



CONCEPT

Over the last few years, an intense debate has unfolded around the opportunity costs associated with supporting Ukraine to resist Russia's aggression, and the consequent effects on prioritising deterrence efforts against China in the Indo-Pacific region. Some analysts have highlighted the existence of strategic trade-offs, arguing that the more resources the United States (US) or its Indo-Pacific allies spend on Ukraine the fewer resources they will have at their disposal to deter China in the Indo-Pacific. Others, in contrast, have emphasised the existence of strategic payoffs, arguing that by standing up for global norms whenever and wherever they might be challenged, the international community would send a powerful signal that will make Beijing think twice before deciding to violate the sovereignty of another state (e.g. Taiwan).

Against this backdrop, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) and the Centre for Security Diplomacy and Strategy (CSDS) are convening an expert workshop to address the following question: How should the US and its allies approach deterrence and alliance management in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific?

The purpose of the workshop is to assess the advantages and disadvantages of three distinct ideal-type approaches to deterrence and alliance management in Europe and the Indo-Pacific: namely bifurcation, cooperation and integration, by paying attention to key factors such as force structure, posture, command and control and alliance structures.

- *Bifurcation* entails treating the *two theatres* independently and implementing a region-specific strategy for deterrence and managing alliances. It implies a clear prioritisation of the China threat in the Indo-Pacific, and a deprioritisation or even accommodation of Russia.
- *Cooperation* entails reconciling the notion that security threats are primarily regional with the acknowledgment that strategic dynamics in Europe and the Indo-Pacific are somewhat interconnected. It requires an '*inter-theatre*' perspective to deterrence and alliance management, and a recognition that China and Russia pose different but interconnected threats.
- *Integration* would require treating Europe and the Indo-Pacific as *one theatre*, conceiving of China and Russia as a single bloc, and developing a unified approach for managing alliances and deterrence across both regions.

PROGRAMME

PRIVATE EVENT

14:00 – 14:05 **WELCOME REMARKS**

Thomas G. Mahnken

President, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Luis Simón

Director, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy – VUB

14:05 – 14:20 **THOUGHTS ON US NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY**

Thomas G. Mahnken

President, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

14:20 – 14:35 **STRATEGIES FOR DETERRENCE AND ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT:
DECOUPLING, COOPERATION OR INTEGRATION?**

Luis Simón

Director, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy – VUB

14:35 – 14:50 COFFEE BREAK

14:50 – 15:20 **DETERRENCE IN EUROPE AND ASIA**

Moderator

Thomas G. Mahnken

President, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Speakers

Evan B. Montgomery

Director of Research, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Tomasz Szatkowski

Distinguished Associate Fellow, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy – VUB

Ashley Townshend

Minister Counsellor Defence Policy, Department of Defence Australia

15:20 – 16:30 **EXPERT DISCUSSION**

16:30 END