

2022

## Secrets and Cooperation: The Role of Intelligence in International Relations Theory

Aaron Z. Brock  
aaron.z.brock.mil@army.mil

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/ijosp>



Part of the [Defense and Security Studies Commons](#), [International and Area Studies Commons](#), [International Relations Commons](#), [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#), [Military and Veterans Studies Commons](#), and the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Brock, Aaron Z. (2022) "Secrets and Cooperation: The Role of Intelligence in International Relations Theory," *International Journal of Security Studies & Practice*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/ijosp/vol2/iss1/1>

This Practice and Perspective is brought to you for free and open access by Nighthawks Open Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Security Studies & Practice by an authorized editor of Nighthawks Open Institutional Repository.

**SECRETS AND COOPERATION: THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE IN  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY**

Aaron Z. Brock

aaron.z.brock.mil@army.mil

Lieutenant Aaron Z. Brock is an intelligence officer in the Georgia Army National Guard, who first enlisted in January 2017 as an intelligence analyst. He is a May 2020 graduate of the University of North Georgia where, in addition to his commission, he received a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with minors in Russian and Military Leadership. While a cadet, Aaron was a Project Global Officer! language scholar for Russian, studying abroad in Eastern Europe. He later served as an intern with the Defense Intelligence Agency's Cooperative Education Program during his senior year. Aaron is currently on active duty, providing support to the Customs and Border Protection Office of Intelligence in Washington, DC. His previous assignment was at Headquarters, U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Florida in the Directorate of Intelligence where he served as an Intelligence Engagements Officer. In addition to his Bachelor of Science degree, Lieutenant Brock holds an Associate of Applied Science in Intelligence Operations Studies from Cochise College, and is currently a graduate student enrolled at Norwich University in the Strategic Studies Master of Arts program.

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are that of the author and do not imply support or endorsements from any other institution, group, or organization.*

## **Secrets and Cooperation: The Role of Intelligence in International Relations Theory**

The role of intelligence in achieving military, economic, or other forms of objectives is not a new concept. Sun Tzu was an ancient Chinese military general and strategist, scholar, and philosopher who lived 2,500 years ago during the Zhou Dynasty. In *The Art of War*, his most famous work, he wrote that “advance knowledge cannot be gained from ghosts and spirits, inferred from phenomena, or projected from the measures of heaven, but must be gained from men for it is the knowledge of the enemy’s true situation” (Tzu, 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC; Sawyer & Sawyer, 1994, p. 231). He was writing about the value of intelligence and went on to describe diverse types of spies that military commanders can deploy to learn as much about the enemy as possible. Has intelligence lost its value in the last 2,500 years? The short answer is no. Rather, it is important to not only military leaders today, but also to diplomats, policy makers, and international organizations. As Pashakhanlou (2017) put it, “The ways in which intelligence has been conducted does...vary across time and space and the procedures are often radically different in the Information Age from previous epochs” (p. 521).

The second decade of the twenty-first century is one with unique challenges that the United States and the world has never endured. China is on the rise, becoming bolder and more ambitious in its quest for economic and military dominance. Russia is actively undermining democracies around the world and seeking to weaken alliances on the European continent, while supporting brutal dictatorships with a clear desire to become a great power once again. Iran poses a security challenge to the United States and its allies through its nuclear program, while North Korea also continues to challenge U.S. policies and international law by testing nuclear weapons. This new age of Great Power Competition (GPC) requires more than military action. To achieve a strategic edge against its adversaries and counter malign influence, the United States and its

global allies must leverage the extensive capabilities of the Intelligence Community to drive decision making not only as it relates to military use of force, but also diplomacy and efforts to promote cooperation—both security and economic—among nation states.

