Beyond Theater Effects:
Perception-Driven Escalation and Loss-of-Control Thresholds in AI-Mediated Conflict

Author: Shaoyuan Wu
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0660-8232
Affiliation: Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC
Date: April 24, 2026

Working Paper

A-Series Information: WP-A develops foundational concepts and diagnostic frameworks for AI governance, reframing strategic relevance by identifying how power, risk, and control are structurally reconstituted in AI-mediated systems.

Recommended Citation: Wu, Shaoyuan. (2026). *Beyond Theater Effects: Perception-Driven Escalation and Loss-of-Control Thresholds in AI-Mediated Conflict* (EPINOVA Working Paper No. EPINOVA–WP–A–2026–02). Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19734514.

Short Citation: Wu (2026), *Beyond Theater Effects*, EPINOVA Working Paper A–2026–01.

Abstract

This paper examines how artificial intelligence (AI) transforms escalation dynamics by shifting the primary transmission mechanism of conflict from material interaction to perception-driven amplification. Within the Multi-Layer Coupled Complexity Model (MCCM) framework, narrative systems operate as nonlinear multipliers that enable low-cost actions to generate disproportionate systemic effects.

The study develops a mechanism-based account of theater effects and validates it across multiple conflict environments. It shows that perception–impact decoupling and loss-of-control threshold (LoCT) compression can emerge under conditions of high information density, even in the absence of major kinetic change.

The findings suggest that escalation is no longer governed primarily by force, but by the interaction of information, perception, and institutional dynamics. Escalation should therefore be understood as a coupled system process rather than a linear function of material change.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Escalation Dynamics; Narrative Amplification; Information Warfare; Perception–Impact Decoupling; Loss-of-Control Threshold (LoCT); Systemic Risk; MCCM Framework

1. Introduction

Traditional models of conflict assume that escalation is driven by material changes, such as force deployment, territorial shifts, and physical destruction. Under this assumption, strategic impact is expected to scale proportionally with kinetic intensity (Schelling, 1966; Jervis, 1976). However, this assumption no longer holds.

The rise of AI-enabled information systems has transformed the structure of escalation. Visibility, narrative construction, and algorithmic amplification now shape how events propagate across domains, enabling low-cost actions to generate disproportionate systemic effects without corresponding changes in underlying capability (Horowitz et al., 2018; Allen & Chan, 2017; Farrell & Newman, 2019). As a result, escalation is increasingly mediated through perception rather than force.

This paper advances three core arguments. First, escalation dynamics are becoming perception-driven rather than capability-driven. Second, narrative systems operate as nonlinear amplifiers of systemic pressure, transmitting localized events into cross-domain effects (Paul & Matthews, 2016; Rid, 2020). Third, LoCT can be approached through information dynamics alone, without major kinetic escalation (Wu, 2026a).

To support these claims, the paper develops a mechanism-based framework grounded in MCCM and validates it across multiple empirical cases (Wu, 2026b). By integrating theoretical modeling with cross-domain evidence, the analysis provides a systematic account of how AI-driven theater effects reshape escalation and redefine the conditions under which control is maintained. In doing so, it conceptualizes escalation as a LoCT-centered, perception-mediated system process, extending existing insights on perception, signaling, and complex systems into a unified threshold-based framework (Perrow, 1984; Helbing, 2013; Wu, 2026a).

2. Theoretical Framework: MCCM and Theater Effects

The analysis is grounded in MCCM, which conceptualizes conflict as a system of interacting domains including perception, transmission, capability, structure, and institutional constraints.

Within this framework, escalation is not linear but emerges from cross-domain coupling and feedback effects. The introduction of AI transforms one critical dimension: the role of observability and narrative.

2.1 Theater Amplification Mechanism

Escalation dynamics can be expressed as:

$$\boldsymbol{Theater\ Amplification} = \boldsymbol{Narrative} \times \boldsymbol{Visibility} \times \boldsymbol{Algorithmic\ Reach} \tag{2.1}$$

This formulation captures how information systems convert localized actions into system-wide signals. To operationalize the amplification dimension, this paper introduces the **Information System Amplification Index (ISAI)**, which measures the intensity and velocity with which information signals are propagated across media and platform ecosystems, often exhibiting rapid amplification dynamics observed in social media environments (Starbird et al., 2014). ISAI reflects the combined effects of algorithmic distribution, network structure, and audience engagement dynamics that transform localized events into high-impact systemic signals.

A low-cost action enters the system through visibility, is shaped into narratives, and is amplified across platforms. The resulting effect is not additive but multiplicative, as amplification processes, captured in part by ISAI, interact with perception and decision systems. As shown in **Figure 1**, this process forms a self-reinforcing loop in which visibility, narrative construction, and amplification jointly drive escalation dynamics.

