

# **Coercive Power of the United States: Comparing Compellence Strategy During and After the Cold War**

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**Note that in this thesis, 'outcome' means the success/failure of the threat itself, not of the crisis.**

*“Successful threats are those that do not have to be carried out”*

- T.C. Schelling

## **Abstract**

This thesis concerns whether there is a difference in compellence strategy by the United States (U.S.) between the periods of the Cold War and after. It does so by investigating six international crises divided equally over both periods, using a comparative case study and random sampling. The variables discussed are related internally to the American compellence strategy itself in terms of what the U.S. was doing differently after the fall of the Soviet Union. The research findings conclude that during unipolarity, the Americans issued harder demands and intended to communicate the threats by announcing them through public or private communication rather than the initial use of military assets. Alongside internal factors, future research could focus on external variables beyond the compellence strategy itself.

## 1. Introduction

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. remained the only superpower in the world (Pfundstein, 2012). Nowadays the Americans possess the most powerful military, a scenario in which they outspend all of their allies combined and are considered as having the greatest military force of all time (Jervis, 2008; Pfundstein, 2012). This military advantage on the international stage should grant the U.S. the possibility to coerce other states easily. However, despite being a hegemon, in the first two decades after the Cold War the U.S. seemed to have more trouble in compelling small states to the will of its foreign policy. According to Pfundstein (2012), the effectiveness of the American compellence strategy after the Cold War has decreased in comparison with the period before. Despite the new unipolarity it seemed that the U.S. had more trouble in compelling states opposed to when being part of a bipolarity.

In the first two decades after the Cold War, states with poor military capabilities refused to accept the American coercive foreign policy (Art & Greenhill, 2018). The U.S. undertook military action whereas compellence threats failed to change the behavior of these states. Somehow, despite the huge power differences and being the only hegemon, the world's superpower struggled to successfully compel some of the weakest states like Somalia, Haiti or Afghanistan. To try to understand this phenomenon the research question is:

*'To what extent is there a difference in compellence strategy used by the United States between the periods of the Cold War and after?'*

To answer this question, the situation surrounding the U.S. needs to be examined from both during and after the Cold War by looking at several international crises in terms of variables like whether cases can be classified as deterrence or compellence and the demand to comply for target states. In addition, Pfundstein (2012, 2016) claims that the way of warfare and type of threat also has influence on the success rate of the American compellence strategy.

Whereas Pfundstein (2012) has researched the compellent effectiveness of the U.S. between the Cold War and the post-Cold War, the scientific relevance of this thesis tends to aim for factors within the American compellence strategy of both periods, which might give a clue to what is causing target states to resist U.S. coercive foreign policy. This is a strange phenomenon because during the Cold War, the Russians would regularly provide target states of the U.S. economic and military assistance. This should have made these states stronger and harder to compel in comparison with those who did not enjoy such support after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the opposite scenario occurred and some of the weakest states have resisted against the threats of the world's sole superpower during its unipolar era.

In addition, this phenomenon is interesting to research, because usually unipolarity means that the hegemon is unmatched on a military scale and no other state can challenge the superpower (Heywood, 2011). However, despite its far superior armed forces, the military clashes between the U.S. and its target states proof that the world leader cannot achieve everything it wants (Nye, 2002; Jervis, 2008). Furthermore, the U.S. struggling to compel weak states is not anything new: history has proven that the strong players in the international system always had difficulties in compelling the weak ones (Art & Greenhill, 2018). Added to that, new powers are on the rise. The semi-peripheral countries like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have shown fast economic growth throughout the last three decades and resist the unipolar world order, inspiring weaker states in the process. These countries seek to create a balance of power and build towards a multipolarity to ensure more global stability from their perspective (Papa, 2014).

To this end, the thesis will proceed with a theoretical framework, highlighting corresponding theories, literature and concepts. Afterwards, the methodology will be discussed, explaining how the research is done and why the used methods were chosen over others. From there on, the variables shall be described and cases of both during and after the Cold War will be compared and analyzed to find an answer for the research question, which will be presented in the conclusion. Finally the discussion indicates other possible influencing factors, granting the possibility for future research.

## **1. Theoretical Framework**

In this theoretical framework, related theories with existing research findings and literature will be discussed to provide background information. This will be supported by the operationalization of key concepts to add more comprehension about what is written. Finally, there is a brief comparison between the U.S. foreign policy between the periods of the Cold War and after.

### **2.1. Theories**

#### Hegemonic stability theory

The hegemonic stability theory states that the international system would function optimally, with desirable outcomes for each state when a hegemon is present. (Snidal, 1985). It also claims that a known imbalance in power should keep a weaker state from waging war with an overwhelmingly powerful opponent (Pfundstein, 2012).

In his article “The Limits of the Hegemonic Stability Theory” Snidal (1985) discusses flaws, which could contribute to explaining the resistance of small states against American coercive foreign policy. The engagements between the U.S. and weaker opponents after the Cold War confirmed that this theory could be questioned. Snidal (1985) states that the main weakness in the theory is that if the power distribution is unequal and the hegemony is performed in a coercive way, it are the weak ones who suffer from this leadership, as they look easier to be coerced because of their limited military capabilities. When this is connected to the international relations theory of structural realism, it confirms that states in the anarchic international system seek to survive and could consider this unipolar dominance as a danger to their interests, they would rather resist in order to prevent that the potential dominator gets too much power (Waltz, 1979; Huth, 1984; Snidal, 1985).

To prevent this, the leader should provide public goods that allows every state benefit from it simultaneously. However, third world countries view the American dominance

more as leadership instead of exploitation with no public good provided. Besides, Snidal (1985) states that collective action is impossible during hegemony, since a hegemon would coerce other states to contribute to public goods. Hovi & Rasch (1986) proceed on the research of Snidal and mention that both smaller states and the world leader itself would gain more when the hegemony is in decline. This decline was set in motion when regional powers like the BRICS also made their breakthrough, establishing themselves as actors striving for a multipolarity in which the U.S. cannot do whatever it wants (Papa, 2014). According to Pape (1996) these states have shifted their national security to the preparation of responding to unpredictable threats and inspiring weaker states to do so, making them harder to be compelled.