## **Thesis**

Accurate, credible, and timely intelligence allows policy makers, senior military leaders, and heads of state make informed decisions on matters of national security, use of force, and formulating plans to compete with strategic threats. Intelligence collection, production, and analysis accomplishes these objectives. This paper seeks to analyze the role intelligence plays in various International Relations (IR) theories and how the application of intelligence assists nation states in achieving their own objectives. Not only will this paper examine specific IR theories, but also historical events and noteworthy intelligence professionals and diplomats who have shown throughout their careers how to apply these truths to their work. Finally, this paper will outline the ways in which world leaders today—especially those who wish to promote democracy and preserve peace—ought to move forward in a time of global competition. Solving security challenges in a post-COVID-19 world will require an innovative approach, and global competitors are not waiting.

## **A New Era for Competition**

Now that U.S. and coalition forces have completed their withdrawal out of Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terror has ended, the Department of Defense (DOD) and IC now shift their focus from counterterrorism to GPC, and more importantly, large scale combat operations. Although ground forces may not be as widely used in GPC, it should be expected that cyber, artificial intelligence, and even space-centric technologies be used both by the United States and its allies, along with adversaries. The threats to the United States, therefore, are becoming more

nuanced and potentially more lethal. The COVID-19 global pandemic did not pause or delay nefarious actors from plotting acts of terrorism, destruction, or harm to the United States. The 2021 Annual Threat Assessment from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) warned that, “Beijing, Moscow, Tehran, and Pyongyang have demonstrated the capability and intent to advance their interests at the expense of the United States and its allies, despite the pandemic” (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2021, p. 4). Keeping these realities in mind, a study into the role of intelligence in IR theory—and subsequently any policy that results from it—is a good starting point.

### **Classic Realism**

This theory in international relations asserts that nation states exist for their own self interests. Realists place their focus and attention on domestic affairs but view international conflicts as areas to avoid. They do not believe that it is in their self-interest to be involved, whether financially or militarily, in a prolonged conflict, especially if the end state is unclear. Jütersonke (2010) wrote, “In international relations theory, Realism posits that international politics involves self-interested actors operating in a self-help system with no overreaching authority” (Jütersonke, p. 5). One of the most notable Realists in history is Hans J. Morgenthau (1904-1980) who taught that “First, that for theoretical purposes, international relations is identical with international politics; second, that a theory of international politics is but a specific instance of a general theory of politics.” Here, Morgenthau is teaching that IR theory and IR politics go together. Realists ought to know the international system to participate in it effectively.

Doyle and Ikenberry (1997) wrote about the central figure in Classic Realism as “the fundamental unit of political organization for the past several centuries has been, and at the

present it is, the nation state” (p. 164). These two authors support what Jütersonke writes, and they hold the same assumptions. Given these basic facts on Realism, domestic security would be a product of a nation state that has self-interests. No matter their democratic status, most world leaders want their nation to be safe and secure. Thus, gathering and analyzing intelligence achieves the objectives of having a secure nation. Nations, in their own self-interests, will not only mobilize whatever military resources they have at their disposal, but also intelligence assets and capabilities. Is Realism, however, the most effective IR theory that promotes the use of intelligence?

To answer this question, it is important to analyze the relationships nations have when it comes to intelligence sharing and not just joint military training, exercises, or drills. With emerging threats becoming more complex, the exchange of intel capabilities and resources among global allies will become more necessary. As such, the Realist school of IR theory approaches partnerships with caution. Dunne et al. (2016) pointed out that Morgenthau “[understood] politics as a struggle for power and unilateral advantage.” Additionally, they wrote that Realism is cautious of partnerships, but not entirely dismissive, because “military capability and alliances are necessary safeguards in the rough-and-tumble world of international relations but cannot be counted on to preserve the peace or the independence of actors” (p. 40). Much of this skepticism came out of World War II. In the years following the war, the European continent was healing and building back from decades of monarchial rule and dictatorships. The United States played a significant role in rebuilding Europe, but it took years longer for relationships to be made. It is no surprise that when nation states take up their own cause—often a misguided one as Germany and Italy learned in World War II—on their own with little regard to the consequences, alliances and partnerships will often not last, and cooperation will be hard to

achieve. Intelligence is a crucial asset, and therefore, that valuable information is only able to be obtained through lasting partnerships that will require frequent attention and nurturement.

