



Figure 1: Cybersecurity theorist Lucas Kello embraces defend forward as a good first step, but argues that Western nations go farther: they should “punish backward” through a system of “punctuated deterrence.” Kello observes that “unpeace” or below-threshold conflict allows nations to levy low-level cyberattacks that have a cumulative strategic effect. That is, countries can achieve strategic effects through disparate attacks, none of which constitutes a use of force. To counter these attacks, Kello argues that “nations that suffer sustained acts of unpeace should punish them as campaigns that inflict *cumulative damage* rather than as individual actions.” In other words, nations must keep a balance sheet of cyber and other offenses against their sovereignty, and commit to punish broadly when the sheet reaches some cumulative threshold of aggression. The US indeed has shifted from a purely deterrence-by-denial strategy to one with more punishment, in the forms of indicting foreign hackers and in persistent engagement. Kello’s work suggests that nations should go further and commit to punishments such as broad sanctions regimes, even if these are economically costly to impose. See STRIKING BACK: THE END OF PEACE IN CYBERSPACE - AND HOW TO RESTORE IT, Yale Univ. Press 2022