#### Theory of coercive diplomacy

The theory of coercive diplomacy is constructed by Alexander George, in which he refers to a defensive strategy as part of a state's foreign policy, in order to force an opponent to stop what it is doing or to undertake action to undo the situation (George, 1991). A relevant feature of coercive diplomacy is that it needs to remain distinguished from deterrence, which corresponds with threats intending to prevent the opponent from undertaking action that would harm the interests of the coercer. A difference is that coercive diplomacy is based on action that was already taken (George, 1991). Compellence fits better in coercive diplomacy, as it requires the coercer to threaten an adversary to undertake action, in order to change the behavior of this challenged state (George, 1991). This is a lot harder to accomplish, since more effort is needed compared to deterrence (Schaub, 2004). Contrary to what people might believe, difficulty in compelling weak actors is an old phenomenon, since mankind has always experienced situations in which the small ones were hard to compel (Art & Greenhill, 2018). Sometimes the costs to comply are higher than the costs to resist, as a result of too high demands issued by the coercer (Pfundstein, 2012). Moreover, the challenged state's reputation is at stake: in a successful deterrence, it can claim that it never intended to do what the coercer wanted to prevent (Huth & Russett, 1984; Lebovic, 2010), while compellence involves humiliation for the challenged state when it complies (Art & Greenhill, 2018). Furthermore, coercive diplomacy will always contain limited military action (George, 1991; Pape, 1996; Jakobsen, 2016), because the goal is not to start an all-

out war (Art & Cronin, 2003). Minimum military force is used to show the challenged state what the coercer is capable of with the intention to enhance the threat and narrowing the probability to intervene.

### Theory of costly compellence

This theory by Pfundstein (2016) states that the U.S. has trouble with compelling weak states, because the way of warfare is very cheap for such a powerful unipole. American threats are credible, since the U.S. does not bluff (Pfundstein, 2012), but the eagerness to achieve its foreign policy goal is not persuasive to its opponent, who witnesses mainly airstrikes. Despite the limited American casualties, his modern way of warfare is not compellent effective and provides a signal that the U.S. does not desire to pay with their own blood and thus the Americans seem not very committed. In order to be taken seriously, the compellence threat must require alternative military force. Pape (1996) however, disagrees and claims that airpower is an efficient instrument for making the enemy surrender, not just because bombing is an easy way to take hostile lives and save friendlies, but also to cripple the challenged state's economy by targeting cities and infrastructure. However simultaneously, the coercer unwillingly sends a message that it does not want to get its hands dirty. By not deploying forces on the ground, the opponents often consider it a weak signal of resolve, making it more attractive for the target state to challenge the coercer and engaging in a military conflict with a failure of compellence threats as result (Pfundstein, 2016; Art & Greenhill, 2018).

## **2.2. Concepts**

### Hegemony

A hegemony can be defined as the dominance of one state over others within the international system. It is often led by a superpower: a state that is vastly superior than any other state. This hegemonic status, in this case of the U.S., is based on structural power in which no other country can match the hegemon's economic and military capabilities. This often provides the possibility for the hegemon to shape the international system to its preferences, sometimes through coercive diplomacy (Heywood, 2011).



### World order

This is the distribution of power between states in international relations (Heywood, 2011). The three possibilities are a bipolarity, a unipolarity and a multipolarity. Bipolarity is the one during the Cold War. Power is distributed over two major actors resulting in two power blocs. A unipolarity on the contrary, is a system in which one state towers above the rest in its power. An important feature is the absence of any potential rival. It came right after the Cold War when the U.S. remained the only superpower. Finally, a multipolarity is a system in which at least three actors participate in the power distribution. This is what the upcoming powers are striving for (Papa, 2014) while the current American hegemony is in decline (Snidal, 1985).

### Coercion

Coercion in international relations means that one state (the coercer) threatens the other (the challenged) in order to prevent or change the actions of the challenged (Finnmore & Goldstein, 2013). This can be divided into two strategies. The first one, deterrence, is focused on preservation. The coercer tries to prevent the challenged state from undertaking actions it otherwise probably would have done. The second one, compellence, concentrates on change. In this situation the coercer threatens with the intention to let the challenged state undertake action in order to change its behavior (Mazarr, 2018). Finally, compellence achieves success when the confrontation does not result in a military conflict between both parties and the challenged state complies. A successful deterrence on the other hand, is unobservable, since the challenged state can claim in never intended any harm that the coercer wanted to prevent (Huth & Russett, 1984; Lebovic, 2010; H. Pellikaan, personal communication, September 17, 2019).

### **2.3. U.S. Foreign Policy: Both Periods Compared**

#### The U.S. during the Cold War

During the Cold War the American foreign policy was mainly focused on the Soviet Union (Lightbody, 1999). In 20 of the 49 international crises in which the U.S. was involved, the Soviets were their opponent (Pfundstein, 2012). However, they never engaged in a full scale war.

Out of fear for a Third World War, the U.S. acted with extreme care when involved in an international crisis. Both parties knew the dangers of mutually assured destruction. During the Cuban Missile Crisis for instance, the Kennedy administration chose coercive diplomacy with a naval blockade instead of rapidly responding by deploying an airstrike. The eventual ultimatum caused the U.S. to remove its nuclear weapons from Turkey after the Soviet Union removed theirs from Cuba. The Russians were forced to retreat which would be a downgrade of their prestige worldwide (George, Hall & Simons, 1971). Reputation was relevant for both superpowers since they wanted as many states as possible on their side. Winning the hearts and minds of the people became an important aspect of the Cold War and the American foreign policy (Wagnleitner, 1994), especially after Vietnam. Since then, U.S. policy makers encountered difficulties in finding domestic support (Blechman & Wittes, 1999), leading to policy change in 1984, when Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, stated that in coercive diplomacy, military force is only to be used if diplomacy fails. The objective should be clear and it requires support from the Congress and American public.

### The U.S. after the Cold War

Initially, during the Bush Senior administration it was claimed that the U.S. should use limited military force in crises. However, the U.S. still relied heavily on its military for reaching their foreign policy goals, since (coercive) diplomacy failed frequently (Art & Cronin, 2003). Now that the Soviet Union had collapsed, the Americans believed that military interventions would not result in a global confrontation, as they did during the Cold War. Eventually, despite the absence of a rival on the international stage, it became clear that the plan of Weinberger would only be available for very few occasions, as most of the crises were too resistant for diplomatic solutions, resulting in an increasing amount of military force. Added to that, the new generation of political leaders in the unipolar era had a basic perception of the U.S. ideals through the use of its military power. They consider the American political will as one of weakness, making them believe the Americans can be defeated. (Blechman & Wittes, 1999).

