier, countries were subjected to punishments through embargoes or trade restrictions and other economic tools for misbehavior. Economic deterrence was successfully used by the US to preempt Iran's nuclear program (Dalton & Levite, [2024](#)), as military deterrence prevents some aggressor from starting a war. Military deterrence has advocated for the holding of North Korea as a responsible power for preventing it from threatening the sovereign state of South Korea. There are enemies that are deterred by the presence of a powerful standing military force. As the importance of space technology will increase, countries will start using space deterrence to protect their space assets such as installations, vehicles, and satellites (Harrison et al., [2009](#)). For this purpose, the US has built a Space Force to protect its space installations (Armagno, [2023](#)) and to deter potential enemies. This ensures that deterrence remains pervasive throughout the current world. Modern threats may warrant a different method of deterrence.

Power of Media in 21st Century

Media play in the present day a decisive role in society. It shapes the society and culture through these various forms of mass media. Media has different effects on us: Global information spreads through the media. It has all updates on politics, pop culture, and sports. The coverage and presentation of things in media would be very good in swaying public opinion. Many issues could be dealt with different effects of media on public opinion. The media could influence public opinion by selecting and reporting certain stories. It's possible that the stance of government and social norms and cultural views will change. The media acts as a watch dog, sacked for accountability of those in authority (Skovsgaard, Heiselberg, & Andersen, 2024). These types of entertainment can change culture and behavior. It is into this media advertising that businesses hit it wide. Consumer behavior with ads might be predictable. They include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Most modern forms of media are very much in the now. The development of such social site applications may impinge on the elections, generate public opinion, and raise social issues. In short, media in modernity is the core of power today. The deep impact of the media in public opinion, social order, and accountability is already existent (Happer & Philo, [2013](#)). Greater and bigger will be the impact of media; thus, it will continue developing and penetrating all factors of society.

Intensification of Media (Social Media)

The social based interacting sites have changed the entire concept of communication, sharing, and connecting in the contemporary century. Some examples of popular social based media podiums that assist the users in world communication contain “Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, as well as LinkedIn”. Therefore, with the help of these social media platforms, a person might establish a virtual connection with another person, even if that person happens to live at a great distance from him or her. The cyberspace and the social media have made a revolutionary change in human communication that is, bringing everyone closer to everyone else (Picard, 2015). It even made individuals from all corners of the earth with similar interests converse and enlighten each other regarding what they

have undergone without having to travel to a common ground. The growing social media has also changed how businesses interact with customers and potential customers (Appel et al., [2020](#)). With social media marketing, businesses directly reach their demographic, immediately giving and receiving feedback. Companies advertise their wares through social media while building rapport with clients. The emergence of social media has wholly transformed how one has to gain news and share it with others. Information and news may not be easily available anywhere but social networking nowadays. The social media users create content and voices and build the perspectives, which also involve the two for democratizing creating entry points for individuals and groups to influence policy and social changes. Social media has brought about changes even in human contacts. Several persons belonging to different social circles can now link and work with one another through the virtual media. Social media also creates a voice for those who would have otherwise remained silent. However, social media does have its disadvantages. Such are the cases of Info-Propagandas that social media creates and spreads. Most commonly, social media is also cited as a cause of social and political polarizations. Information dissemination (Yang, Zhang, Cheng, & Zhao, 2023) has transformed into the stage of modernity, that is, social media has turned out to be a productive means of information dissemination. Social media has pros and cons i.e., It can also prime to unbearable trauma as well as compression to keep comparing a few to others and accompany raised levels of desolation and seclusion (Zsila & Reyes, 2023), but it is indeed part and parcel of life in the present age and will continue to evolve in communication.

