

Speech Neta Crawford, given at the opening of the CDWS on February 19th, 2026

Cis vi pacem para bellum, or cis vi pacem para pacem.

If we want peace, how do we pave the way for it? By preparing for war, or setting up the conditions for peace?

The context for this important occasion includes the four year anniversary of Russian aggression, increased Chinese military spending and armament. Worse, one of the other founding members of the alliance is insulting NATO members, and in some ways, threatening and actually abandoning the international rule of law. Add to these the longer term challenges of climate change, nuclear modernization without the safety belt and suspenders of arms control treaties and an arms control process, even as the doctrine of Strategic Attack both threatens nuclear war and ignores the real potential for escalation and nuclear winter.

War colleges educate military leaders in military doctrine, law, and ethics. War colleges and doctrinal centers of ministries of defense help shape grand strategy and link doctrine, operations, technology and theory into coherent plans. They anticipate threats, think through scenarios,

write manuals and set procurement requirements in service of doctrine.

How is the Centre's role different? How can this Centre, which is "committed to a just, resilient and secure society" fulfill its' urgent and appropriate missions in this context?

I have no intention to tell you what to do. But I am excited to explore options with you.

Academic centres can perform additional roles. Because they mix strategists and military professionals with educated outsiders, experts in their own fields. Outsiders can, if they are not bedazzled by the medals and the ribbons, learn from military professionals and at the same time challenge received wisdom.

Centres such as these should be critical. They put diplomacy, civil society, and economics on the table as alternatives to the use of force. They are sites for multidisciplinary research on the tensions between security, defense, and resilience.

To understand Defense in the context of a just, resilient and secure society is to consider strategy and war in the context of the costs, risks, and consequences of military spending, military industrialization, and war.

It is to examine the ethics of going to war, the conduct of war, and the consequences of war. It is to look at the big picture, the long run, including recursive and unanticipated effects.

For instance, the environmental consequences of military industrialization, mobilization and war include military greenhouse gas emissions. U.S. military emissions, at around 47 million metric tons annually, exceed the emissions of entire nations combined, about the same size as Finland's entire annual emissions in 2024. NATO military and military industrial emissions will rise as it increases military spending by up to 5 percent of GDP.

If we worry about climate change and conflict, we ought to worry that conflict causes climate change through its emissions, as well as how it reduces the cycle of carbon sequestration by destroying forests and damaging farmland, and how after war, it entails post-conflict reconstruction.

Thus, if they are to function best, academic centres do not work for the state so much as perform the role Kant described in Perpetual Peace. They are the philosophers or political theorists to the King, the honest broker.

If climate change is an existential threat and at the same time a threat multiplier, it may not be enough to mount solar panels, install micro-grids on bases, and increase the fuel efficiency of aircraft or tanks. Most military emissions are operational. Military exercises, procurement and even missions may have to be rethought.

Second, Centres such as these are part of the antidote to a persistent dynamic where long term military mobilization and war tends to increase the concentration of power in the executive, exacerbates economic inequality as the civilian sector is put on a diet to fund military spending, and as the fear of war and enemies from outside and within promotes secrecy and the intolerance of difference and dissent.

Democratic societies can be more resilient to gray zone threats. Academic centres can bolster resilience. They are a venue for public and professional education and deliberation, part of the public sphere. They can enact and illustrate the kind of informed deliberation and debate that should be the hallmark of democracies.

Third, Centres can offer innovative and integrated solutions. I will use the remainder of my time to illustrate the kind of thinking that can be possible — critique and alternatives.

Russia, the United States and NATO have, for years, focused on deterrence by the threat of punishment. This doctrine, known in NATO as forward defense, includes deep offensive and counter offensive strikes against an adversaries follow on forces. In sum, these doctrines require weapons capable of long-range attack and they are intended to create the perception by adversaries that not only are the weapons there, but we have the will to use them to devastating effect, even if it risks escalation to nuclear war.

The U.S. doctrine, updated in August 2025, is to be “capable of attack-in-depth to disrupt, destroy and defeat adversary forces.”¹ The concept includes “strategic attacks” by U.S. air forces. Specifically, “Airpower extends the area of potential conflict far beyond the front lines. The ability to project power deep into enemy territory holds at risk any target, regardless of its location, disrupts enemy operations, and increases pressure on adversary leadership.”²

Offensive defense schemes risk security dilemmas and escalatory spirals. Non-offensive defense (also known as

¹ U.S. Naval War College, “Air-Sea Battle,” p. 4.

² Air Force, *Strategic Attack*, Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-02. 4 August 2025, p. 2. https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP_3-02/AFDP_3-02_Strategic_Attack.pdf.

territorial or defensive defence), is deterrence and defense by denial and resistance. They deter by showing an adversary that they cannot quickly and easily achieve their objectives. Deterrence and denial are accomplished by non-offensive forces which are less likely to trigger security dilemma spirals.