This resulted in frequent military threats with unsuccessful outcomes. A strange phenomenon of the American coercive foreign policy was the increase of U.S. military activity while the armed forces went through demobilization reducing Uncle Sam's assets with 30% after the fall of the Soviet Union (Cindy, 2001). Nevertheless, Blechman and Wittes (1999) state that performance of military operations was part of its post-Cold War coercive foreign policy, in order to give threats more credibility. A difficult strategy to achieve success with, since threats are always unbelievable (Schelling, 1966). Besides, the issued compellence threats demanded more on average in the post-Cold War period compared to the demands during the Cold War. While Cold War threats were mainly about negotiations or reversing action which was recently undertaken, post-Cold War threats intended to change regimes, which would be more costly to comply for the target state. Note that these are averages of demands from both periods. During the Cold War, regime changes were also the goal in several cases and lighter demands took place as well in the Unipolar period (Pfundstein, 2012).

## **2. Methodology**

The applied methodology for this research mainly consists of the qualitative method of a comparative case study with a small quantitative element of random sampling. It is comparative in the way of comparing possible similarities and differences between cases. In addition, the case study is used to see if certain phenomena develop over time (George & Bennet, 2005). This part starts with an explanation of choosing mainly qualitative over quantitative research. Moreover, several reasons come to light about why a comparative case study is chosen, what benefits random sampling provides and how the cases are being selected.

The choice to use more qualitative research elements is because this research tends to concentrate on texts, rather than numbers. Besides, according to Gooding and Klingemann (1996) the term “qualitative” can refer to the presence or absence of certain characteristics in specific cases as a result of systematic comparison, which is relevant for comparing the cases and searching for patterns among them. Mostly, small-N situations, which occur in this research, do not correspond good enough with quantitative research methods, making them unsuitable (Gooding & Klingemann, 1996). Six cases shall be analyzed without the use of a statistical analysis. The only exception on behalf of the quantitative part in this research is that performing random selection for the cases will provide a more representative sample of the population instead of the qualitative method of purposive sampling, which can cause the problem of sampling error (Bryman, 2016).

### **3.1. The use of the Comparative Case Study Method**

As already stated in the first section of this part, the used method will be the one of a comparative case study. Several reasons occur to why the choice fell on this methodology. The first one is because the focus lies on the U.S. compellence strategy of the Cold War and the post-Cold War. These two periods are to be compared in terms of six international crises in which the Americans were involved, divided over the period before and after the fall of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the comparative part is a suitable one for this research as it concentrates on the use of comparisons within a small number of cases (George & Bennet, 2005). It also involves internal examination so that notable phenomena in each case can come to light and what impact the independent variables have. If similar

phenomena do perform in multiple cases, we can speak of a pattern about what the U.S. did or did not change in their strategy and why small states would accept or refuse the American compellence.

Furthermore, the case study itself should add a significant contribution in finding an answer to the research question. It is a useful method for studying a certain phenomenon over time in an intensive manner and has some decent advantages over other methods in social research (see next section). Firstly, it is important to divide the cases during and after the Cold War into two blocs. Then, both periods will be examined separately to see if there are similarities within the cases of one bloc which might form a pattern. In the progress the exact same thing will be done with the second bloc of cases from after the Cold War. The cases will be selected from the ICB Data Viewer for the International Crisis Behavior Project (ICBP). Note that the post-Cold War period goes up to only 2006, since the cases in the ICBP do not go beyond this year. After examining both blocs, the periods will be compared to see what stands out, which might cause a difference in the U.S. compellence strategy. In a possible scenario, the selection will contain a deterrence case which is an interesting situation, since deterrence is considered to require less coercive effort than compellence (Schaub, 2004). So, if some compellence strategies succeed in one bloc where a deterrence strategy had failed in the other it could give an indication of possible changes in the coercive strategy in general between both periods.

Additional reasons for using the comparative case study method lie more in the case study part. It provides an interpretation on why this is the right way of performing the research. The case study has some unique strengths in comparison with other research methods (Bhattacharjee, 2012). For instance, a case study can be used in both theory building and theory testing practices and there is no need to know the constructs of interest before starting the research, since our knowledge will be expanded about these aspects while studying the cases (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Although there are some flaws, the comparative case study remains the best option. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) case studies do not contain experimental control or internal validity, but almost every other research method (with experiments as an

exception) contain this common weakness, so choosing another method would provide the same problem without the advantages mentioned in the previous sections. Besides this, a statistical analysis is unnecessary, since the number of cases is small (George & Bennet, 2005). Furthermore, despite containing theory building elements, case studies also possess the quantitative element of theory testing (Van Evra, 1997). This thesis however, remains part of qualitative research, because the subject of this research is more about making sense and understanding rather than prediction. For example, as mentioned in the introduction, Pfundstein (2012) argues that the effectiveness of compellence threats by the U.S. has weakened after the end of the Cold War. The fall of the Soviet Union marked a new global development, as we left the bipolar world order and entered a new unipolar one led by the U.S.. The potential differences in the American compellence strategy in combination with the switch to a new world order are developments to be considered phenomena we try to understand, rather than predict, which is, according to Bhattacharjee (2012) an essential part of qualitative research. The final weakness to be refuted is the performance of selection bias. In this research such a problem will not occur as the next section will explain why.

## **2.2. Case Selection**

The cases that are being utilized for this research are selected by the quantitative method of probability sampling with the specification types of systematic and simple random sampling (Bryman, 2016). Whereas simple random sampling is the most basic form in choosing cases randomly out of the population, systematic random sampling selects cases directly from the sampling frame. In general, the random sampling method is a manner of selection which means to keep the sampling errors to a minimum by picking a set randomly out of a population. Each individual case has the same probability to be chosen, which makes it a fair method for the outcome. Generally, it is assumed that a more representative sample will be the result if random sampling of the population is used instead of its counterpart. The direct opposite of random/probability sampling is purposive sampling, in which a not-random selection method is used, implying that some cases in the population have a bigger potential to be chosen than others. George and Bennet (2005) agree with Bryman (2016) and refer to the problem of selection bias when using purposive sampling with the problem that cases are self-selected. This results in a

distortion of the representativeness of the sample, arising because some cases stand only little chance to be picked, causing systematic or sampling errors and influencing the outcome of the research in a false way.