Social Media, Deterrence & 21st Century: A short Debate

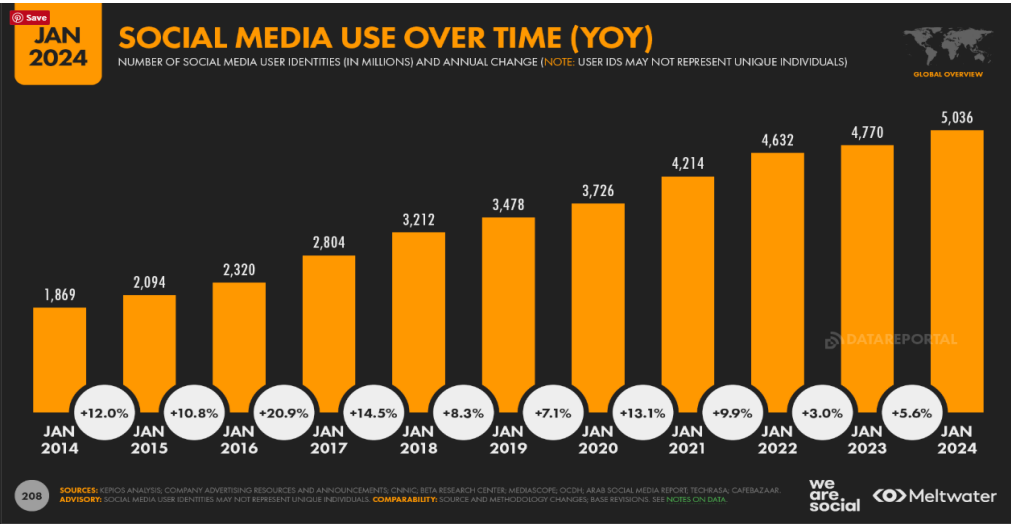
The modern century is such that social media enables people to converse and share information across the whole world. Beyond its ability to ameliorate harmful actions, it has a severe cultural impact. Social media harassment and other negative behavior may be mitigated by encouraging users to report them, especially when so much goes unreported due to fear of reprisal or lack of reporting channels. The emergence of social media has enabled victims of harassment or similar abuses to make their incident public, raise awareness of the issue, and possibly compel change in the behavior of abusers. One more way social media discourages is by the opportunity of accountability to ordinary individuals and groups against influential people. Of course, there will have been cases where public officials, or perhaps heads of other authorities, got away without being discovered because there was not as much information or resources. Now, however, it would seem that the general dissemination of information or evidence of wrong might bring about a change in the conduct of influentials. Online communities would have the possibility of making hate speech and other negative behavior common and public. Whereas it enables individuals to express their view, social media may serve as a catalyst for intolerance, actually making undesirable behaviors more unacceptable.

Social networking sites may identify and eliminate harmful conduct based on algorithms and community rules. Meanwhile, today, social media denouncements can take place. It could change societies-the account complains, inform the powerful, empower those few on the wrong end of intolerance, and create a culture that can't endure hate speech and other forms of destructive behavior. Mixed, indeed, the social implication of social sites is. Social media users really must be vigilant. But social media plays itself within current cultures everywhere. Communication and sharing of information have transformed into another sphere. The “Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube”, and the likes are hugely widespread for allotment thoughts and linking with people. It has completely changed our views (Lewis, [2023](#)) and perceptions as well as opnions can be changed (Thomas, 2016) within the short time which lead towards deterrence notion. An increasingly dominant factor for many people in the current world in preventing bad behavior is the availability of social media. For example, people would use social media to report on cases of corruption, injustice, or any other wrongdoing. There is now prevalent & in-depth use of social media, facilitating users in reporting crimes and abuse, and offenders are found and punished more quickly.

Social media has become a weapon (Carnew & Furlong, 2017) for political people and people from other walks of life. No one could escape being seen watching themselves in the walls of such resting places, now known as social. Thus, politicians are now all the more responsible and careful about their language and action since the information gets easily spread through social places. Politicians now behave as responsible people because they know that exposure and criticism can happen anytime on the social media platform. Cyberbullying or online harassment has significantly reduced due to social media exposure. More and more people know that cyberbullying damages lives, and platforms are beginning to take a stand against it (Nizami, 2020). Some people think twice if they would do something wrong since it would embarrass them or expose them on social media. Social media has its advantages and such uses as features. It is relevant to message that this entire spread of social media has given birth or has provided ground for propaganda and lies to be spread as well as hoaxes. It also results in self-censorship and curtails expression for fear through the medium of online identity insecurity. Now, this should be made clear that it has become the biggest disincentive in present days. Its ability to reveal injustices, hold people accountable, and generate awareness has made the media an important resource in a fight for social justice and equality. Therefore, we must consider the pros and cons of this medium in creating a beneficial outcome for its positive contributions while ensuring it remains a force for good.