Being hesitant of intel sharing among allies is a major weakness in the Realist theory. This is viewed by Pashakhanlou (2017) as a “security dilemma” (p. 519). There is only one solution, and it is easier said than done. “To overcome this condition, states must accurately gauge and reassure one another of their benign intentions” (Pashakhanlou, p. 520). Some partnerships will take longer to foster than others. Nation states must not only have the will to engage in security cooperation, but also the resources. DeVine (2019) stressed that it is not only in the United States’ best interest for enhanced security cooperation through intelligence, but also the nation with which the United States is attempting to cooperate. “U.S. intelligence relations with foreign counterparts offer a number of benefits: indications and warning of an attack, expanded geographic coverage, corroboration of national sources, accelerated access to a contingency area, and a diplomatic backchannel” (DeVine, p. 1). Realism, therefore, provides fair and well-thought points on the role of intelligence in national objectives, but falls short in international cooperation to confront like adversaries and security challenges.

### **Classic Liberalism**

Classic Liberalism is among the most widely studied theories in international relations. This is because many Western democracies that exist today, the United States included, exist as a result from Liberal thinkers like John Locke (1632-1704) or Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Their research and literature equipped and enabled thinkers to challenge the status quo of what it meant to be governed and to govern. Liberals advocate for free and fair elections, human and civil rights, and the rule of law. Where, then, does intelligence play a role? Dunne et al. (2016) wrote that the Classic Liberal thinker holds the position that “war and conflict can be overcome or

mitigated through concerted changes in both the domestic and international structures of governance” (p. 69). In twenty-first century America, this governance is far beyond what Locke and Kant advocated for. Today, the federal government is much bigger than what they envisioned, and it certainly has more control and influence on global affairs. Nevertheless, Classic Liberalism still advocates for cooperation to achieve good and effective governance.

Intelligence, thus, is central to governance in the modern world. It drives IR policies and national defense strategies. Pinkus (2014), however, has a stern warning. Intelligence can be politicized, and when it is, its value is undermined, and achieving national policy objectives becomes more difficult. One such example is when political leaders interpret the intelligence assessments they receive into their own personal narratives, often with political spin. Pinkus (2014) wrote that “the main risk of using intelligence for public diplomacy is that even when intelligence does not directly contradict what policymakers want it to reveal, it will likely introduce nuances that create political difficulties. These nuances can tempt policymakers to distort information when they present it to the public” (p. 35). Is this, however, a weakness to the Liberal IR theory? It can be. Consider the amount of power, influence, and trust liberal democracies enjoy in their elected representatives. Few Americans pay attention to the “nuances” of the intelligence community and its work, and thus, they easily choose to believe whatever someone in a position of influence tells them or what they may hear in the news or social media.

Intelligence and diplomacy are not only politicized in liberal democracies, but also in states that are run by brutal dictators. The fundamental concepts of Classic Liberalism—freedom, free speech, and so many others—are very much present in recent history, and of course, politics and governance play an important calculation. Look no further than the Arab Spring, which began in Egypt in 2011 and was felt in neighboring Libya, Tunisia, and portions of the Middle East such as Syria. The citizens of these dictator-run countries protested their oppressive government out of a



sense of nationalism, desire for freedom, and a demand for basic human rights. The United States was seen as a nation that would undoubtedly support the people of North Africa and the Middle East.

Burns (2020) wrote that, at the time, President Barack Obama did not wish to make the plight for freedom a political football. Responding with military force would not be the preferred course of action, but rather diplomacy. This proved difficult, especially during the Syrian Civil War. When Syrian President Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people, President Obama was placed in a difficult position, revealing another potential weakness to the Classic Liberalism IR theory. The Administration received credible intelligence that sarin gas was used by the Assad regime to kill thousands of civilians. “Assad has not only crossed our red line but had violated a crucial international norm” (p. 329). Burns argued that if military retaliatory action is used based on “incontestable” intelligence, such a response should not be viewed as “regime change” or “direct intervention in the civil war” (p. 330).

The role of intelligence in Classic Liberalism can thus be defined as a means of gathering reports and observations of acts being performed by dictators and nation states in direct competition with the United States. The Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War revealed that intelligence helps paint a picture of the social and political unrest that often unfolds in these non-democratic states.