For putting this method into practice, the total amount of international crises in which the U.S. was involved need to be divided into two population blocs: one for the period during the Cold War and one for after. As mentioned before, for each period three cases are to be researched. To randomly select those six cases the first step is to establish the size of the populations. Whereas Pfundstein (2012) argues the U.S. was involved in 49 international crises during the Cold War and 14 after the ICB Data Viewer for ICBP shows respectively only 48 and 13. Bryman (2016) states to perform systematic random sampling, divide the sample size ( $n$ ) by the population size ( $N$ ) with the formula of  $n / N$ . For the first group this is  $3 / 48 = 1$  in 16 to be chosen. There are three groups of 16 cases. Each case in the three groups is given a number from 1 to 16 in chronological order with for the first group the case of the Truman Doctrine (1947) as 1 and the case of the Bay of Pigs (1961) as 16 (see table 1). The second group reaches from the Berlin Wall (1961) to Black September (1970) and the third from Cienfuegos Submarine Base (1970) to the Gulf War (1990). There are intervals between three eras to prevent that the picked cases happened too recently after one another. To pick one case out of each group 16 equal pieces of paper are used and numbered from 1 to 16. The next thing is shuffling them and putting them face down in a random order, so the researcher has no clue of which number he picks. This happens three times (once for each group) and the number to be chosen will be the case of examination for that group between the intervals. For the period after the Cold War not the exact same process is to be done, due to the small number of cases. For this bloc the same pieces of paper can be used except for numbers 14, 15 and 16. By simple random sampling another three numbers are chosen.

The outcome of the random draws for the international crises during the Cold War was number **15** for the first group, number **8** for the second and again **15** for the third,. The corresponding cases are Pathet Lao Offensive (1961), Pleiku (1965) and Invasion of Panama (1989) (see table 1).

**Table 1. International Crises the U.S. was Involved in from 1947-1991**

Case nr.	Cases group 1	Cases group 2	Cases group 3
1.	TRUMAN DOCTRINE (1947)	BERLIN WALL (1961)	CIEFUEGOS SUBMARINE BASE (1970)
2.	BERLIN BLOCKADE (1948)	VIETCONG ATTACK (1961)	VIETNAM PORTS MINING (1972)
3.	CHINA CIVIL WAR (1948)	NAM THA (1962)	CHRISTMAS BOMBING (1972)
4.	KOREAN WAR I (1950)	CUBAN MISSILES (1962)	OCTOBER-YOM KIPPUR WAR (1973)
5.	KOREAN WAR II (1950)	PANAMA FLAG (1964)	MAYAGUEZ (1975)
6.	KOREAN WAR III (1953)	GULF OF TONKIN (1964)	WAR IN ANGOLA (1975)
7.	GUATEMALA (1953)	CONGO II (1964)	POPLAR TREE (1976)
8.	DIEN BIEN PHU (1954)	PLEIKU (1965)	SHABA II (1978)
9.	TAIWAN STRAIT I (1954)	DOMINICAN INTERVENTION (1965)	AFGHANISTAN INVASION (1979)
10.	SUEZ NATIONALIZATION-WAR (1956)	SIX DAY WAR (1967)	US HOSTAGES IN IRAN (1979)
11.	SYRIA-TURKEY CONFRONTATION (1957)	PUEBLO (1968)	INVASION OF GRENADA (1983)
12.	IRAQ-LEBANON UPHEAVAL (1958)	TET OFFENSIVE (1968)	NICARAGUA MIG-21S (1984)
13.	TAIWAN STRAIT II (1958)	VIETNAM SPRING OFFENSIVE (1969)	GULF OF SYRTE II (1986)
14.	BERLIN DEADLINE (1958)	EC-121 SPY PLANE (1969)	LIBYAN JETS (1988)
15.	PATHET LAO OFFENSIVE (1961)	INVASION OF CAMBODIA (1970)	INVASION OF PANAMA (1989)
16.	BAY OF PIGS (1961)	BLACK SEPTEMBER (1970)	GULF WAR (1990)

For the period from 1991 to 2006 the numbers **2**, **4** and **10** were picked, representing the cases of Haiti Military Regime (1994), Desert Strike (1996) and Iraq Regime Change (2002) (see table 2).



**Table 2. International Crises the U.S. was Involved in from 1991-2006**

**Case nr.      Cases**

1.	NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR I (1993)
2.	HAITI MILITARY REGIME (1994)
3.	IRAQ TROOP DEPLOYMENT-KUWAIT (1994)
4.	DESERT STRIKE (1996)
5.	UNSCOM I (1997)
6.	US EMBASSY BOMBINGS (1998)
7.	UNSCOM II OPERATION DESERT FOX (1998)
8.	KOSOVO (1999)
9.	AFGHANISTAN-USA (2001)
10.	IRAQ REGIME CHANGE (2002)
11.	NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR II (2002)
12.	IRAN NUCLEAR II (2006)
13.	NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR III (2006)

### **2.3. Measuring Within and Between**

Now that the cases are picked the next step is to analyze and compare them. Like mentioned in the end of the part of “The use of the comparative case study method” it is important to see what stands out when comparing the cases within a bloc. Afterwards the focus lies on similarities and differences between both periods. So, for the period during the Cold War the cases of Pathet Lao Offensive, Pleiku and Panama will be investigated to see if there can be found a certain pattern between those cases. The same thing will be done afterwards with the cases of Haiti, Desert Strike and Iraq from the post-Cold War period. Afterwards both blocs will be put next to each other for further investigation to find an answer for the research question. The independent variables for the measurement will be described in the next part.

### **3. Description of the Variables**

This thesis concentrates on multiple independent variables, which could indicate that the U.S. changed its compellence strategy after the Cold War. The examined variables are the coercive strategy, the demand, the use of airpower and threat type.

#### Coercive strategy

Despite the main focus is on American compellence from both periods, chances exist that a deterrence case has been selected. As already mentioned, there is a difference in difficulty to achieve success between the two. The coercive strategy variable is a binary one labelled as deterrence or compellence.