2.2 Perception as a Transmission Medium

As a result, perception becomes the primary medium through which escalation propagates. This produces three structural transformations in conflict dynamics. First, the relationship between cost and impact weakens, allowing limited actions to generate disproportionate systemic effects. Second, decision latency compresses as information spreads faster than verification, increasing the likelihood of miscalculation. Third, systemic pressure accumulates through perception-driven feedback, independent of large-scale kinetic change.

Under these conditions, escalation proceeds through recursive interaction between perception, information systems, and decision-making processes, rather than through direct material confrontation alone.

2.3 From Linear Escalation to Feedback-Driven Dynamics

As shown in **Figure 1**, escalation is no longer linear but feedback-driven, consistent with complexity-theoretic accounts of nonlinear system behavior (Mitchell, 2009). Perceived pressure can rise faster than actual pressure, creating a divergence between material conditions and system-level stress. This divergence explains a recurring empirical pattern: high volatility in perception alongside constrained kinetic escalation, where apparent stability masks increasing proximity to LoCT.

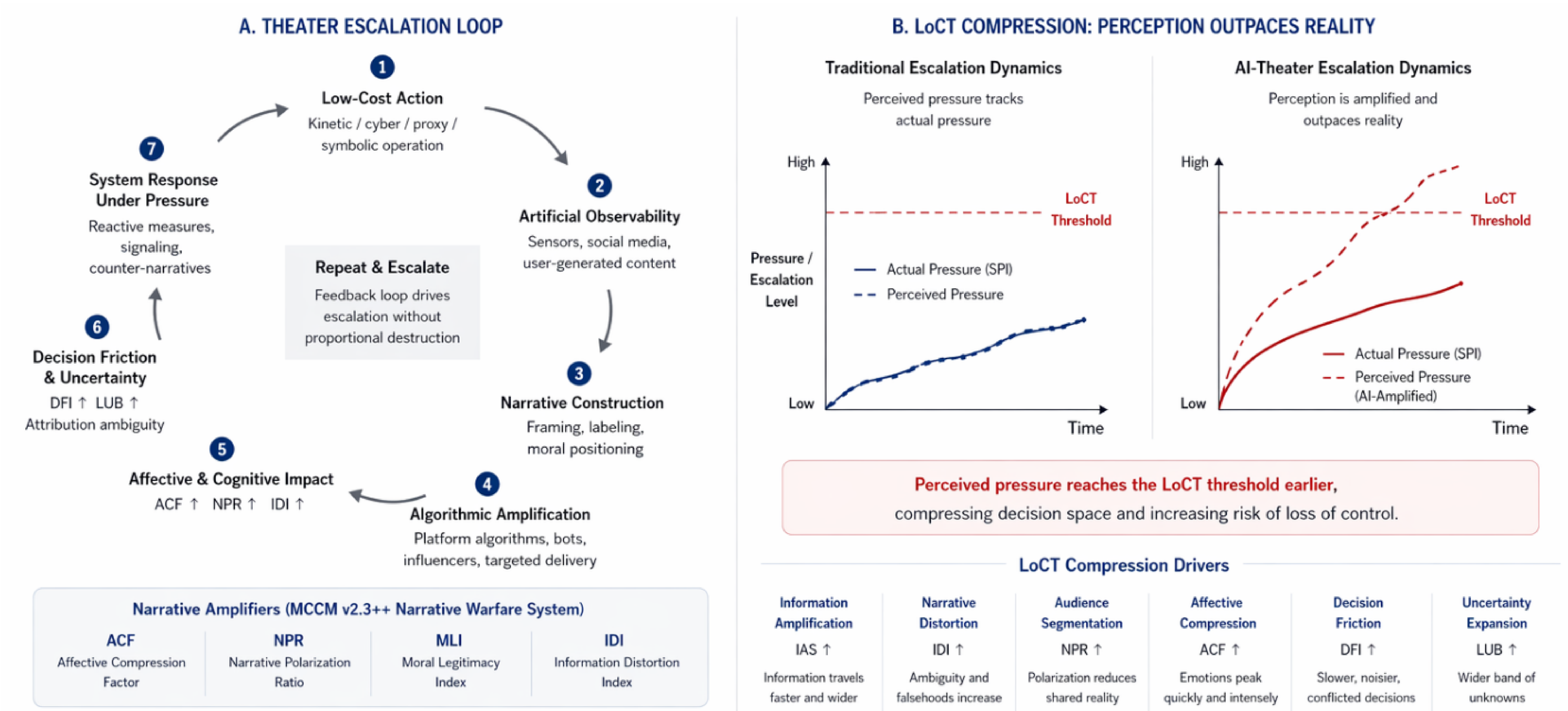

Figure 1. Theater Escalation Loop and LoCT Compression

Caption: AI-enabled amplification creates a self-reinforcing loop in which low-cost actions generate visibility, are translated into narratives, and amplified across information systems. As perceived pressure rises faster than actual pressure, the system approaches LoCT earlier, compressing decision space and increasing escalation risk.