According to one estimate, almost 5 billion people in the world now use social networking (Kemp, 2024) to engage in, share information, and remain in touch with current events. The following figure shows the results.

Figure 1
Users of Social Media



Source: [datareportal](https://datareportal.com)

All that can be done to minimize a negative act is to start showing the effects of it in public through social media. Stop it using Online Networks: Publicly shaming someone is the best use of social media. Wrongdoing may be broadcasted, proven, and punished by publicizing evidence through social media. Visible actual results may prevent imitation. Reporting by the general public: They may record daily events and uploads videos now by means of a smartphone and the social media platforms. Just the thought of being monitored might be sufficient to refrain from dishonest or otherwise undesirable acts. Cyberbullying, harassment, and abusers may be deterred by public nature of social media (Al-Turif & Al-Sanad, 2023). It might encourage social media users to act appropriately if they know their actions are going to be broadcasted worldwide. Crowd sourced surveillance exists when multiple individuals will observe one another and report on each other in doing so. This will increase chances of being caught by many eyes; thus, reduced criminal behavior. The legal impact of bad behavior can spread such that bad act can be spread

on social media. Public shaming, citizen journalism, danger of exposure, crowd sourced monitoring, and legal boiling are all social prevention methods using social media. Such an approach can go a long way towards ensuring that social media contributes to better, improved personal relationships in the world.

Social Media as Military Deterrence

As David argues that "The internet is the trump card for trivial squabbles, election contests, or major wars" (Axe, 2024) Recent times, social media has turned out to be a very potent weapon against military action (Walker, 2024). Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have undoubtedly grown much closer to operational uses among governments and militaries as strategic communication and information operations tools (Malhotra, 2016). Its also argue that the possibilities of social media in preventing conflict (Betz, 2018) and promoting peace (Bunse, 2021) There are different forms of public opinion shaping that governments and militaries can use. Dissemination of information and propaganda can influence how the public perceives their opponents and capabilities through social media platforms. The army might use some profiles on social media in order to showcase its state-of-the-art weaponry to impress potential foes as well as use for strategic communication (Mangat, 2018). Such sites may be an avenue through which governments and militaries issue warnings to future aggressors (Looks, 2021). For example, a military can use social media to show its opponents that it is vigilant and prepared. Making these warnings publicly may help a military avoid a confrontation. Social media may be used for psychological operations, such as generating propaganda or generating false evidence that would mislead one's opponent and impair their forthcoming actions (Deem, 2020).

Reformation of Military Leaders Already Using social media: Disposition the Army to Use social media for Disinformation Creating mistrust in the enemies and disturb the trust-based ecosystem (Serrano, 2024) such that the enemies would be reluctant to attack would be the final act of sowing misinformation and disinformation to an army using social media. The army may also use the public platform to attract support of the masses for the operations to be conducted (Higate et al., 2017). With the support of the found civilian sympathies an army could easily downplay a perceived threat of that enemy and make it difficult for others to carry out any action against it. Social media could be used to coordinate mobilization of resources and an effort at response. Intelligence gathering would also benefit from it possible. Social media surveillance or OSINT could bring in military intelligence on enemy readiness (Barr, 2024). Thus, the military may use that information for better preparations and responses to threats. Social media should prevent peace, too. It can deter the possible adversaries from fighting by changing attitudes, issuing danger signals, performing psychological operations (Hamel, 2016), orchestrating public support, and collecting information. But, a most rigorously structured and executed plan is greatly required before any of above attempts against military social deterrence are attempted.