#### Demand

During both periods, American compellence threats consisted of demands of diverse natures. The selected cases contain demands of different degrees in difficulty to comply for the challenged state. The demands issued in the selected cases are from difficult to easy: regime change (very hard = 3), troop withdrawal (hard = 2) and ceasefire (regular = 1). Therefore, this will be an ordinal variable.

#### Airpower

In her costly compellence theory Pfundstein (2016) states that airpower threats are taken less seriously compared to the use of ground forces, while Pape (1996) claims airstrikes to be an effective instrument of warfare to make the opponent comply. This binary variable has 1 as value if a threat contains predominantly of airpower. On the contrary if this is not the case, the value 0 will be obtained. Despite a naval attack would also limit casualties of the coercer, it is quite different compared to air attacks, because unlike aerial bombings, naval bombardments do not possess the capabilities to reach targets further inland. Therefore, infantry (or the airforce) must be deployed to attack the whole territory. Moreover, paratroopers and helicopters will not be considered airpower, because these military assets have a higher probability of taking casualties compared to the use of war planes and jets, which are on a safe height in the air.

### Threat type

Classified as a nominal variable, Pfundstein (2012) discusses five different types of compellent threats.

***Type 1, a passive implicit:*** the threat is communicated to the target by the movement of military assets. There is no use of force to generate fear and there is an absence of demands and punishment for non-compliance.

***Type 2, an active implicit:*** the threat is issued by utilizing minimum force in order to communicate to the target state. Unlike type 1, it has the intention to generate fear to the opponent in order to make him comply.

***Type 3, a vague threat:*** the threat is conveyed by a public statement or private communication. However the specifics in demands and/or punishment for non-compliance are unclear with every single option available for the outcome. The final feature is the lack of time pressure (see type 5).

***Type 4, an open-ended:*** like with type 3, the threat is conveyed by a public statement or private communication and there is no time pressure. The difference is that in type 4 the demands and punishment for non-compliance are clear.

***Type 5, an ultimatum:*** the threat is conveyed by a public statement or private communication, with specific demands, a specific punishment for noncompliance, and a deadline to comply.

## 4. Results: Case Analysis and Comparison

In this part the results from the selected cases will be discussed. As mentioned in the methodology part, initially both periods will be investigated separately by providing an overview of each crisis and confirm which label of each variable is to be applied. Afterwards both periods will be compared to detect differences.

### 5.1. Cases during the Cold War

#### *Case 1: Pathet Lao Offensive (1961) – Outcome: success*

##### Overview of the crisis

The U.S. was triggered into a crisis when Pathet Lao troops invaded Laos and threatened with a communist takeover. The Kennedy administration felt that if Laos were to be abandoned, there would be a danger of communist pressure against South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. The U.S. responded by ordering troops to mobilize and move into the area if necessary. After the increased American military activity, president Kennedy held a television news conference in which the probability of war would enhance if the Soviet Union and North Vietnam were to support Pathet Lao. Simultaneously, the proposals for a ceasefire were supported by the U.S.. Eventually, this negotiated ceasefire was reached between the Laotian government and Pathet Lao, ending the crisis for all parties (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

##### Coercive strategy

The television news conference held by president Kennedy served as a warning to Pathet Lao, to stop their actions against the government of Laos. The increased military activity as support of this announcement was aimed to change the behavior of Pathet Lao. Therefore, a compellent threat was issued by the U.S.. However, Pfundstein (2012) claims that this action by the Americans was also intended to deter the Soviet Union from support to its communist allies. Thus, both deterrence and compellence strategies were issued.

### Demand

The Pathet Lao offensive can be classified as a regular demand of ceasefire (Pfundstein, 2012). The U.S. intended to halt the actions of the Pathet Lao and stop the fighting, in order to keep out communist pressure on the nearby regions.

### Airpower

Apart from the initial troops ordered to mobilize for an assault, the increased American military activity in the region consisted of a constructed helicopter base, the deployment of the Seventh Fleet and putting special trained units for combat in South East Asia on alert. In other words, armed forces from different branches would be deployed, indicating that there was no dominant role for airpower.

### Threat type

The threat types which were issued by the U.S. were both 1 and 3. The increased military activity in South East Asia was meant to threaten Pathet Lao and its communist allies, marking this as a passive implicit. This occurred in combination with the announcement by the television press conference used as a public statement. However, although the demand was clear, there was a lack of a deadline to comply and no specification of punishment for noncompliance, ensuring this was also a vague threat (Pfundstein, 2012).

## ***Case 2: Vietnam - Pleiku (1965) – Outcome: failure***

### Overview of the crisis

On February 7, 1965 Vietcong guerillas raided military barracks from both the U.S. and South Vietnam at Pleiku, inflicting light casualties to the capitalist belligerents. The Johnson administration responded by deploying air assets in hitting military targets in North Vietnam. This aerial reaction became publicly known as Operation Rolling Thunder and triggered a crisis for North Vietnam after suffering from the bombardments. It resulted in the U.S. being pulled deeper into the Vietnam War (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

### Coercive strategy

The Pleiku crisis can be classified as a failed U.S. compellence case. Operation Rolling Thunder was meant to compel the enemy and make them negotiate on Washington terms. Complying however, would have been costly and unnecessary for North Vietnam, since the North Vietnamese believed they would lose the public, which was so important in winning the war. (Lebovic, 2010; ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

### Demand

Naturally, with the bombings performed by the U.S., the Americans did not want to let the raid and inflicted casualties by the North Vietnamese troops go unanswered. However, Operation Rolling Thunder was intended to initiate a ceasefire between both parties (Pfundstein, 2012).

### Airpower

A major aspect of the American compellence threat against the North Vietnamese was the use of air bombings to induce the Vietcong to negotiate on American terms. Although the U.S. had already troops deployed, it were these airstrikes which were used to issue the threat without succeeding to change the behavior of North Vietnam and resulting in a failure of the compellence threat (Minasyan, 2012).

### Threat type

In the Pleiku case the type 2 threat is used by the Americans. There was no public statement released and communication through negotiations was reached after the U.S. decided to enforce airstrikes and showing what the superpower was capable of to make the North Vietnamese comply, indicating an active implicit (Pfundstein, 2012).