### **Neoliberalism**

This theory in IR embraces alliances and partnerships. It argues that the world today is an institutional in nature and as such, global powers, economies, and societies operate in such a way that they cannot be successful without relying on each other to a certain degree. The international system requires cooperation. Much of this is accomplished not through individual nation states, as Realism would approach it, but through organizations made up of international participants. Neoliberalism emerged after World War II and at first was focused on economic cooperation, but the theory quickly applied to security cooperation as well during the Cold War, a time when

tensions remained high between the United States, the Soviet Union, and other nations that still felt the vulnerabilities of World War II. Scholars of Neoliberalism, therefore, teach that common threats lead to common ground. When nation states face a like adversary or a like threat, their instinct is to protect themselves and each other. The establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a fitting example of an organization that emerged from a great, global conflict with the aim of promoting regional security, cooperation among states, and diplomatic partnerships.

Intelligence comes plays a role in Neoliberalism by being a method by which nation states, through international organizations, can share with each other their concerns about regional and global challenges. Such intel often comes in many forms. Whether it is open-source intelligence on the open internet or classified, clandestine reporting through diplomatic channels, allies can not only build on the trust they already have with each other, but potentially foster new ways to approach and study regional and global threats. However, credibility in intelligence is important and establishing it must be the first step. Tuzuner (2010) explained that “the best way to change mindsets about intelligence cooperation on an international level is to start from home. We must first make the different domestic level intelligence agencies cooperate and share information with each other” (p. 7). In the intelligence community, there are seventeen federal agencies, whose work is unique from their counterparts. The intelligence arms of the uniformed service branches, for example, collect and analyze intelligence that is specific to their fighting domains or areas of responsibility. The Air Force will collect intelligence on Russia or China’s airpower and capabilities, while the Navy may approach their naval assets in a similar fashion.

The best example of cooperation at home is the relationship that the intelligence community has with the Department of State. The central themes of Neoliberalism are seen

through the inter-connected work of these two organizations. Although the State Department has its own intel arm, known as the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, it still relies on intelligence assessments from the greater IC. It is common for Ambassadors, Foreign Service Officers, and military attachés to gather reports and other products to develop security cooperation initiatives, diplomatic strategies, and other forms of assessments vital to the U.S. diplomatic mission within a country. James R. Clapper, former Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) director in the Clinton Administration and Director of National Intelligence in the Obama Administration, assesses that if cooperation cannot exist among U.S. agencies, it certainly cannot exist between the United States and another nation. “When agencies cooperate, one defines the problem and seeks help with it. When they act jointly, the problem and options for actions are defined differently from the start” (Clapper, 2019, p. 102).

Although Neoliberalism promotes cooperation among states through institutions such as NATO, there are other forms of cooperation, specific to intelligence, that are equally effective. One such example is the Five Eyes (FVEY) alliance. It was established in May 1943 by President Franklin Roosevelt and was at first a bilateral partnership with the United Kingdom in a joint effort to share intelligence and eliminate the threat to Europe by the Axis powers. Three years later, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand joined the agreement. The DIA, the United States’ lead military intelligence agency, values the FVEY alliance, saying “Today, the FVEY partnership is the longest recorded formal intelligence relationship in history. For more than 70 years, through numerous conflicts and over the course of dozens of administrations, the FVEY relationship has proven to be an invaluable tool in safeguarding the security interests for each country” (Defense Intelligence Agency Public Affairs, 2019). This is the type of partnership for which Neoliberalism advocates. Despite being strong advocates for alliances and cooperation

through institutional organizations, Neoliberals, like Realists, are cautious in their approach to cooperation. “Because states fear that their cooperative partners may fail to live up to mutual agreements, states may be discouraged from engaging in cooperative projects in the first place” (Dunne et al., 2016, p. 96). This is a legitimate concern, especially in today’s very dynamic and rapidly changing world.