Source: Author's analysis based on the MCCM framework.

3. System Dynamics: LoCT Compression and Stability Transformation

The emergence of theater effects fundamentally transforms the dynamics of system stability. Under traditional conditions, proximity to LoCT is primarily determined by material escalation, with stability maintained through force balance, signaling clarity, and gradual adjustment processes.

Under AI-driven amplification, this relationship is reconfigured. Perceived pressure can rise faster than actual pressure, effectively compressing the distance to LoCT without corresponding changes in underlying capability. As a result, systems may approach instability without large-scale conflict, and escalation risk becomes nonlinear and discontinuous, reflecting dynamics characteristic of complex adaptive systems (Perrow, 1984; Helbing, 2013; Mitchell, 2009).

LoCT therefore serves as the central organizing variable of escalation dynamics under AI-enabled conditions. Rather than reflecting the cumulative effects of force alone, it captures how interactions among perception, information flows, and institutional capacity jointly determine the system's proximity to loss of control, extending classical insights on perception and signaling into a threshold-based, system-level framework (Schelling, 1966; Jervis, 1976; Wu, 2026a).

This shift alters the mechanisms through which stability is maintained. Stability is no longer governed primarily by material balance, but by the system's capacity to absorb, interpret, and regulate perception-driven pressure. As perceived dynamics increasingly outpace material change, control becomes more fragile and discontinuous, and decision processes are more prone to disruption (Schelling, 1966; Jervis, 1976).

At the same time, uncertainty expands beyond the stabilizing capacity of traditional signaling mechanisms, while cross-domain coupling intensifies. Shocks originating in the information domain propagate rapidly across political, economic, and military systems, linking previously separable dynamics into tightly coupled escalation pathways.

The system therefore transitions from one characterized by gradual degradation to one defined by threshold-sensitive instability. Under certain conditions, this dynamic may not lead to immediate collapse, but instead produce a state of sustained high-pressure systemic equilibrium (HPSE), in which systems remain operational while exhibiting declining resilience and increasing sensitivity to shocks (Wu, 2026c). In this state, small perturbations, particularly those amplified through narrative and visibility, can trigger disproportionate systemic effects. Apparent stability may persist, but increasingly masks proximity to loss-of-control conditions.

4. Empirical Validation Strategy

This study adopts a multi-case, cross-domain validation strategy to assess whether AI-enabled theater effects generate measurable escalation dynamics independent of large-scale kinetic change. Rather than aiming at point prediction, the objective is mechanism validation, specifically, to determine whether perception-driven processes systematically shape system-level stress and proximity to LoCT.

4.1 Analytical Framework

To operationalize the validation framework, the analysis integrates three categories of indicators capturing material activity, information dynamics, and system-level outcomes:

- **Kinetic indicators** (baseline controls) include strike intensity, UAV and missile usage, and territorial change, providing a baseline measure of material activity.
- **Narrative indicators** include social media velocity, sentiment polarity, narrative divergence, and misinformation density, capturing amplification dynamics within the information domain. Narrative amplification is further proxied by ISAI, enabling comparative assessment of amplification intensity across cases.

- **Systemic indicators** include shipping flows, insurance premiums, energy prices, and logistics disruptions, capturing downstream effects on economic and logistical systems.

The empirical strategy employs a mixed-method approach designed to trace escalation dynamics across domains:

- **Time-series alignment** identifies lead–lag relationships between narrative spikes, kinetic events, and systemic outcomes, assessing whether perception-driven signals precede measurable system effects.
- **Event-based analysis** examines system responses to high-visibility incidents by defining event windows around major information shocks and measuring abnormal changes in logistics flows, prices, and risk indicators.
- **Cross-domain correlation analysis** evaluates the relative explanatory power of narrative versus kinetic variables in explaining systemic outcomes.
- **Comparative case logic** tests robustness across distinct escalation regimes, including high-intensity, low-cost, and rule-driven environments.

Together, this analytical design enables the identification of three core empirical patterns: narrative spikes systematically precede or amplify system-level stress; systemic disruption occurs without proportional kinetic escalation; and instability correlates with signaling volatility and rule degradation. Taken together, these patterns provide structured empirical support for the presence of perception–impact decoupling and the compression of LoCT.

While the analysis is not designed as a causal identification strategy, it provides structured empirical evidence for mechanism validation within the MCCM framework.

4.2 Case Application

The validation framework is applied across three conflict environments to assess whether perception-driven dynamics generate system-level effects independent of kinetic escalation. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, these cases exhibit a consistent divergence between limited kinetic activity and disproportionate systemic disruption.