India-Pakistan Ties, Social Media & Deterrence: A Case Study

Pakistan has always defensive wisdom and wants peace along prosperity in the region. Pakistan also prefers global as well as regional peace, harmony and stability. Reciprocally, since inception, India has aggressive and offensive moves towards its neighbor particularly towards Pakistan. during the cold war, apart from the alliance politics, Indian paradox handling with global politics vis-à-vis estranged relations with major powers was suspicious (Nisar, 2019). The history has witness that since independence, India uses autocratic gestures and it seems that Indian defense budget is increasing by five percent annually (Abbasi & Nisar, 2022). Because of the framework of Indian increasing martial competences, security teamwork with major powers further secures India and reciprocally insecure its neighbors (Danish, 2023). In the contemporary era, India is using digital tools (information weapon) against Pakistan (Raashed, 2020). This is probably the motivation of the Hindutva propagandists as it thrives on ambiguities and emotions. India mixes toxic poisons from historical grievances, cultural stereotypes among masses, and fear. False narratives on the nuclear program of Pakistan, state-sponsoring terrorism, and religious extremism are emerging on online platforms and transcending beyond mere trolls and bots to poison public perceptions and influence policy

decisions (Hamid, [2024](#)). All three networks: Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp act as the major channel used by India in disseminating and formation of public opinion with regard to their active forces against Pakistan. India has planned to use social media as a tool for dissuasion in their strategy mingling a fiery relationship (Noor, [2024](#)). Social media has been leveraging India against Pakistan to break the Pakistan and glorify the self (India) (Sarfraz, 2021). Public opinion manipulation in lieu of violent acts, infant a state of confusion-dread is the main aim of this propaganda (PR, 2019). India is feeding on constant online platforms against Pakistan (Sarfraz, 2020). India's falsehood crusade through social media has become a thoughtful hazard to Pakistan's national partisan and societal permanency. The disinformation campaign has two targets: instigation of upheaval inside Pakistan and defamation of Pakistan at the international level, establishing it as overcoming, at the nation level as well as affecting its diplomatic and economic interests (Wasim, 2021). Keeping intact with modern technology of warfare, India is resorting to adding newer techniques to prop up the already existing war preparation against her enemies, predominantly Pakistan (Afridi, [2024](#)). However, as far as this propaganda is concerned, Pakistan remains a demonstration to its strivings and resilience. India has relentlessly struggled to project Pakistan as being tarnished and so instigating falsehood and false-information and acquiescently condemning Pakistan of purportedly backup terrorism. India has been energetically busy in its activity of scattering untrue narratives designed against Pakistan and India is helping many nationalist groups in the province of Baluchistan against Pakistan respectively. Seemingly, it is known that India has been supporting Terrorist Group Tehreek-e-Taliban-Pakistan (TTP) that is petrified against Pakistan (Noor, [2024](#)).

Archer Blood, who once served as the previous Washington CG in Dacca, said, "Thus, the soil of India became available to the Mukti Bahini in training camps, hospitals, and supply depots" (Arain, [2021](#)). The Foreign Office in Pakistan disclosed in November 2016 that Indian diplomats, along with other officials of RAW and the Intelligence Bureau, had been involved in terrorist and other forms of subversion in Pakistan. currently, in vigorous service with the India's Fleet (Kulbhushan Yadav), was apprehended in the province of Baluchistan, Pakistan, on 3rd March 2016. During interrogations, Yadav purportedly confessed that he had been the mastermind behind planning terrorist activities within the provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh respectively. India, as it is, sponsors the separatist movements in Baluchistan, and particularly the BLA, otherwise called the Baloch Liberation Army. For years, India has created instability in Baluchistan in combination with Afghanistan and that also distributes terrorism upon it. India has fought information warfare against Pakistan through the West and Israel for a elongated period. Indian scholars and pundits continue to spread around their pessimistic views regarding governance systems, law and order, along with economy, of Pakistan through the media (Arain, [2021](#)). The impressions of social media on national security are also curse and can increase extremism, radicalization in the country (Abd, [2022](#)). Essentially, India wants to destabilize Pakistan economically and politically (Ahmed, [2021](#))