Among Realism, Classic Liberalism, and Neoliberalism, Neoliberalism appears to be the most effect IR theory that achieves diplomatic cooperation while leveraging the critical role of the intelligence community. This IR theory is effective in the twenty-first century because great powers such as Russia and China are only becoming more assertive in their quest for global hegemony. They seek to undermine democratic values, weaken military and economic alliances they view as threatening, and expand their sphere of influence through forceful and at times illegal means. To this end, intelligence sharing and collaboration among the United States and its allies will allow for better situational awareness on adversarial motives, plans, and intentions. Additionally, it will allow for strong bonds to become even stronger and more enduring. This is exactly what Pashakhanlou (2017) wrote about in his study. He observed that “intelligence is used in this context to avoid strategic surprise. Specifically, it helps determine whether other states’ military capabilities are merely intended for defensive purposes or if they might be employed offensively” (p. 522). Intelligence cooperation is a form of diplomacy, and thus, can lead to military cooperation and great security measures being taken to deter adversaries. Neoliberalism, therefore, advocates for enhanced cooperation through intelligence because it leads to other forms of cooperation and more enduring partner relations.

Tuzuner (2010) was very blunt in his call for cooperation among nation states to achieve a more secure global environment and the role of intelligence in achieving these ends. Because

security challenges are becoming more nuanced and global competition is increasing on all fronts, “countries should be more eager than ever to cooperate. The threats should be taken care of and controlled by mutual collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among internal and external intelligence institutions within and among countries” (p. 46). Allies cannot provide effective security or intelligence support to each other without on-going dialogue where various opinions and ideas are exchanged.

### **Achieving Security Cooperation Through Intelligence**

Understanding the role of international relations theories is only a first step in determining courses of action that are in the best interest of the United States in achieving effective security and diplomatic cooperation initiatives. In order to advance its diplomatic efforts while leveraging intelligence, the United States ought to consider three additional approaches: harness the power of career diplomats in the intelligence decision-making process, formulate clear and direct strategic policies and initiatives in areas of intelligence sharing, and provide career diplomats and foreign service officers with necessary training, resources, and intelligence requirements to allow them to have better and more effective approaches to diplomacy. With these in mind, the intelligence community must also adapt, modernize, and be equipped to address emerging threats posed by malign activities in cyber, artificial intelligence, and social instability.

Diplomats offer a unique perspective into intelligence gaps that exist in the global environment. Their knowledge, skillset, and education are critical to achieving intelligence cooperation. Consider William J. Burns who currently serves as the director of the CIA. Prior to his current role, Burns served as the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a DC-based think tank of “diverse disciplines and perspectives” that seeks “to advance

international peace” (<https://carnegieendowment.org/about/>). Director Burns, however, was not a career intelligence professional. Rather, his career was at the State Department. Throughout his thirty-three-year career in the foreign service, he served as Ambassador to Jordan in the Clinton Administration and Ambassador to Russia in the George W. Bush Administration. He held numerous senior positions at State along with the White House throughout his career as well before retiring in 2014. His appointment by President Joe Biden is significant for many reasons. First, as mentioned already, his career is in the foreign service. The Biden White House sees the importance of diplomacy in the IC and vice versa. Burns’ unique qualifications, skill set (he is fluent in Russian), and experience make him the ideal candidate to lead the CIA.

A great deal of conversation is taking place in the second decade of the twentieth century about the rise of Russia. The DOD and IC are increasingly worried that a more pragmatic and assertive Vladimir Putin is seeking new ways to undermine U.S. influence and alliances such as NATO. These concerns, however, are not new. When Bill Burns was Ambassador to Russia (2005-2008), he engaged with Putin on numerous occasions and observed that “Putin’s most striking characteristic was his passion for control—founded on an abiding distrust of most of those around him, whether in the Russian elite or among foreign leaders” (Burns, 2020, p. 206). This hunger for control by the Kremlin has only increased, and Vladimir Putin has “already begun to tilt in a more adversarial direction . . . persuaded that American-led international order was constraining Russia’s legitimate interests” (Burns, 2020, p. 209). What role then can the IC play to foster more cooperation between the United States and Russian governments?