A. Russia–Ukraine War

The Russia–Ukraine war provides a high-intensity, high-information-density environment in which narrative amplification can be examined alongside sustained kinetic activity. The analysis focuses on periods of elevated information visibility, including widely circulated drone strike footage and infrastructure attack reporting, and compares corresponding shifts in narrative indicators with underlying battlefield changes.

Across these episodes, increases in narrative intensity are evaluated in relation to decision friction, escalation gradients, and cross-domain transmission. This comparison enables assessment of whether escalation perception accelerates beyond observable changes in strike volume or territorial dynamics, indicating amplification effects within the information domain.

B. Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz case captures a rule-driven escalation environment characterized by institutional contestation and signaling instability. The analysis examines changes in rule-related variables, including contestation, fragmentation, politicization, and erosion, alongside shifts in political signaling and incident frequency.

These developments are compared with system-level indicators such as shipping throughput and energy price volatility to assess whether rising institutional instability corresponds to increasing systemic stress. The focus is on whether threshold dynamics emerge through rule degradation and signaling disruption in the absence of major kinetic escalation.

C. Red Sea Crisis

The Red Sea crisis represents a low-cost, high-spillover environment in which limited attacks generate disproportionate systemic effects. The analysis traces individual low-cost strike events, particularly UAV and missile incidents targeting vessels, and examines subsequent responses across shipping, insurance, and corporate behavior.

Observed patterns, including rerouting decisions, insurance premium adjustments, and commercial withdrawal, are analyzed to assess whether relatively small-scale actions produce large-scale disruption through amplification mechanisms, reflecting a decoupling between physical impact and systemic consequences.