Additionally, without a doubt, social media has created problems that are all over the world, including Pakistan. Some of the most apparent problems include: Public opinion and politics can easily be altered and manipulated with propaganda, false news, and various other forms of online misrepresentation. The terrorist addition and the political parties used social media in Pakistan to spread disinformation and create a divide in the society (Khalique, [2024](#)). The maximum vital delinquent of social media is rising political polarization in Pakistan and Such an important reason for the rise of political polarization in Pakistan is social media itself and these political unstable noises have far and long-lasting effects (Rana & Arooj, 2022) and this ongoing in-depth political polarization within the country has the undesirable impacts on the mega project titled “CPEC’ as well (Danish et al., [2022](#)). As reported in its Indian Chronicles-2020 report, the DisinfoLab, which is the disinformation bureau of the EU, has discovered that dozens of fake news agencies operate in 116 countries over the course of 15 years. This Indian IP Address is currently being used for hate and false information propaganda purposes particularly against Pakistan (Noor, 2024).

Cyber-bullying and harassment are other manifestations of social media that could have bad effects on victims and their societies in general (Imam, [2024](#)). Among the most affected are women and communities from

different religious or ethnic minorities in Pakistan. These websites have also been reported in cases of radicalization and extremism, which occur when these extremist groups try to lure others by promoting messages of hatred and violence through the internet. The online platforms specifically Facebook and Twitter, are used by terrorist groups based in Pakistan for recruiting new members and spreading their message to its youth (Haider et al., 2023). Other issues include censorship and the right to freedom of expression. A large segment of the population does not possess the requisite digital literacy skills to navigate their online worlds confidently (Ali, 2021). Hence, they cannot be said to be sound enough into this whole deception, fake news, and other forms of digital harm. Prevention in social media is difficult for Pakistan but need digital based authority to counter the evils of social media (Najam, 2024). The administration, the part of civic humanity, and the part of business must join hands to have a solution to these problems.

Counter Measures Options for Pakistan

In this era of digitalization, Pakistan should need the following hurry reforms regarding ongoing digital confrontation era. The government, the part of civic humanity, and the part of business must join hands to have a solution to these problems. There are some suggestions to counter this threshold evil.

- ▶ There are probably laws that can restrict and regulate citizens' use of social media.
- ▶ Subjects like propagating false information, or instigating hatred or violence, and endangering democracy through social media may be punishable by fines or other penalties.
- ▶ Monitoring posts on social networks provides a potential mechanism for identifying hazardous material.
- ▶ Organizations could also employ social media analysts or partner with social media firms to identify and take down potentially explicit posts.
- ▶ Accountability in Social Media Awareness campaigns, educational events, and training programmers are several methods that could be used to inculcate the values of social media stewardship in Pakistan.
- ▶ People would be encouraged to report bad content and trained on responsible use of social media through such initiatives.
- ▶ The Birth of Home-grown Social Networks: Create Pakistan's own networks to reduce dependence on foreign sites, which may not be in line with the ideals of the country.

Conclusion

Deterrence, if summed up in one sentence, can be defined as a strategy that discourages an adversary from taking actions that may threaten your interests due to the fear of repercussions. A quintessential instance of deterrence is the nuclear arms competition between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, where the danger of guaranteed mutual annihilation prevented direct military engagement. This historical instance is frequently referenced as an effective demonstration of how deterrence operates. However, the emergence of social media has prompted inquiries regarding the significance and efficacy of deterrence in today's world.

Historically, traditional media gave governments the power to dictate the narrative, but social media has changed this landscape by facilitating quick sharing and broad distribution of information, frequently independent of state control. This greatly affects governments' capability to uphold the credibility of deterrent threats, since information can be swiftly manipulated and spread. Social media has created additional vulnerabilities that allow malicious actors – both state-sponsored and non-state – to exploit new means to sway public opinion, spread misinformation and conduct propaganda campaigns. The spread of misinformation and propaganda complicates the ability to distinguish real threats from mere hoaxes, a challenge for traditional deterrence methods. For deterrence to be effective, it needs to be revised to tackle these emerging threats. The world is now complex and multi-dimensional, and therefore the phobia needs to adjust to the intricacies of this new interconnected era. Deterrence can only remain credible and effective against evolving challenges through constant adaptation.

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