This again points to Neoliberalism’s approach to institutional cooperation. The State Department, the Defense Department, and the Intelligence Community must have a common threat picture, identifying and addressing common intelligence gaps. In the right context,

diplomacy acts as a solution as much as military force. Therefore, it is critical for career diplomats, like Bill Burns, to be in positions of leadership in the intelligence community. An intelligence threat assessment depends on regional knowledge, a top skill that diplomats possess. Individuals with a background in the foreign service also possess relationships with their foreign counterparts, relationships that are valuable in achieving cooperation in areas with intelligence equities and requirements. The 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States addresses the need for cooperation to achieve regional and global security. “Our allies and partners provide complementary capabilities and forces along with unique perspectives, regional relationships, and information that improve our understanding of the environment and expand our options” (Department of Defense, 2018, p. 8). Intelligence professionals with a diplomatic background, therefore, enhance the United States’ ability to meet cooperation initiatives while at the same time meeting national defense priorities.

Intelligence sharing with international partners will strengthen and enhance both the United States’ ability to address emerging security challenges, but also those of its allies. To this end, intelligence agencies, along with the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) of the Defense Department must put in place strategic initiatives and policies to allow for this type of cooperation to not only exist but also thrive. Now that the United States is engaged in Great Power Competition with near-peer adversaries such as China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, it should be expected that such competition will require intel cooperation among agencies and international partners, while not dismissing mil-to-mil or economic cooperation. McGruddy (2013) described the mutual benefit of this approach, “Intelligence collaboration occurs when both sides can see potential benefits, be it from gaining information that helps complete the jigsaw, reducing the need for expensive surveillance in other countries, or more recently, less

developed nations gaining precious aid resources” (p. 214). Strategic policies in intel sharing will assist in guiding the United States’ approach to GPC.

Broad intelligence sharing agreements and policies are created mostly by the IC and DOD. Current policies, directives, and Executive Orders are implemented down to the GCCs, with oversight from the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSD-I). Among the responsibilities tasked by DOD Directive 5143.01, OUSD (I) is responsible for “Establish[ing] and maintain[ing] Defense Intelligence relationships and Defense Intelligence exchange programs with selected cooperative foreign defense establishments, intelligence or security services of foreign governments, and international organizations, in coordination with the USD(P)” (Department of Defense, 2020, p. 6). Intelligence sharing policies and initiatives, therefore, can create partnerships in areas of academia, diplomacy, and foreign aid. Combatant Commanders must not only rely on military cooperation initiatives to achieve their regional security objectives, but also on intel sharing.

Diplomacy requires a great amount of training in cultural awareness, foreign language, and policies. One asset that would further their diplomatic efforts to achieve security and other forms of cooperation is continued training in intelligence. Knowledge in intelligence oversight, counterintelligence, and intel sharing assists those in diplomatic posts in conducting their missions. This training is offered via several methods, to include online virtual, in person classroom, in the field, in a military garrison setting, or in a residency capacity at a school or university. Courses in vast areas of intelligence is provided by not only the State Department, but also by the DIA’s Joint Military Attaché School or various other programs by the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency.



Intelligence training is not the only resource diplomats or foreign service officers need to accomplish security and diplomatic cooperation initiatives. The role of liaison officers (LNOs) is also critical. LNOs may be from other agencies, legislative aides from Capitol Hill, or military officers, both U.S. and international, with a diverse service background. They represent their organizations to a host nation and act as a point person to their assigned organization. LNOs are advocates, expressing the needs, desires, and intentions of the nation which they represent. Neoliberalism encourages these partnerships to accomplish national objectives. IR theory—no matter the type—places an important amount of stress and focus on a state’s credibility to leverage its resources to achieve policy objectives. Training and adequate resources, thus, allow for state actors to have the ability to pursue their own national interests in a credible way.