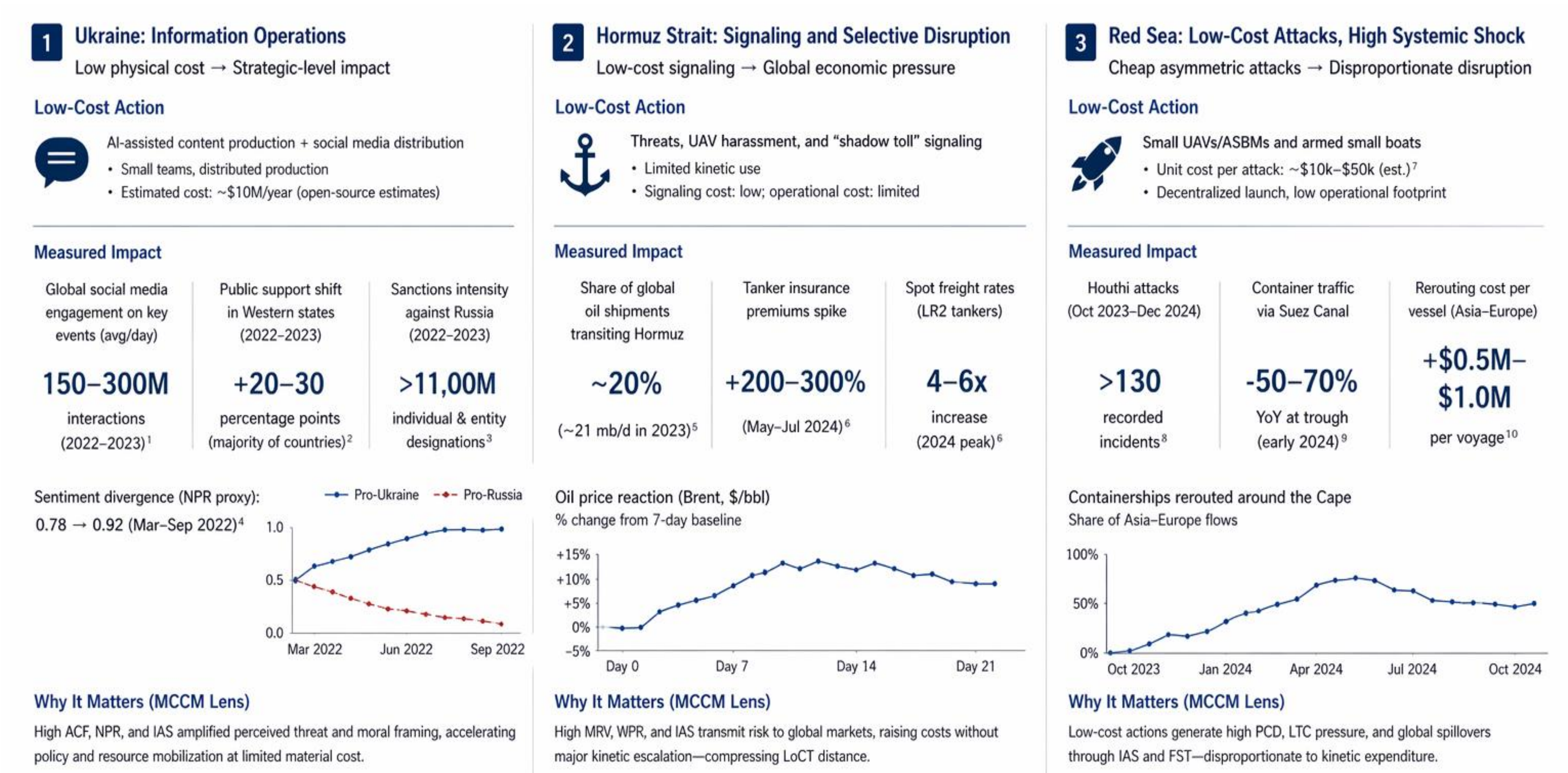

Figure 2. Low-Cost Actions, High-System Impact Across Cases

Caption: Across the Russia–Ukraine war, the Red Sea crisis, and the Strait of Hormuz, low-cost or limited kinetic actions are associated with disproportionate systemic disruption, including logistics shifts, market volatility, and signaling changes. The figure highlights the divergence between physical activity and system-level impact, consistent with perception–impact decoupling under AI-enabled theater effects.

Source: Author's analysis based on multi-source data, including open-source intelligence (OSINT), AIS shipping data, energy market indicators, and media-based narrative metrics.

Working Paper

4.3 Findings

As shown in **Figure 3**, increases in narrative amplification are associated with rising system-level stress and a reduced distance to LoCT. Across cases, three consistent patterns emerge.

First, spikes in narrative intensity systematically precede or amplify system-level stress, even when kinetic activity remains relatively stable.

Second, low-cost or limited actions generate disproportionate systemic effects, including logistics disruption, market volatility, and shifts in political signaling.

Third, systems approach threshold conditions through information dynamics and institutional instability rather than through large-scale battlefield escalation, reflecting competitive threshold dynamics in which actors face asymmetric exposure to loss-of-control conditions (Wu, 2026d).

Taken together, these findings provide consistent evidence of perception–impact decoupling and indicate that LoCT compression can occur without major kinetic change.

While the analysis is not designed as a causal identification strategy, it provides structured empirical evidence for mechanism validation.