### ***Case 3: Invasion of Panama (1989) – Outcome: failure***

#### Overview of the crisis

When the Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega became involved with drug trafficking, money laundering and started to repress the political opposition, both the Reagan and Bush administrations made efforts to remove him from his position. After initial economic sanctions were ineffective, Bush Senior called for free elections in Panama to be pursued with more sanctions and military action if Noriega were not to comply. After a U.S. naval officer was killed by the Panamanians the Americans decided to invade with a force of 26.000 troops. After the surrender of Noriega, the democratic Endara regime was established, marking the end of the crisis (Blechman & Wittes, 1999; ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

#### Coercive strategy

At first the U.S. tried economic sanctions to overthrow Noriega. When these seemed ineffective the Americans tried diplomatic negotiations after they had a minor influence in a coup to remove the Noriega regime. Alongside these soft threats, military action was emerged by Bush in order to change the status quo in Panama, indicating the Invasion of Panama as a compellence case (Blechman & Wittes, 1999). This strategy is a conformation of the use of coercive diplomacy, proposed by Weinberger and constructed in the theory by Alexander George (see theoretical framework).

#### Demand

From Noriega's point of view complying to the regime change issued by the U.S. would do more damage to him than resisting against the American threat. It is unknown if Noriega was to comply when the U.S. had announced its invasion: the force was assembled in secrecy and came unexpectedly (Blechman & Wittes, 1999).

#### Airpower

Part of the American compellence strategy was the 26.000 strong military force on standby (ICB Data Viewer, 2004). The invasion of Panama was conducted by mainly ground forces, with no dominant role for air assets.

### Threat type

The threat types the U.S. issued were 1 and 3. The Bush administration expressed threats not just by private communication with Panama, but also through increased military activity in Central America. Military exercises were purposely visible to show Noriega the U.S. was not bluffing. However, despite the American demand was clear, the U.S. had no deadline announced or cost specified for noncompliance, so the threat could be classified as a passive implicit and a vague one.

## **5.2. Comparisons within the Cold War Period**

When examining the international crises of the Cold War, the only successful outcome is in the Pathet Lao Offensive, which contains deterrence. The other cases are failed compellences, showing that deterrence is easier to perform indeed (Schaub, 2004). However, the compellence part of the U.S. also succeeded against Pathet Lao. Despite the absence of airpower and containing the same threat types, the cases of Pathet Lao and the Panama invasion have different demands and outcomes, indicating that this is an important variable. Furthermore, the majority of the threats was executed by deploying ground forces, confirming that the way of warfare did not happen predominantly by airpower during the Cold War. Besides, the fact that airpower could have led to the failure is uncertain, since the absence of it has also led to no success during the invasion of Panama. The failure with Panama is probably because of the regime change demand.

On the other hand, there is a pattern among the three cases considering threat type. In all cases military assets have been used to express the threat and in two of the three it was combined with announcements through a public statement or private communication, but without specifying deadlines and a punishment for noncompliance. However, in the Pleiku case military assets were used to threaten, possibly leading to a failure as the opposite of the desired outcome emerged, while the demand was of regular difficulty.



**Table 3. Overview of the crises during the Cold War**

Cases	Coercive strategy	Demand	Airpower	Threat type	Outcome
Pathet Lao Offensive (1961)	Deterrence/compellence	1	0	1 & 3	Success
Pleiku Vietnam (1965)	Compellence	1	1	2	Failure
Invasion of Panama (1989)	Compellence	3	0	1 & 3	Failure

### **5.3. Cases after the Cold War**

#### ***Case 4: Haiti Military Regime (1994) - Outcome: failure***

##### Overview of the crisis

In the first half of the nineties, Haiti was associated with brutal violation of human rights. The Clinton administration perceived the incoming Haitian refugees as a threat to the domestic stability of the U.S. and threatened with an invasion to restore democracy to Haiti. The United Nations (UN) responded by authorizing member states to use any means necessary to remove Cédras, commander in chief of Haiti's armed forces, from military leadership through a Security Council Resolution. Eventually, the goal became to settle the crisis with a non-violent resolution. Democracy was to be restored in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions by the UN. After negotiations failed, American troops landed on Haiti and drove off the dictatorship (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

##### Coercive strategy

Initially the Clinton administration had been using the diplomacy tool in the Haiti Crisis, without success nonetheless. The reasons for wanting the Cédras regime gone were to uphold democracy in the aftermath of the Cold War, stopping the Haitian refugee crisis and maintaining the American credibility. The Congress, the American and international public were against the invasion after the Somali fiasco and Haiti posed no threat to the U.S.. Nonetheless, the message was sent that the dictatorship needed to end and its leaders were obliged to leave the country. A refusal would lead to an invasion, indicating this as a compellence threat (Girard, 2002).

### Demand

The violations of human rights caused the Clinton administration to step in, remove the dictatorship and restore democracy. This indicates that the demand calls for a regime change, although Cédraś considered resisting a better alternative than leaving the country (Pfundstein, 2012).

### Airpower

While president Clinton gave a speech about a possible invasion in Haiti, two aircraft carriers were already on their way accompanied by vessels with helicopters, tanks and infantry (Girard, 2002). When the final negotiations failed over 20.000 American troops landed on Haiti, encountering light resistance, gaining an easy victory and restoring democracy (ICB Data Viewer, 2004). The airpower was limited to the use of several planes, but the bulk of the force consisted of ground troops.

### Threat type

To the Haiti case belongs the type 5 threat. A public statement was released by the UN Security Council that the U.S. was allowed to use any necessary means. Moreover, there have been events of private communication between both parties in which Cédraś was offered to leave the country or otherwise Haiti would be invaded and the dictatorship would be removed. He had till the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 12 at midnight, implying there was a deadline, making this threat an ultimatum (Girard, 2002).

