

Title: “Testing the Psychological Hypotheses of Confrontation Analysis”

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Abstract: Confrontation Analysis is under consideration as a planning tool for commanders dealing with complex psychological confrontations such as arise in Peace Operations. Confrontation Analysis is based upon Drama Theory, a development of Game Theory. This paper reports on research to test the psychological tenets of Drama Theory with the aim of ensuring its reliability prior to using tools based upon it. Previous Drama Theory papers proved that after players have communicated “positions” and “fallback strategies” to each other they either find that their positions agree and they can trust each other to carry out this agreement, or they face “dilemmas”. This was proved mathematically.

Drama Theory goes on to make predictions as to the behaviour of real-world players. It asserts, as a psychological hypothesis, that each dilemma causes a player to try to eliminate the dilemma by re-defining the situation. This re-definition may be carried out in many different ways—for example: by further changing his or her position, fallback strategies, preferences or options—and are accompanied by emotions.

In order to provide a rigorous test of the psychological assertions of Drama Theory, trials were made of three game “situations” in which subjects’ emotions and preference changes could be predicted. This paper examines the results, and draws conclusions for the applicability of Confrontation Analysis for consistency of Command and Control in confrontations involving military commanders.