FFI Forsvarets forskningsinstitutt

**Deterrence and live exercises:
How can we analyse the benefits?**

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Foto: AdobeStock

Deterrence and exercises

Large-scale live military exercises are often justified by arguments on their contributions towards deterrence

However:

- Just what is deterrence?

- For whom, and in what cases?

- How to analyse/measure?

Additionally

- Exercises cost a lot

- Environmental impact

- Wargames and simulation-based training may be viable alternatives

Photo: Emil Wenaas Larsen, NOR Armed Forces

The *Response* Exercises

Practical purpose: Tactical + operational

- NOR live exercise (LIVEX),
  with allied participation by invitation
- Training and rehearsal for war
- In the High North
- Recently +/- 30.000 soldiers

(Geo)Political and mil. strategic purpose

- **Key deterrence activity**
- Allied will + cohesion
- STRATCOM, messaging

Nordic Response 2024 (NR24)

- Part of *Steadfast Defender 2024*
- Linked to the UK-led *Joint Warrior 2024*

Map: CIA World Factbook

Deterrence analysis in *Cold Response 22 (CR22)*

Conclusion: The exercise was a strong demonstration of NATO coherence and cohesion, with clear deterrence benefits

However:

- Deterrence in CR22 was strongly linked to the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War
- The long-term effects on deterrence and Alliance cohesion are hard to assess without a larger knowledge base to draw on
- Deterrence effects are perceived by the adversary and hard to measure
- How can we be sure that the lessons we identify are relevant over time?

Problem structuring before *Nordic Response 2024*

Problem: Cost-benefits of LIVEX

Alternatives to LIVEX?
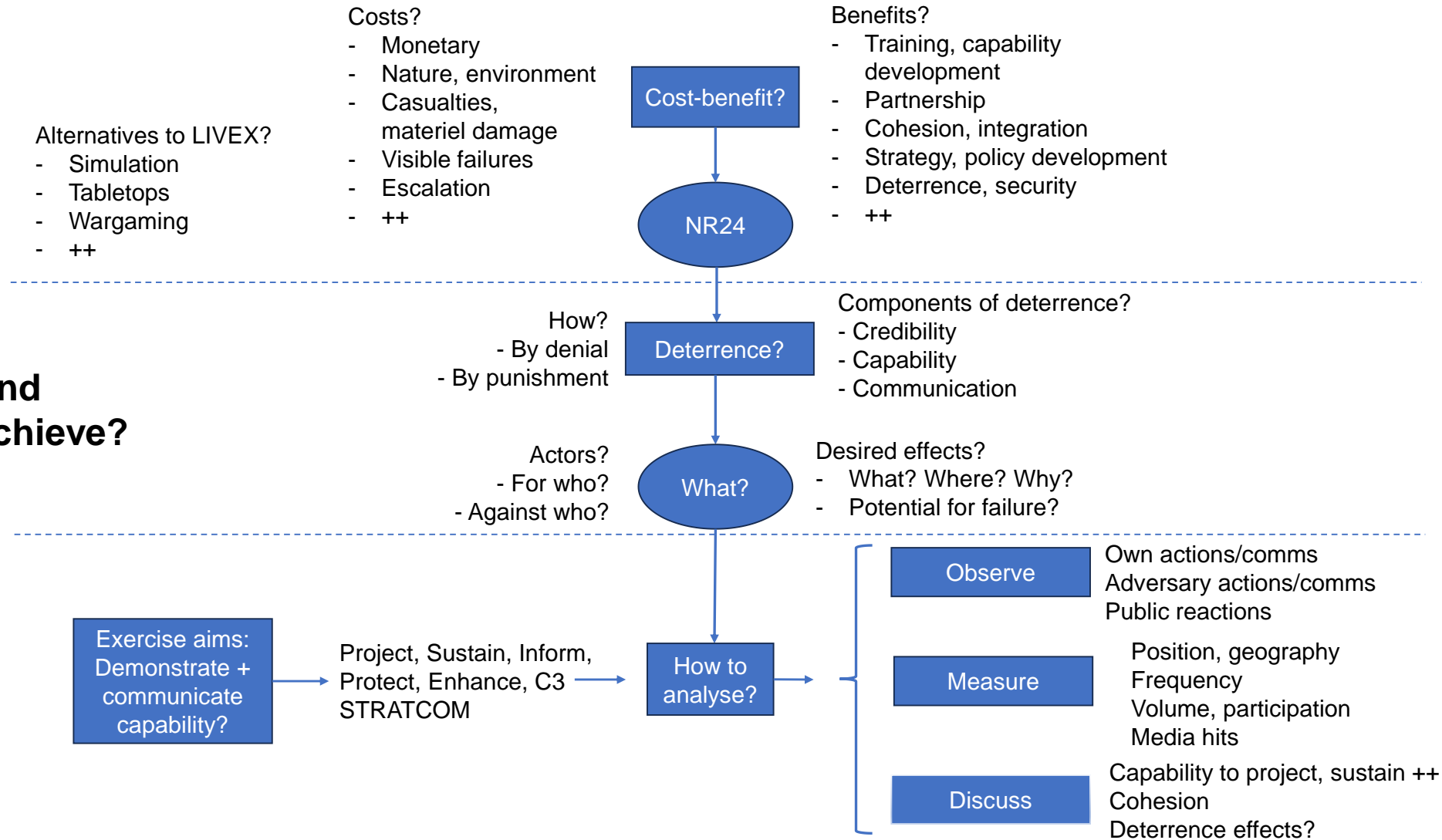- Simulation
- Tabletops
- Wargaming
- ++