Another key resource in intelligence cooperation is professional military education (PME). Exchange programs between nations allow for joint exercises, drills, and cultural proficiency. Just like training in intel, this training is also able to be administered in many ways. PME does not necessarily have to be tactical in nature. An example of this is international field grade officers attending the Army War College or Naval Postgraduate School, earning Graduate-level degrees in strategic studies or strategic intelligence. Utilizing the power of education is something that is central to any IR theory. Being well-rounded and well-read allows military officers, diplomats, and policy makers to make better-informed ideas and approaches to sensitive-level decisions. It allows for lessons of the past to be studied and analyzed and the outlook to be discussed and debated. A changing global environment and threat picture in the twenty-first century only underscores the importance of PME in security cooperation.

## Great Power Competition

How then is IR theory, Neoliberalism specifically, harnessed in the age of Great Power Competition with powers such as China, Russia, North Korea, or Iran? Neoliberalism, without a doubt, will play a key role by encouraging existing partnerships and alliances to become more engaged with each other and for new partnerships to be created. Military cooperation will not be the sole focus area, but also economic, social, and diplomatic cooperation. It is thus critical for modern defense strategists to understand that GPC will be unlike anything the United States has ever faced in the past. “The return of great power competition does not necessarily mean a return to large-scale conventional operations. In fact, the forms of conflict with other great powers that are most likely to emerge in the near future will not resemble the major combat engagements of the Cold War” (Erickson, 2021). These conflicts will be low intensity, falling below the threshold of armed conflict. Russia, for example, may continue to use its proxies to engage in cyber warfare, election interference, or sow social unrest in regions like Eastern Europe.

A key nuance of GPC is the desire and ability of adversaries to exploit numerous vulnerabilities and weaknesses of Western powers. “Great power competition means U.S. adversaries are deploying capabilities across continents and in every domain to challenge the United States and its interests” (Harrington & McCabe, 2021). The cyber domain along with the space domain will become more prominent in the years to come, and the land domain, while being the largest and most common, will become less so. Harrington and McCabe wrote that the military needs to closely coordinate its efforts with the IC to properly address the security challenges faced by the United States, especially in fighting domains where there exists a lack of attention, resources, and capabilities. The United States must not only identify areas of vulnerability in its defense infrastructure but also work to secure and improve such areas.

Neoliberalism advocates for the role of institutions to achieve national policy objectives. As such, military, diplomatic, and political intuitions must remain aware, through active intelligence gathering and analysis, of the global threat picture. Military organizations such as NATO must be equipped with the latest and most dependable intel collection assets and capabilities, along with rigorous and continuous training requirements. Intel sharing among NATO partners needs to occur on a regular basis via several methods, being engagements, exercises, or exchanges. Foreign disclosure officers will play an increasingly significant role in vetting intelligence products to international partners in accordance with federal law. Intel sharing partnerships such as the FVEYs may require additional funding and resources to complete their missions. These multinational partnerships are now considered to be “the norm, making intelligence sharing with interagency and multinational partners increasingly important” (JP 2-01). This important work must continue. Strategic allies are a critical component of the United States’ national defense strategy, and given the nature of current strategic threats, the allies’ role in multinational cooperation will become even more vital.

## **Conclusion**

Realism, Classic Liberalism, and Neoliberalism provide multiple ideas and solutions to achieve security cooperation and national policy objectives through the role of intelligence. Intelligence is critical to national security objectives and cooperation because it allows decision makers such as diplomats, policy makers, or military commanders make informed decisions based on the current threat picture. It allows for partners and allies—whether interagency or multinational—to collaborate on common threats and security challenges. Neoliberalism, however, is among the most effective approaches between the three theories because of the value it places on institutions. The world in the twenty-first century is institutional already, and as

such, international organizations, whether military, diplomatic, or humanitarian in nature, already operate in such a way. Intelligence among partners, through institutions and organizations, allows for these entities to operate in a more productive and situationally aware approach.