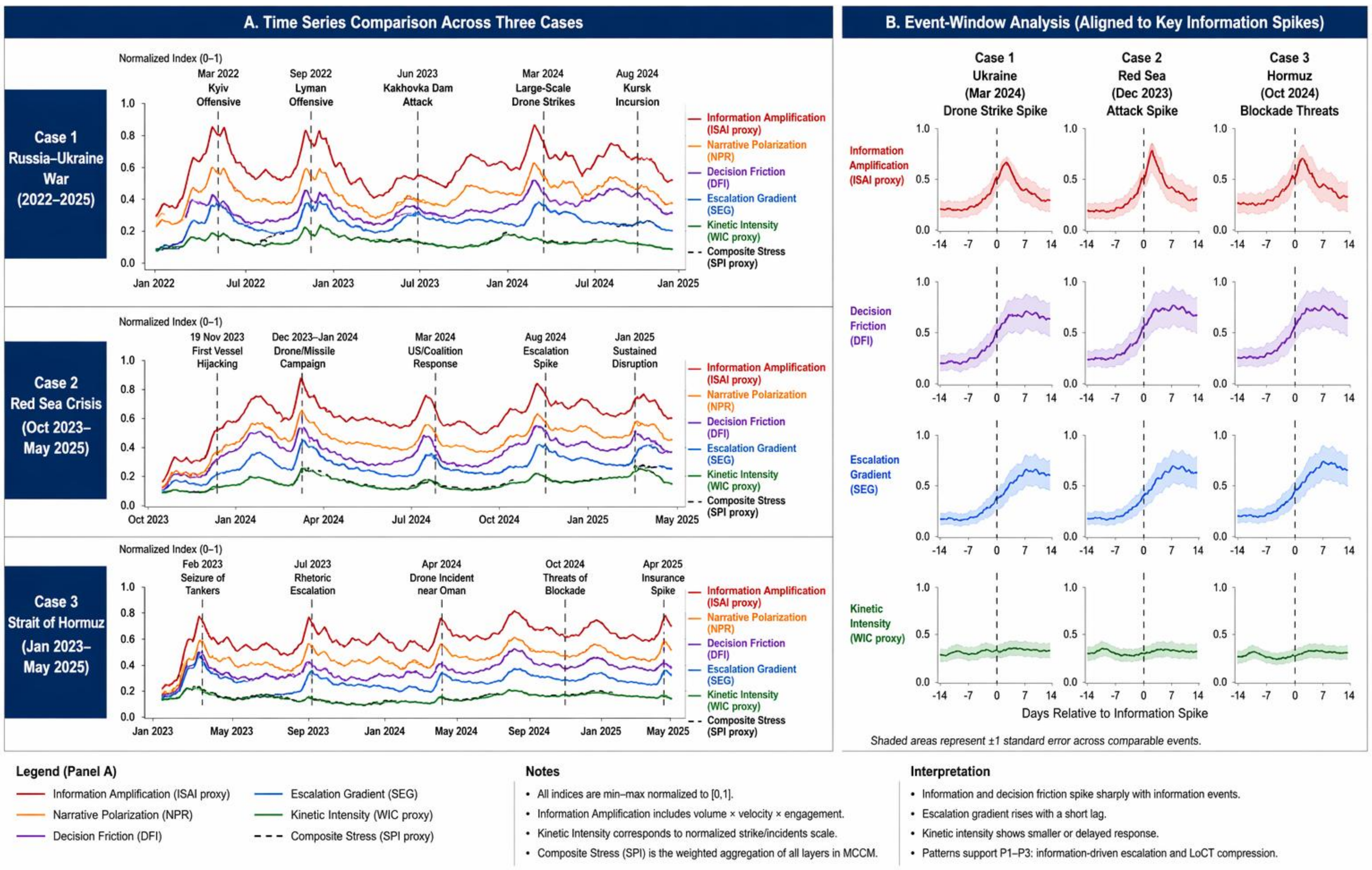

Figure 3. Validation of Theater Effects and LoCT Compression

Caption: The figure illustrates the relationship between narrative amplification, system-level stress, and proximity to the loss-of-control threshold (LoCT). As narrative intensity and information velocity increase, proxied by the Information System Amplification Index (ISAI), perceived pressure rises faster than underlying material change, compressing decision space and accelerating the approach to LoCT. This dynamic provides empirical support for perception-driven escalation mechanisms across cases.

Source: Author's analysis based on the MCCM framework, integrating narrative indicators, kinetic baselines, and systemic outcome measures.

4.4 Interpretation

This validation strategy does not aim to predict specific outcomes, but to assess whether the mechanisms proposed by the MCCM framework, particularly theater-driven amplification and LoCT compression, are empirically observable across different conflict environments.

The convergence of findings across structurally distinct cases suggests that escalation dynamics are not solely driven by material change. Instead, perception, narrative amplification, and institutional instability function as primary drivers of system-level outcomes.

More broadly, these results support a shift in conflict analysis from force-based models toward a framework in which escalation is understood as a function of information dynamics, perception, and the capacity of institutions to regulate systemic pressure.

5. Discussion

The transformation of escalation dynamics under AI-enabled theater effects produces several structural implications for conflict systems.

First, escalation risk becomes increasingly information-driven rather than capability-driven (Horowitz et al., 2018; Farrell & Newman, 2019). Changes in narrative velocity and amplification compress decision timelines and accelerate escalation gradients, even when underlying material capabilities remain stable.

Second, systems may converge toward loss-of-control conditions without observable escalation. This form of “silent threshold convergence” reflects the nonlinear structure of escalation, in which information amplification, decision compression, and cross-domain coupling jointly reduce the effective distance to LoCT.

Third, high-information environments increase the probability of miscalculation (Jervis, 1976; Fearon, 1995). Under conditions of rapid information flow and limited verification, attribution uncertainty and competing narratives introduce systematic bias toward overreaction.

Fourth, institutional erosion functions as an independent driver of escalation (Perrow, 1984). Fragmentation, politicization, and weakened enforcement mechanisms reduce the system’s capacity to stabilize interpretation and constrain behavior, thereby lowering effective escalation thresholds.

Finally, negotiation feasibility becomes structurally constrained rather than preference-based. Under theater conditions, signaling instability, asymmetric information, and time-arbitrage incentives limit the effectiveness of negotiation even when actors express willingness to engage.

Taken together, these dynamics indicate a structural shift from force-based escalation models toward systems in which information, perception, and institutional stability jointly determine risk.

6. Policy Framework: Rebuilding Control

The appropriate response is not to suppress narrative competition, but to restore institutional control over perception-driven escalation dynamics.

Policy intervention should focus on five core directions:

- **Restore decision latency through verification mechanisms.** Separate confirmation from attribution, delay escalation decisions until evidence stabilizes, and institutionalize multi-stage response protocols to reduce decision friction and premature escalation.

