

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 11-05-2023		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) N/A	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Intelligence-Sharing to Enhance Alliances and Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A	
6. AUTHOR(S) Maj Catherine W. Axel, USAF				5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A	
				5e. TASK NUMBER N/A	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Writing & Teaching Excellence Center Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) N/A	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) N/A	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the curriculum. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT Intelligence-sharing is an underutilized instrument for developing deeper alliances and partnerships. The 2022 National Security Strategy and 2022 National Defense Strategy emphasize the importance of alliances and partnerships in the U.S. strategy and highlight the need for intelligence-sharing. When combined with other instruments of national power, intelligence-sharing can be a powerful tool for enhancing ally and partner relationships. Compared with alternative options for ally and partner engagement, intelligence-sharing is highly cost-effective. This paper discusses the need for the U.S. to develop more robust intelligence-sharing frameworks with Indo-Pacific states to further its regional strategy and outlines methods for the U.S. to do so.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS (Key words) Intelligence-sharing, intelligence, alliances, partnerships, Indo-Pacific, integrated deterrence					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT N/A	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Director, Writing Center
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-6499

Research Paper

Intelligence-Sharing to Enhance Alliances and Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific



Introduction

The United States (U.S.) can leverage intelligence-sharing in concert with other instruments of national power to enhance ally and partner effectiveness and improve collective security in the Indo-Pacific region. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has focused primarily on the military instrument of power to accomplish its national security aims. However, as peer competitors such as China and Russia have become strong enough to challenge the U.S., America's national strategy has grown to encompass more cost-effective instruments, including an expansion in diplomacy and economic statecraft. Information can be a challenging instrument for a democracy to employ due to the need for domestic transparency. However, the U.S. can leverage it through traditional intelligence-sharing and declassifying intelligence related to significant global developments. The U.S. supported Ukraine by declassifying crucial intelligence leading to the Russian invasion in February 2022. Reports indicate that the U.S. may still be supporting Ukraine with intelligence related to targeting and Russian troop positions and capabilities. All these gains have diminished Russia's military capability and global standing for a relatively modest cost.

This paper will first discuss the role of intelligence-sharing in U.S. history since WWII, focusing on the UKUSA agreement that developed into the "Five Eyes" partnership. Second, it will describe the role of alliances and partnerships in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. Third, it will discuss the cost-effectiveness of intelligence-sharing as an instrument of national power compared to alternative options and how the U.S. can integrate intelligence-sharing into its "Integrated Deterrence" framework. Fourth, it will argue that the U.S. needs to develop more robust intelligence-sharing frameworks with Indo-Pacific states to further its regional strategy, focusing on opportunities to increase collaboration with non-Anglophone nations. Finally, this

paper will explore methods for the U.S. to expand its intelligence-sharing in the Indo-Pacific, from traditional bilateral arrangements to multilateral relationships focused on the region. By growing intelligence-sharing relationships with Indo-Pacific partners, the U.S. can increase its security, make progress on its strategic objectives in the region, and demonstrate trust with partners who are critical for the success of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy.

History of U.S. Intelligence-Sharing

States engage in intelligence-sharing for various reasons, whether to build confidence between states, to increase access to intelligence from other states, or to build a common informational foundation for coalition operations.¹ Intelligence agencies “act primarily in support of their nation’s foreign policy objectives and in their self-interest,”² making intelligence-sharing an ancillary benefit of the work states already conduct. No intelligence-sharing relationship exists solely for the sake of friendship or collaboration; instead, “it is utility that drives collaboration.”³ Collaborating on intelligence production and sharing finished products provided the added benefit of exposing decision-makers to multiple perspectives. Intelligence agencies in different countries see the world in different ways that can provide unique insight. In every intelligence-sharing agreement, whether bilateral or multilateral, each state has particular objectives and end states in mind for its participation. For intelligence-sharing arrangements to be successful, the states involved must trust one another, there must be reciprocity in the sharing

¹ David Letts, “Intelligence sharing among coalition forces: Some legal and ethical challenges and potential solutions,” in *National Security Intelligence and Ethics*, ed. Seumas Miller et al. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 123; Ariel Stenek, “Toward a Quadrilateral Intelligence Sharing Network?” *The Diplomat*, 7 January 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/toward-a-quadrilateral-intelligence-sharing-network/>.

² Stephane Lefebvre, “The Difficulties and Dilemmas of International Intelligence Cooperation,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 16, no. 4 (2003), 534.

³ Stephen Lander, “International Intelligence Cooperation: An Inside Perspective,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 3 (Oct 2004), 484.

of intelligence, and there must be an understanding of the security measures required to protect each state's secrets.