Intelligence plays a key role in the Neoliberalism IR theory because it equips those in positions of great power to anticipate rising challenges and depend on international and institutional partnerships. Nation states that are great powers are no longer able to survive or meet their national interest objectives on their own. As U.S. and NATO allies complete their military operations in Afghanistan, a new challenge becomes central. Great Power Competition poses security challenges by China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran in new domains of warfare. Accurate and credible intelligence gathering, analysis, and sharing allows for the United States become better postured to meet those threats. In addition, proper intelligence training and resources will also be central to combatting GPC. The United States and its international partners must enhance their ability to train with each other, identify intelligence gaps, and provide each other with valuable opportunities for professional military education. GPC will take place in new domains, and great powers that are in competition with the United States are not waiting to act militarily or politically to achieve their national interests. The United States cannot afford to wait either.

## References

- Clapper, J. R., & Brown, T. (2018). *Facts and fears: Hard truths from a life in intelligence*. Viking.
- de Graaff, B. (2017). NATO Intelligence: At the crossroads of informal intelligence sharing and institutional streamlining. *Atlantisch Perspectief*, 41(6), 4–5.
- Department of Defense. (2018) *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America – Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge*. Office of the Secretary of Defense. <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>
- Department of Defense. (2020, April 6) *Directive 5143.01*. Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security. <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/514301p.pdf>
- DeVine, M. E. (2019, May 15). United States foreign intelligence relationships: Background, policy and legal authorities, risks, benefits. *Homeland Security Digital Library*. Retrieved August 2021, from <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=825630>.
- DIA Public Affairs. (2019, May 30). *This Week in DIA history: Formation of the fvey partnership*. Defense Intelligence Agency. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://www.dia.mil/News-Features/Articles/Article-View/Article/1861392/this-week-in-dia-history-formation-of-the-fvey-partnership/>.
- Doyle, M. W., & Ikenberry, G. J. (1997). *New thinking in international relations theory*. Westview Press.
- Dunne, T., Kurki, M., & Smith, S. (2016). *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity*. Oxford University Press.

Editor's introduction: Reeled into complacency: How the CIA and the Pentagon use Hollywood to shape our ideas about friends and enemies. (2017) *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 76(2), 233–279. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12185>

Erickson, P. (2021, June 21). Tactics in an era of Great Power Competition. *Modern War Institute*. Retrieved August 2021, from <https://mwi.usma.edu/tactics-in-an-era-of-great-power-competition/>

Harrington, J., & McCabe, R. (2021, August 6). *Modernizing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to 'find' in the era of security competition*. Retrieved August 2021, from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/modernizing-intelligence-surveillance-and-reconnaissance-find-era-security-competition>

Jütersonke, O. (2010). *Morgenthau, law and realism*. Cambridge University Press.

Mori, S. (2018). US defense innovation and artificial intelligence. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 25(2), 16–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2018.1545488>

McGruddy, J. (2013). Multilateral intelligence collaboration and international oversight. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 6(3), 214–220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26485072>

Panetta, L. E., & Newton, J. (2015). *Worthy Fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace*. Penguin Books.

Pashakhanlou, A. H. (2018). Intelligence and diplomacy in the security dilemma: Gauging capabilities and intentions. *International Politics*, 55(5), 519–536. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-017-0119-8>

Pinkus, J. (2014). Intelligence and public diplomacy: The changing tide. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 7(1), 33–46. Retrieved July 9, 2021 from, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26466499>

Office of the Director of National Intelligence. (April 9, 2021). *Annual threat assessment of the US Intelligence Community*.

<https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2021-Unclassified-Report.pdf>

Tuzuner, M. (2010). *Intelligence cooperation practices in the 21st century: Towards a culture of sharing*. IOS Press. [https://search-ebscohost-](https://search-ebscohost-com.library.norwich.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=342848&scope=site)

[com.library.norwich.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=342848&scope=site](https://search-ebscohost-com.library.norwich.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=342848&scope=site)

Tzu, S. (1994). *Sun Tzu: The art of war*. (R. D. Sawyer, & M. L. Sawyer). Westview Press.

(Original work published 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC).

Watling, J. (2021). Preparing military intelligence for great power competition. *Rusi*, 166(1), 68–80.

Wolfberg, A., & Young, B. A. (2016). Is Intelligence an Instrument of National Power? *American Intelligence Journal*, 33(1), 26–30. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26202163>