Most of us draw two kinds of lessons from Ukraine, strategic and tactical.

For example, one strategic lesson is supposed to be that economic sanctions don't work to deter war. (Although I think we might all be better served by looking at the way the sanctions have weakened Russia's ability to sustain the fighting.)

Another is to affirm the view that the strong do as they will, and the weak suffer what they must.

Tactical lessons from this war focus on cycles of innovation and counter-innovation — especially on the creative uses Ukraine has made of drones.

The current issue of *Foreign Affairs* includes an article by Michael Brown and Matt Kaplan says,

“Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was meant to last three days; instead, it has dragged on for four years. The United States needs to study why Moscow, previously thought of as a leading military power, failed and why Kyiv has performed so well. Washington must learn how weaker opponents can surprise stronger ones, prepare to iterate rapidly, and start producing large quantities of low-cost capabilities. These new paradigms of conflict are not easily or quickly internalized, which is exactly why adopting them requires urgency and large-scale focus.”

I agree and would have underscored and bolded the difficulty military organizations have in learning and adapting. However, the piece largely focuses on tactical innovation, how David’s slingshot has wounded and in some ways crippled Goliath and the implication that it is important to make more slingshots.

But Russia’s offensive wasn’t simply foiled by drones, and quick thinking. Russia offensive doctrine, a blitzkrieg, was met and stalemated by Ukraine’s defensive doctrine that includes a resilient civil society and citizen mobilization.

So, two questions arise. First, can defensive doctrines deter and defend against determined aggressors? And second, what is the role of civilians in such doctrines.

Deterrence by denial shows an adversary that aggression will not pay: if the costs and risks of invasion and occupation are high, the offense cannot quickly and easily achieve their objectives, and there is little chance of victory, then invaders can be deterred.

In *defense* by denial, the defense makes it difficult or even impossible for an aggressor to take and hold territory. They slow any advance and increase the costs of war and occupation.

In contrast to offensive defense, which emphasizes deep strikes against the adversary, in defensive defense, deterrence and denial are accomplished by *non-offensive forces*.

These are described as asymmetric or “porcupine” strategies, where dispersed, mobile, and numerous defenses raise the difficulty and costs of an invasion.

Non-offensive defense schemes use non-provocative weapons systems and tactics to deter and resist attack. These include early warning, air defense systems, anti-ship coastal defenses, mines, and electronic warfare. Light infantry, barriers, and the destruction of bridges also contribute to the attrition of invading forces and the

frustration of their lines of communication and reinforcement.

Sure, punishment strategies also raise costs. But they have certain risks, namely that the weapons and doctrines that are depend on the threat of counter-offensives can be seen as aggressive. They increase the risks of security dilemmas and escalation. A defensive strategy that does not entail deep strikes into an adversary will be extremely unlikely to spark conventional and nuclear escalation.

Deterrence and defense by denial strategies rely on the traditional advantages of defense. Defenders have shorter lines of communication — less distance to move troops, equipment, fuel, and food. They can fight from prepared positions. They know and can make effective use of the local geography. Defensive forces, familiar with local terrain and conditions will be able to distinguish the abnormal from the normal.³

Second, as the U.S. and others have learned repeatedly, even when nearly completely occupied by a force with commanding firepower, defending armed forces can mount effective insurgency campaigns.

³ Gholz, Friedman, and Gjoza, "Defensive Defense."

Third, defenders enjoy greater political legitimacy than attackers at home and abroad; observers will rally to sanction aggressors and send supplies to defenders.

Fourth, populations can mount non-violent civilian resistance efforts that are costly and difficult to counter.

Taiwan has called their porcupine strategy of defense against invasion from China “a large number of small things.”⁴ Taiwan’s defenses are layered. First, they will protect their forces and people with anti-air and anti ship missiles. They would meet a Chinese naval and air attack in the shallow, littoral zone using small, agile boats. Sea mines will also be deployed to make the landing more difficult. Further, Taiwan will contest and destroy any forces that land during an amphibious assault using light, highly mobile forces.

Non-offensive defense can lower the likelihood of war by decreasing an adversaries’ concern that your side has the capacity and the desire to be aggressive. Because they do not require the purchase of long-range platforms that are also expensive to maintain, they are also lower cost and more adaptable, and they will also likely have lower greenhouse gas emissions.

⁴ Lee His-min and Eric Lee, “Taiwan’s Overall Defense Concept, Explained,” *The Diplomat*, Nov. 3, 2020 <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/taiwans-overall-defense-concept-explained/>.

Of course, at the moment Taiwan's strategy is backstopped by the promise that the US will make deep strikes into China. It retains the costs and risks of an offensive defense.