### ***Case 5: Desert Strike (1996) – Outcome: failure***

#### Overview of the crisis

The intervention of Iraqi troops in the Kurdish civil war triggered a crisis for the U.S. since Iraq seized the 36<sup>th</sup> Parallel, which was a UN-protected zone since 1991. The Americans led a coalition in restricting military activities by Iraq. The Clinton administration responded stating that the U.S. would respond aggressively to the breach of UN agreements. After the threat had to be carried out, Iraqi military positions were heavily bombed and the air exclusive zone was extended. After the Iraqi forces fired back at the American planes, the U.S. destroyed the involved air defense systems and threatened with new airstrikes. Alongside the new threats it was Russia who helped in convincing Iraq to comply, ending the crisis eventually (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

#### Coercive strategy

The Clinton administration asserted that it would react aggressively against the Iraqi invaders. The American threat was intended to compel the opponent in the sense of to undo the actions performed by Iraq when they breached the UN agreement about the protected zone. Despite the U.S. did not have sufficient support of the UN or other nearby states, the bombing would proceed after the Iraqi troops did not leave the region (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

#### Demand

In Operation Desert Strike the U.S. issued a hard demand for Saddam Hussein: the Iraqi military activities in the UN-protected zone were to be halted and the Iraqi troops had to withdraw out of the region.

#### Airpower

In this crisis there is an obvious use of airpower by the U.S. both during the threat and after it is carried out. By increasing the aerial activity above the area, expanding the air exclusive zone and threat with new bombardments after the initial ones, it is clear that the threat consisted predominantly by deploying the airpower (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

### Threat type

The threat types issued for this case is 3. Before Clinton released a public statement claiming that the U.S. demanded the Iraq military to leave the region or the response would be aggressive. However, ‘respond aggressively’ still gives no clear idea of any specifics considering punishment for noncompliance, classifying this threat as a vague one (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

### ***Case 6: Iraq Regime Change (2002) – Outcome: failure***

#### Overview of the crisis

Disallowing UN inspectors into Iraq, the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds and the commence of a nuclear weapons program are events by Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, that makes him one of the biggest threats to the Western world. Believing that it formed a danger to U.S. security, plans were made for a unilateral regime change by the Americans. The Iraqi response on the U.S. hostilities were to reach for a diplomatic resolution, but American preparations were already set in motion involving a force of 200.000 troops. Alongside the U.S., the United Kingdom (U.K.) would join in a Western alliance, despite the absence of support from the UN. Without a resolution the invasion would take place if Hussein did not comply within 48 hours. Having failed to comply, the regime was brought to its knees (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

#### Coercive strategy

After 9/11, the U.S. focused more on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in the wrong hands, which was seen as the biggest threat to stability and security of the American people. Iraq was being accused of producing nuclear weapons, inviting the U.S. to knock on the door. If the Hussein regime did not meet the conditions of the Bush administration, Iraq would face a U.S. invasion. This threat to the Iraqi regime to undertake action indicates this was part of the compellence strategy (ICB Data viewer, 2004; Dodge, 2008).

### Demand

The international crisis with Iraq of 2002 contains a regime change as American demand as the title gives it away. Like with the dictatorship of Haiti, Saddam Hussein sees complying as more harmful than resisting against the U.S. compellence threat (Pfundstein, 2012).

### Airpower

The ICB Data Viewer (2004) does not specify the style of warfare the Americans threatened with and used against the Iraqi regime. The U.S. invasion force was 200.000 troops strong, assuming multiple branches of the U.S. Armed Forces joined. Dodge (2008) however, discusses the participation of U.S. troops frequently, indicating that the use of infantry might be the most dominant of the military means.

### Threat type

On 12 September 2002 Bush gave a speech to the General Assembly of the UN, announcing that the Iraqi regime was to meet with the demands of the U.S. Through this public statement Iraq was to stop the ongoing weapon programs and allow UN inspectors or strong multilateral action would be taken with severe consequences for noncompliance. War likelihood and time pressure were involved in the compellence threat of the U.S. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March in 2003 an emergency meeting between the U.S., the U.K. and Spain was held, in which they gave Hussein 48 hours to leave Iraq or face an invasion, indicating a deadline and thus a type 5 threat (ICB Data Viewer, 2004).

#### 5.4. Comparisons within the Post-Cold War Period

When comparing the international crises in the unipolar period there are some similarities among the cases. Table 4 provides an overview of all the independent variables, its labels and the outcome. At first, the U.S. aims to change regimes in two of the three cases. Adding the troop withdrawal of Desert Strike gives a result that in all examined crises the demands were difficult to comply with. In addition, all three cases were compellence, indicating that the U.S. was aiming for multiple changes.

In contrast, the case of Desert Strike differs from the Haiti Military Regime and Iraq Regime Change crises in terms of warfare and threat type. In Desert Strike the U.S. communicated the threat by using force in terms of airpower and through a public statement with clear demands, but without mentioning the punishment for noncompliance, while in the other two cases the American military force consisted of mainly ground forces and a deadline with specific demands and punishment for noncompliance was communicated as per public statement or private communication. So, the patterns in the compellence cases after the Cold War are difficult demands to comply with and threatening through seeking initial communication instead of deploying military force.

**Table 4. Overview of the crises after the Cold War**

Cases	Coercive Strategy	Demand	Airpower	Threat type	Outcome
Haiti Military Regime (1994)	Compellence	3	0	5	Failure
Desert Strike (1996)	Compellence	2	1	3	Failure
Iraq Regime Change (2002)	Compellence	3	0	5	Failure

### 5.5. Comparisons between Both Periods

Now that certain patterns among the cases within the Cold War and after the Collapse of the Soviet Union have been examined separately, the differences and similarities between both periods will be looked into. Table 5 below is a combination between tables 3 and 4.

**Table 5. Overview of the cases from both periods**

<b>Cases during the Cold War</b>	<b>Coercive strategy</b>	<b>Demand</b>	<b>Airpower</b>	<b>Threat type</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Pathet Lao Offensive (1961)	Deterrence/compellence	1	0	1 & 3	Success
Pleiku Vietnam (1965)	Compellence	1	1	2	Failure
Invasion of Panama (1989)	Compellence	3	0	1 & 3	Failure
<b>Cases after the Cold War</b>	<b>Coercive Strategy</b>	<b>Demand</b>	<b>Airpower</b>	<b>Threat type</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Haiti Military Regime (1994)	Compellence	3	0	5	Failure
Desert Strike (1996)	Compellence	2	1	3	Failure
Iraq Regime Change (2002)	Compellence	3	0	5	Failure

#### **Coercive strategy**

The single deterrence/compellence case with a successful outcome and all other compellence cases ending up in failure indicate that compellence requires more effort (Schaub, 2004). Furthermore this could indicate that a compellence strategy was used to deter the Soviet Union from intervening in crises. Besides, the absence of deterrence cases in the unipolar era in this research could indicate that the U.S. coercive foreign policy in general was aiming for changes in the international system, rather than preservation.