Costs?
- Monetary
- Nature, environment
- Casualties, materiel damage
- Visible failures
- Escalation
- ++
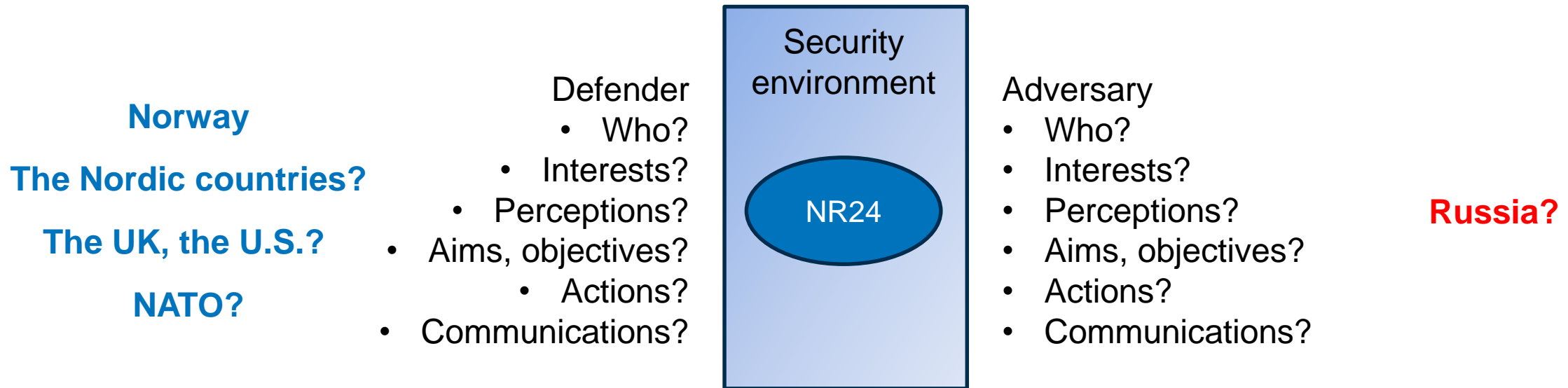
Cost-benefit?

NR24

Benefits?
- Training, capability development
- Partnership
- Cohesion, integration
- Strategy, policy development
- Deterrence, security
- ++

1 What is deterrence, and what are we trying to achieve?

How?
- By denial
- By punishment

Deterrence?

Components of deterrence?
- Credibility
- Capability
- Communication

Actors?
- For who?
- Against who?

What?

Desired effects?
- What? Where? Why?
- Potential for failure?

2 Data collection to support the analysis of deterrence: How and what?

Exercise aims: Demonstrate + communicate capability?

Project, Sustain, Inform, Protect, Enhance, C3 STRATCOM

How to analyse?

Observe

Own actions/comms
Adversary actions/comms
Public reactions

Measure

Position, geography
Frequency
Volume, participation
Media hits

Discuss

Capability to project, sustain ++
Cohesion
Deterrence effects?

Critical:
Understand the actors, their interests and objectives

Norway

The Nordic countries?

The UK, the U.S.?

NATO?

Defender
- Who?
- Interests?
- Perceptions?
- Aims, objectives?
- Actions?
- Communications?

Security environment

NR24

Adversary
- Who?
- Interests?
- Perceptions?
- Aims, objectives?
- Actions?
- Communications?

Russia?

Identify hidden/unspoken assumptions

Build sufficient knowledge on the cost-benefit decision calculus for the involved actors
- Deterrence v. escalation?