- **Re-govern observability and attribution.** Establish multi-source verification frameworks, standardize attribution procedures, and create protected evidence channels to shift observability from platform-driven to institution-driven systems.
- **Stabilize institutional rules under pressure.** Reinforce baseline norms, limit real-time politicization of incomplete information, and preserve minimum shared standards of interpretation to prevent rule erosion from accelerating escalation.
- **Make restraint visible and strategically credible.** Develop formal risk signaling mechanisms, publicize de-risking measures, and create observable pathways for de-escalation to restore the strategic value of non-escalatory behavior.
- **Design negotiation frameworks resistant to structural distortion.** Enforce symmetry in commitments, limit time-arbitrage opportunities, and ensure observable compliance mechanisms to maintain negotiation feasibility under high-pressure conditions.

7. Limitations and Outlook

This analysis relies on proxy-based measurement of narrative indicators, which are inherently sensitive to platform-specific dynamics and data availability constraints. Attribution uncertainty and information distortion, particularly in early-stage crises, may affect input quality and introduce bias into observed relationships. In addition, cross-case comparability remains partial rather than exact, and the framework is most applicable to high-connectivity, information-saturated conflict environments. Accordingly, findings should be interpreted as indicative of structural tendencies rather than precise causal estimates.

Despite these limitations, the framework provides a systematic basis for analyzing escalation dynamics under conditions of increasing information complexity. Future research can refine measurement approaches for narrative variables, improve data integration across domains, and further develop dynamic representations of threshold behavior. More broadly, extending the framework to additional conflict environments and incorporating real-time monitoring capabilities would enhance its applicability as both an analytical and early-warning tool.

8. Conclusion

AI-driven theater effects represent a structural transformation in conflict systems (Wu, 2026a). Escalation is no longer governed primarily by the accumulation of force, but by the interaction of information, perception, and institutional dynamics, which together shape how pressure propagates across systems.

As a result, systems may approach loss-of-control conditions even in the absence of major kinetic change. This reconfiguration introduces a persistent risk of high-pressure equilibria characterized by continuous signaling, elevated uncertainty, and compressed decision space.

Effective risk management therefore requires a shift from capability-based control toward system-level constraint management. In particular, restoring verification, preserving decision latency, and maintaining institutional coherence are essential to preventing premature convergence toward LoCT.

Working Paper

References

Allen, G. C., & Chan, T. (2017). *Artificial intelligence and national security*. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School.

Farrell, H., & Newman, A. L. (2019). Weaponized interdependence: How global economic networks shape state coercion. *International Security, 44*(1), 42–79. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00351

Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization, 49*(3), 379–414. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300033324

Helbing, D. (2013). Globally networked risks and how to respond. *Nature, 497*(7447), 51–59. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature12047

Horowitz, M. C., Kahn, L., & Mahoney, C. O. (2018). *Artificial intelligence and international security*. Center for a New American Security.

Jervis, R. (1976). *Perception and misperception in international politics*. Princeton University Press.

Mitchell, M. (2009). *Complexity: A guided tour*. Oxford University Press.

Paul, C., & Matthews, M. (2016). *The Russian "firehose of falsehood" propaganda model*. RAND Corporation.

Perrow, C. (1984). *Normal accidents: Living with high-risk technologies*. Princeton University Press.

Rid, T. (2020). *Active measures: The secret history of disinformation and political warfare*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Schelling, T. C. (1966). *Arms and influence*. Yale University Press.

Starbird, K., Maddock, J., Orand, M., Achterman, P., & Mason, R. M. (2014). Rumors, false flags, and digital vigilantes: Misinformation on Twitter after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. *iConference 2014 Proceedings*. https://doi.org/10.9776/14308

Wu, S. (2026a). *A systemic theory of escalation and the loss-of-control threshold in networked conflict* (EPINOVA Working Paper No. EPINOVA–WP–F–2026–09). Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19139977

Wu, S. (2026b). *From cost monitoring to systemic escalation assessment: The MCCM v2.0+ framework* (Policy Brief No. EPINOVA–2026–PB–29). Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19550886

Wu, S. (2026c). *Escalation without collapse: High-pressure systemic equilibrium in the U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict (Days 1–50)* (Policy Brief No. EPINOVA–2026–PB–35). Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19645873

Wu, S. (2026d). *Who loses control first? Threshold competition in the 2026 U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict* (EPINOVA Working Paper No. EPINOVA–WP–F–2026–08). Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19118195