## **Demand**

After the Cold War, the American demands were harder in general. Table 6 shows that in the post-Cold War cases only contain (very) hard demands. Pfundstein's statement (2012) about the demand to comply for the target state being more difficult on average during the Cold War is hereby confirmed. The regular demand in the Pathet Lao case could have led to the compliance of the target state, since the costs to comply was low. Nevertheless, that same demand in the Pleiku case corresponds with failure, indicating the other variables might be relevant. Finally, when the demand is either hard or very hard to comply with, it is assumed that the compellence threat fails.

## **Airpower**

Both periods contain a case in which airpower was a dominant factor of the issued threats. But in the majority of the post-Cold War cases it was not deployed dominantly. Both airpower cases ended in a failure as Pfundstein (2016) predicted in the costly compellence theory. The statements by Pape (1996) about airpower being the most effective instrument in compellence threats are hereby not confirmed. In contrast to this, it still does not explain why the use of predominantly ground forces has led to failure during the Cold War as well as in the post-Cold War period, whereas the demand or threat type fill the gap.

## **Threat type**

During the unipolar period the U.S. communicates more openly. In all three cases public statements or private communication were used to make announcements to the opponent, whereas in the three cases during the Cold War, threats were vague most of the time and issued through the movement of military assets or even the use of force. Furthermore, in the modern international crises the U.S. applied deadlines in two out of three cases while this was never issued during the researched cases of the Cold War. So whereas the Americans would generally deploy military forces in the Cold War, they would communicate privately or per public statement during the unipolarity, detailing deadlines frequently with demands and/or punishment for noncompliance, without success though. Note that these are general assumptions and there are exceptions in both periods, like Desert Strike lacking a deadline.



## 6. Conclusion

This research has focused on differences in U.S. compellence strategy between the periods of the Cold War and after Soviets collapsed. The corresponding research question was *'To what extent is there a difference in compellence strategy used by the United States between the periods of the Cold War and after?'*

The variables used to study this phenomenon were coercive strategy, the demand, airpower and threat type. The results (Table 5) have indicated that there is one successful deterrence/compellence case during the Cold War, indicating that the U.S. might have used both coercive strategies in a combination to deter the Soviets while compelling a target state. Moreover, the compellence cases have failed, matching with the theoretical statements of Schaub (2004), about compellence being harder to perform as more effort is needed compared to deterrence. In addition, American compellence strategy during unipolarity contained harder demands on average compared to the Cold War period, making it more difficult for the challenged state to comply as it would be more costly opposed to resisting. Since this variable indicates a difference in the compellence strategy between both periods, it is therefore a crucial one. Furthermore, the use of airpower is less important. In cases from both blocs it has led to failures of threats, matching up to the costly compellence theory of Pfundstein (2016). However, her statements about the U.S. using more airpower in modern warfare cannot be confirmed by this research, since in both blocs the majority of the crises airpower was not the dominant military asset of the threat. Finally, there is a difference in the use of threat types between both periods, making this also a highly relevant variable. During the Cold War, threats were mostly issued by the use of military assets through movement or even force. On the contrary, after the Cold War the Americans would apply public statements or private communication frequently, announcing deadlines, demands and punishment for noncompliance, while this would be more vague when the Soviet Union was still standing.

**Table 5. Overview of the Cases from Both Periods**

<b>Cases during the Cold War</b>	<b>Coercive strategy</b>	<b>Demand</b>	<b>Airpower</b>	<b>Threat type</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Pathet Lao Offensive (1961)	Deterrence/compellence	1	0	1 & 3	Success
Pleiku Vietnam (1965)	Compellence	1	1	2	Failure
Invasion of Panama (1989)	Compellence	3	0	1 & 3	Failure
<b>Cases after the Cold War</b>	<b>Coercive Strategy</b>	<b>Demand</b>	<b>Airpower</b>	<b>Threat type</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Haiti Military Regime (1994)	Compellence	3	0	5	Failure
Desert Strike (1996)	Compellence	2	1	3	Failure
Iraq Regime Change (2002)	Compellence	3	0	5	Failure

The answer to the research question is that there is a difference in compellence strategy performed by the U.S. between the periods of the Cold War and after, since in the unipolar period the issued demands were harder for target states to comply with and the types of threats were more verbal communicative compared to the threats in the period of the Cold War. Finally, under bipolarity the U.S. might have used compellence strategy to deter the Soviet Union, unlike during unipolarity when there was no need for deterring such a rival anymore.

At last, in finding this answer a comparative case study has been applied, selecting three cases during the Cold War and three cases after (see table 5) with random sampling. At first, both periods have been investigated separately to see if there were patterns within a bloc. Afterwards the blocs have been compared to detect similarities and differences in the compellence strategy of the U.S. under bipolarity and unipolarity.

## 7. Discussion

Alongside the discussed variables, external factors, beyond the American compellence strategy, could be investigated to study the discussed phenomenon in future research like the impact of other states or the public in the crisis. Another example is the influence of the switch from bipolarity to unipolarity. This remains a strange phenomenon, because the opponents of the U.S. did not enjoy the same Russian financial and military support as some target states did during the Cold War. Nonetheless, for all we know the unequal power distribution in a unipolarity (hegemonic stability theory) or the upcoming BRICS striving for multipolarity, inspiring small states to resist, might have influenced the difficulty in compellence.

Or is the phenomenon to be explained from internal factors, within the strategy itself? Whereas this research gives a clear indication that the American demands and threat types differ between both periods, it does not provide credibility to make a statement of what it was like with all the uninvestigated cases, since only three cases for each period have been examined. For instance, Pfundstein (2016) and Art and Greenhill (2018) state that airpower is the most used force in modern American compellence, but the small sample of this research shows that this was not the predominant use of military assets. Finally, this problem also occurs with the single deterrence/compellence case. To confirm that the U.S. really used compellence to deter the Soviet Union, more Cold War cases are required for a credible statement.

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