NR24 analysis process

Understand the actors

1 Identify actors
- Defenders
- Adversaries

2 Understand actors
- Interests
- Motivations

3 Identify specific deterrence objectives

4 Map activities supporting the deterrence objectives

5 Collect data

6 Discuss possible deterrence effects
- Observations
- Perception

Gather and analyse data
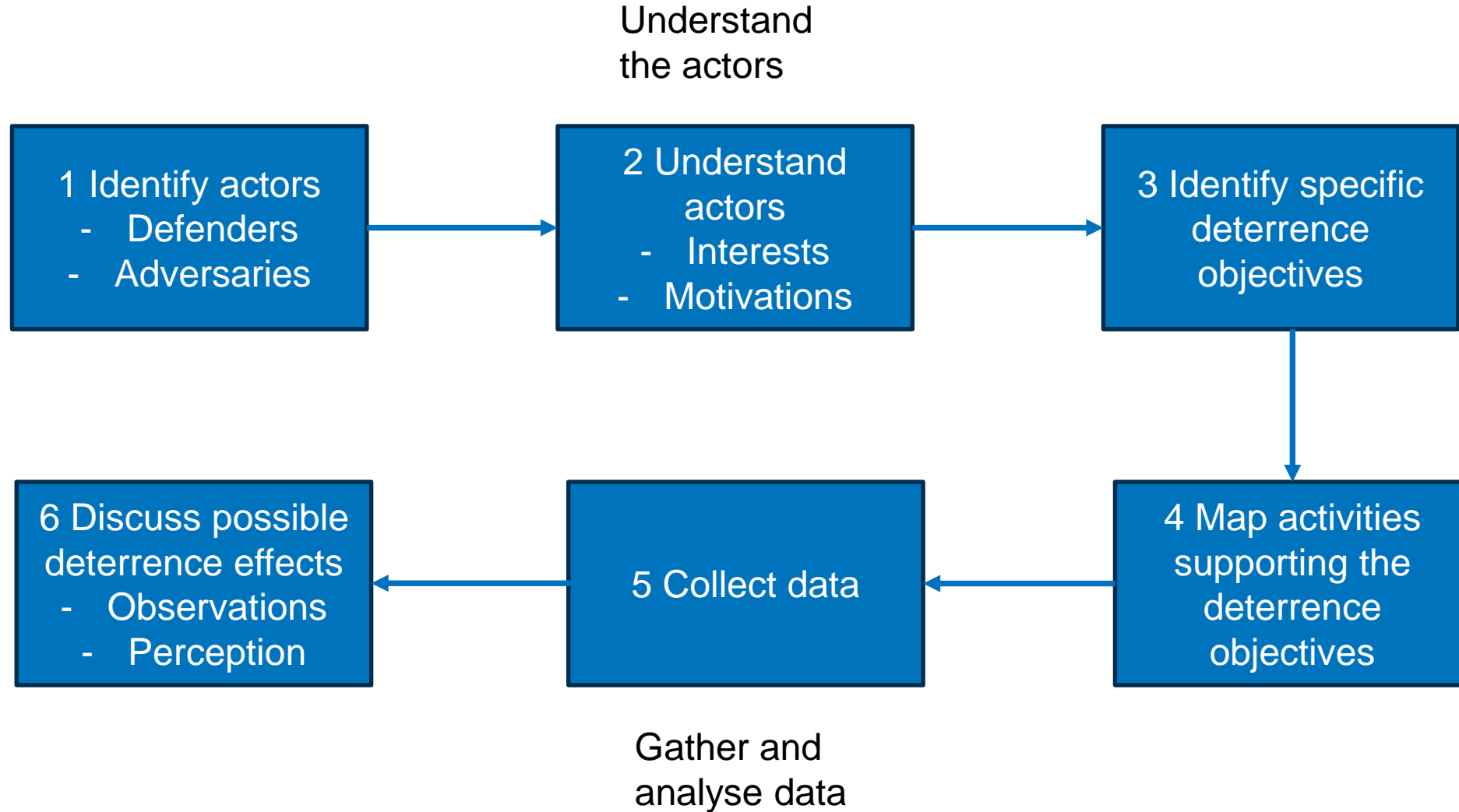
Some anticipated challenges

Are deterrence objectives known + unambiguous?

- "Where", "when"?
- Intended type, scope?

What activities intend to support deterrence objectives?

- Planning v. LIVEX v. STRATCOM?
- Data sources, quantitative v. qualitative?
- How do we collect data, and when?

What data indicate successful deterrence?

- Actual Russian military movements, compared to the expected?
- The coverage of NR24 in Russian media and government statements?
- Russian actions down the line?

Cold Response:

Russia Says No to Observing NATO Exercise

Media: High North News
Photo: 333 Squadron, NOR Armed Forces

Conclusions and way ahead

A simple process for analysing deterrence in LIVEX

*   To be further developed and tested during exercise *Nordic Response 2024*

Key takeaways:

*   Critical to bring clarity to what deterrence means for different stakeholders and which effects they try to achieve
*   Hard to isolate effects on deterrence from one exercise alone
*   (Adversary) deterrence calculus changes over time
*   Conclusions in the CR22/NR24 analysis may be proven wrong in the future
*   But at least, we will have empirical data for later studies

Photos: Torbjørn Kjosvold, NOR Armed Forces
Thomas Nilsen, The Barents Observer