Turning to the second question: What is the role of civilians in military doctrines?

In most conventional defense schemes, civilians do not play a role in deterrence and resistance unless and until they are mobilized into military units.

But civilians play a part in deterrence and defense by denial doctrines.

There are essentially two different schemes to mobilize civilian engagement.

The first is rooted in the traditions of non-offensive defense. In this way, civilian participation may take the general form of symbolic protest (expression), non-cooperation (omission), or non-violent direct action (disruptive and creative interventions).

The idea that a resilient society and one where everyone is active in defending the country, a comprehensive or total

defense system, is 'indigestible' for aggressors is not new. They can deter by showing adversaries that victory will not be, easy, quick or cheap. They resist external aggressors by frustrating and increasing the costs of war and occupation. The Dutch, Danish, and Norwegian people have experience with this.

This strategy for civilian involvement attempts to preserve the principle of distinction and noncombatant immunity. Defense and resistance consists of mobilizing noncombatant civilians in various roles

1) Civilians can complicate and delay the advance of an aggressive ground force through nonviolent means.

2) In unoccupied zones, civilians can provide labor that supports the civil society, allowing the state to focus on military defense, thus bolstering state capacity, or they may work directly in war-sustaining industries.

3) In occupied zones, through various acts of denial, civilian resistance can cause the aggressor to expend more resources to administer and extract resources from the portions of the territory that they have already occupied (denying a quick and easy victory).

4) Material and symbolic civilian actions can diminish the morale of the invading/occupying forces.

5) Resilient individuals and civil society can support and protect other civilians, reducing the material effects of war and increasing domestic morale.

6) Finally, while it can, depending on specific circumstances, bring civilians into the role of direct participation in hostilities, civilians can commit direct actions against the occupiers' forces or the infrastructure they are using, including sabotage, theft, and the destruction of the occupiers' weapons and other tools.

Of course we ought to keep in mind that the distinction between combatant and non-combatant can be very blurry here. Which gets us to the next form of civilian participation.

Comprehensive or total defense schemes fully integrate civilian and conventional military defense. These whole of society approaches are also intended to deter a potential enemy by raising the cost of aggression and lowering the chances of its success.

They essentially add civilian participation to conventional offensive or deep strike defense and begin to resemble counterinsurgency or guerrilla war.

Take for example, the Resistance Operating Concept articulated by Otto Fiala. It 'includes not only governmental agencies and functions from national to municipal level, but also private and commercial enterprises, voluntary organizations, and individuals. Total Defense encompasses all societal functions'⁵. The Resistance Operating Concept, envisages total societal mobilization, where individual civilians act, but they can also be mobilized into voluntary 'home guards or defensive leagues'.⁶

NATO doctrine stresses the fact that it already uses civilian institutions, such as transport. But there is a push to do more.

A 2024 European Commission report (European Commission) calls for 'comprehensive preparedness' by 'reinforcing civilian-military cooperation' Accordingly, it says, a 'key dimension of comprehensive preparedness is to ensure that civilian and military crisis response actors

⁵ Fiala, O.C. (2020) *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)*. McDill Air Force Base: Joint Special Operations University Press, p. 2

⁶ Fiala, *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)*. p. 3.

enable each other and can operate seamlessly, including to prepare for the most severe military contingencies'.⁷ It also stresses strengthening and harmonizing 'dual-use' (civil-military) infrastructures and technologies.

Several Nordic countries have articulated and implemented total defense doctrines.

In Finland, total defense depends on the mobilization of a conscript army and Sweden relies on people being trained in national military service. This sort of mobilization does not *necessarily* erode the principle of distinction.

But the devil is in the details, where 'seamless' operations may blur the lines between combatant and noncombatant and may jeopardize noncombatant immunity for both civilian participants and non-participants.

The sort of 'total defence' approach, described by the Swedish government potentially erodes the principle of distinction.

In 2017, the Swedish Defence Commission said that Sweden's defense 'rests on the will of the population to

⁷ European Commission. (2024) *Safer Together – Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness*. Report by Sauli Niinistö. P. 14. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/5bb2881f-9e29-42f2-8b77-8739b19d047c_en?filename=2024_Niinisto-report_Book_VF.pdf [

defend the country, their commitment in peacetime, and resilience and resistance in war'⁸

Note that civil preparedness, civilian resilience and civilian's direct participation are all lumped together in the Swedish doctrine.

In many respects, the civilian resilience envisioned by NATO and European Commission is sensible.

But there are two cautions here. First, elements of civilian preparedness and resilience can be part of a deterrence and defense by denial strategy, or they can be total, paired with an offensive doctrine.

