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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



ANNEX 3-72 NUCLEAR OPERATIONS

DISSUASION

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Dissuasion, also closely related to [deterrence](#), consists of actions taken to demonstrate to an adversary that a particular course of action is too costly, or that the benefits are too meager. The intent is thus to dissuade potential adversaries from embarking on programs or activities that could threaten our vital interests, such as developing or acquiring nuclear capabilities. Dissuasion differs from deterrence in that it is a concept aimed at precluding the adversary from developing or acquiring nuclear capabilities. Dissuasion is most often conducted using [instruments of national power](#) in concert, such as a combination of diplomatic, economic, and military measures. Air Force nuclear forces may play an important role in the latter, often by providing a credible deterrent.

An unanticipated outcome from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003 was Libya's subsequent decision to divest itself of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including its investment in nuclear weapons technology.

Although a desire to normalize relationships with the West was also a factor in Libya's decision, the key rationale behind Operation IRAQI FREEDOM was to rid Iraq of its WMDs. This fact, coupled with the rapid, forceful take-down of Iraq in general, was not lost on Libyan leadership.

For additional discussion on effects, see "[Practical Design: The Coercion Continuum](#)" in Annex 3-0, *Operations and Planning*.