Working Paper

Appendix A. MCCM Variable Definitions

Variable	Name	Definition	Interpretation
DFI	Decision Friction Index	A composite measure capturing constraints and distortions affecting decision-making processes under conflict conditions, including delays, informational noise, and coordination failures.	Higher values indicate greater difficulty in timely, accurate, and coordinated decision-making, leading to increased instability and reduced control capacity.
NPR	Narrative Polarization Ratio	A measure of the extent to which competing narratives diverge into mutually reinforcing and oppositional frames, reflecting interpretive fragmentation and audience segmentation.	Higher values indicate stronger polarization, increasing misperception, escalation bias, and resistance to de-escalatory signaling.
ISAI	Information System Amplification Index	A measure of the intensity and speed at which information signals are amplified across media and platform ecosystems, driven by algorithmic distribution and network effects.	Higher values indicate stronger amplification, increasing the likelihood that localized events produce system-wide escalation effects.
IDI	Information Distortion Index	A measure of the degree to which circulating information deviates from verifiable conditions, capturing distortion from misinformation, selective framing, propagation bias, and signal degradation.	Higher values indicate greater divergence between perceived and actual system states, increasing attribution uncertainty, decision error, and escalation risk driven by misperception.
SEG	Strategic Escalation Gradient	A measure of the rate of change in conflict intensity across time and domains, capturing escalation speed, scope expansion, and cross-domain propagation effects.	Higher values indicate rapid escalation acceleration and expanding conflict scope, signaling increasing systemic instability and faster compression toward critical thresholds.
EFLI	Escalation Feedback Loop Intensity	A measure of the strength and persistence of recursive interactions between actions and system responses, where escalation events generate reinforcing secondary effects across domains.	Higher values indicate stronger positive feedback dynamics, making escalation increasingly self-reinforcing and less dependent on deliberate control.
DRI	De-risking & Restraint Index	A composite measure of actions and conditions that reduce escalation pressure, including de-escalatory signaling, operational restraint, and diplomatic engagement.	Higher values indicate stronger stabilizing forces, expanding the buffer to escalation thresholds and enhancing system-level control capacity.
LUB	Latent Uncertainty Band	A measure of the range of unobserved or ambiguous variables that introduce uncertainty into assessment, attribution, and decision-making processes.	Wider bands indicate greater systemic uncertainty, increasing the probability of miscalculation and divergence between perceived and actual system states.

Appendix A. MCCM Variable Definitions (Cont.)

Variable	Name	Definition	Interpretation
EET	Energy & Economic Throughput	A measure of the functional flow of energy and economic activity within the system, capturing the ratio of actual throughput to baseline capacity across critical infrastructures.	Lower values indicate disruption to systemic flows, reflecting reduced operational continuity and increasing economic pressure that contributes to cumulative systemic stress.
SRS	State Risk Signaling	A measure of the clarity, intensity, and credibility of risk-related signals issued by state actors, including warnings, deterrent messaging, and strategic communication of escalation thresholds.	Higher values indicate stronger and more explicit signaling, which can stabilize expectations through clarity or intensify escalation through threat amplification, depending on system context.
LoCT	Loss-of-Control Threshold	A system-level threshold at which cumulative pressures exceed an actor's capacity to regulate escalation dynamics, triggering nonlinear and self-reinforcing escalation processes.	Crossing LoCT reflects a breakdown in coordination and control, where escalation becomes increasingly autonomous and difficult to contain.

Appendix B . MCCM-Aligned Policy Action Matrix

Actor	Objective	Immediate Actions (0–30 days)	Structural Actions (30–180 days)	MCCM Link
Government	Restore decision control under high narrative pressure	• Establish multi-source verification mechanisms (e.g., OSINT, ISR, allied inputs) • Introduce structured delay windows for escalation decisions • Implement calibrated state risk signaling (SRS) in place of reactive messaging	• Institutionalize verification protocols across agencies • Develop cross-domain coordination mechanisms (military, economic, information) • Codify escalation thresholds into formal doctrine	Reduces decision friction (DFI) and information distortion (IDI), while expanding decision space (DRI)
Military	Contain narrative-driven tactical escalation	• Decouple operational decision-making from media cycles • Implement engagement delay buffers in high-risk environments • Strengthen control over observability (visibility and attribution of actions)	• Develop low-cost capabilities with bounded escalation potential (e.g., UAV doctrine redesign) • Integrate LoCT-aware planning into operational frameworks	Reduces escalation gradients (SEG) and escalation feedback loops (EFLI), while improving control space
Corporations	Reduce exposure to systemic shock and narrative volatility	• Activate rapid de-risking protocols (DRI) • Adjust logistics and supply chain routing • Limit personnel exposure in high-risk environments	• Diversify supply chains structurally • Build redundancy in logistics networks • Integrate geopolitical risk assessment into core planning processes	Reduces systemic exposure (EET risk) and enhances overall system resilience
Platforms (Media / Tech)	Mitigate amplification of distortion and polarization	• Limit rapid spread of unverified high-velocity content • Explicitly signal uncertainty ranges (LUB) • Adjust algorithmic amplification thresholds	• Develop credibility-weighted information architectures • Integrate verification layers into content distribution systems	Reduces information amplification (ISAI), narrative polarization (NPR), and information distortion (IDI)