If total defense doctrines retain the offensive capabilities that are characteristic of conventional maneuver defense doctrines, they may be seen to be part of an offensive plan and thus a potential threat.

This is a risk with current US doctrine to defend Taiwan. US Strategic Attack doctrine posits that deep strikes will deter an adversary.

⁸ Quoted in Wither, J.K. (2020) 'Back to the Future? Nordic Total Defence Concepts,' *Defence Studies*, (January) 20(1), pp. 61-81:66.

The doctrine anticipates that conventional war could escalate to nuclear war — either by a decision to use nuclear weapons, or because of the inadvertent use of nuclear weapons. Specifically, the United States Strategic Attack doctrine proposes “escalation dominance.” It says, “Nuclear response remains the ultimate form of escalation dominance, and its threat can deter an adversary’s use of CBRN [chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear] weapons.”⁹

Thus, a kind of paradox: while Taiwan’s defenses might deter, U.S. preparations for war might make war more likely as it ramps up its long range strike capabilities in INDO-PACIFIC command and prepares for deep strikes including nuclear war.

Second, when civilians become direct participants in hostilities, they give up their immunity from deliberate attack for the duration of their participation. A whole of society effort, integrating conventional military and civilian action, blurs the lines between combatant and civilian articulated in the principle of distinction and could be conceived of by adversaries as insurgency or guerrilla war, thus risking harsh forms of counterinsurgency warfare

⁹ Air Force, *Strategic Attack*, p. 11.

which target the civilian population and dual-use infrastructure with devastating results for civilians.

Civilian preparation and actions in Ukraine are a textbook of total defense — planning and practicing individual and group action to resist the Russian invasion. Indeed, Ukrainian civilians have acted in all six of the ways described above and more.

Ukrainian civilians began to protest and resistance non-violently in February 2022, immediately after the Russian invasion began. In early 2022, civilians deliberately blocked the advance of Russian tanks with their physical presence, constructed barricades, and the ordinary citizens changed road signs to obstruct the movement of Russian troops.

In March 2022 a civilian protest forced some Russian vehicles to turn around. Civilians have been, from the period before the war, crucial in the cyber defenses of Ukraine.

They have also worked closely with the Ukrainian military and in occupied areas of Ukraine. Further, some civilians have been acting like partisans and become partisans (Matsiyevsky, 2023).

The Ukrainian military launched the National Resistance Center (NRC) in February 2022, an element of Ukraine's Special Operations Forces. As a spokesperson, Ostap, for the NRC told journalists in 2023 'The primary goal was to muster and organize civil resistance forces for repelling the enemy' (Quoted in Zakharchenko and York, 2023). The NRC mission is to 'train civilians in resistance tactics against occupiers' and to organize civilian resistance in 'temporarily occupied' areas. 'It equips civilians with skills to resist, both through non-violent and active measures, and coordinates efforts to disrupt occupier control in these regions' (Military Land, 2022). A handbook produced by the center includes advice to government workers to "misunderstand" orders and "ask endless questions' (Garman, 2022).

How can the general protection of the civilian population from deliberate harm be preserved if some members of the civilian population might for at least a time be considered direct participants in a war?

Civilians can participate in deterring war and resisting occupation in many ways that do not put them over the line into a combatant role. If civilians are to be included in deterrence and defense, they should only engage in non-violent actions or actions where their actions are clearly an *indirect* contribution to the fight. Actions of non-

participation and non-violent obstruction can be considered indirect. These are the sorts of strategies that Gene Sharp describes: massive, non-violent non-cooperation using 'psychological, social, economic, and political' means (Sharp, 1990, p. 89). When a society engages in comprehensive defense, civilians should focus on civil preparedness and resilience.

If civilians want to directly participate in violent actions, such as by piloting drones, they ought to join the military as they have done in Ukraine, and thus, give up their civilian status.

Concepts of total defense blur the line between non-violent and indirect action, and direct participation in hostilities. These do not preserve the principle of distinction.

Direct civilian participation in war, which blurs the principle of distinction potentially puts all civilians in jeopardy. This is worth underscoring: a decision by even a minority of citizens to act in ways that could be seen to erode civilian immunity and puts all civilians at risk.

The people themselves must decide how they want to participate. Societies must weigh the risks and the benefits of such a course. It may be that in some wars, of

the sort where not only state sovereignty, but the survival of the people is at stake — wars of ethnic cleansing and genocide or in the face of large scale and on-going massacres — the loss of distinction is worthwhile. In those cases, the adversary has already violated the principle of distinction.

Whatever the specifics of a particular case, societies probably ought not to wait for an invasion occupation to consider the role of civilians in war. The question of how to integrate civilians, if at all, in defense or whether to move to an entirely non-violent civilian based system is, first political and moral, and second about effectiveness. It should probably be discussed in centers like this.