Modern U.S. intelligence-sharing has its roots in the WWII alliance between the U.S. and the United Kingdom (U.K.). In the years following the war's end, the U.S. and the U.K. signed the UKUSA agreement, which included the dominions of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand that became known as the "Five Eyes" partnership. The signals intelligence-focused relationship created an "English-speaking, global surveillance network of states" that divided the world into areas of responsibility for each member state.⁴ This burden-sharing was crucial to the agreement's success, ensuring that "the Five Eyes Alliance is not just a set of principles, but a true cooperative agreement."⁵ This long-standing relationship is the U.S.'s strongest intelligence alliance, creating a foundation of deep trust between its participants which is the envy of many U.S. allies who desire equal access to signals intelligence. Australia and New Zealand are both parties to Five Eyes, but Japan is outside the fold within the Indo-Pacific region. There is a disparity between the U.S.'s regional Anglophone allies and its relationship with countries like Japan and South Korea, both essential allies for the U.S.'s national strategy, which focuses on competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Alliances and Partnerships in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy

The 2022 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS) highlight the PRC as the U.S.'s pacing threat and primary great power competitor on the global stage. Both documents heavily emphasize the importance of collaboration with allies and

⁴ Corey Pfluke, "A History of the Five Eyes Alliance: Possibility for reform and additions," *Comparative Strategy* 38, no. 4 (2019), 304.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 305.

partners for the strategy's success. The NSS's second line of effort is to "build the strongest possible coalition of nations...to solve shared challenges," emphasizing that alliances and partnerships are the U.S.'s "most important strategic asset."⁶ The Indo-Pacific strategy outlined in both documents focuses on building collective capacity through multiple instruments of national power, including "greater intelligence and information sharing."⁷ The NSS states, "Our intelligence relationships with our allies are a strategic asset that will increasingly factor in to our competition with our rivals."⁸ This strategy intends to counter PRC influence in the Indo-Pacific region among U.S. allies and other countries. It also acknowledges the need to counter North Korea (DPRK) and its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. Two potential contingencies drive home the need for a particularly close relationship with Japan: the possibility of China attempting to invade Taiwan and incorporate it into the PRC and the threat of a missile attack from DPRK on Japanese territory.

Due to its reliance on host bases in Japan, the U.S. requires an especially close relationship with Japan to enable a successful counter-PRC strategy. Ideally, Japan would be responsible for defending its territory, including these bases; doing so would allow the U.S. to focus on its strategic objectives outside of Japanese territory.⁹ Because its warfighting concepts rely on agility, the U.S. should also strengthen its relationships with nations beyond its traditional regional treaty allies. It must look to Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific as potential locations for logistical hubs and expeditionary bases for operations. The U.S. cannot

⁶ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, 2022), 11.

⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Pentagon, 2022), 14.

⁸ White House, *National Security Strategy*, 14.

⁹ James Holmes, "Japan Matters if China Invades Taiwan," *19FortyFive*, 7 January 2023, <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2023/01/japan-matters-if-china-invades-taiwan/>.

out-compete China's economic largesse; the One Belt, One Road Initiative drew many smaller nations to China's side due to its substantial economic benefits to less wealthy states. However, intelligence-sharing can be much less costly to the U.S. while demonstrating America's commitment to and trust in its partners in the Indo-Pacific.

Intelligence-Sharing: Low-Cost, Low-Risk

Intelligence-sharing can be highly cost-effective compared to the military and economic instruments of power. The Defense Department budget for fiscal year 2023 is \$816.7 billion; by comparison, the budget for the combined national and military intelligence programs was \$93.7 billion.¹⁰ Moreover, spending on intelligence is unlike spending on defense because expanding partner access to U.S. intelligence is unlikely to create high additional costs. Any additional costs are related to the need for the U.S. to review intelligence before clearing it for disclosure and create channels to share such intelligence. Generally, the U.S. enters bilateral or multilateral intelligence-sharing agreements with the explicit understanding that "information cannot be shared in one direction only."¹¹ In addition to providing its partners with U.S.-sourced intelligence, intelligence-sharing treaties require that the partner also share intelligence with the U.S. In many cases, this intelligence comes from human sources, which are notoriously hard to develop even for a nation with an intelligence community as well-resourced as the U.S. The insights partners generate from their unique human sources can be invaluable to the U.S. in regions and countries where it has a smaller intelligence collection footprint.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, "FY 2023 Defense Budget," accessed 15 January 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/FY2023-Defense-Budget/>; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "U.S. Intelligence Community Budget," accessed 15 January 2023, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/ic-budget>.

¹¹ Christopher Johnstone, "To Make Japan Stronger, America Must Pull It Closer," *Foreign Affairs*, 12 January 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/japan/make-japan-stronger-america-must-pull-it-closer>.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 provides an excellent real-world example of how intelligence-sharing can be a low-cost method for the U.S. to accomplish its strategic objectives. The Defense Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency directors hailed U.S. intelligence-sharing with Ukraine as “revolutionary,” saying they had “never seen a better sharing of accurate, timely and actionable intelligence.”¹² U.S. intelligence-sharing with Ukraine encompassed both “rapid declassification of information early in the crisis” and, reportedly, providing “intelligence to Ukrainian forces...enabling them to thwart Russian advances and target Russian force concentrations.”¹³ Declassifying intelligence related to Russia’s intent prior to the invasion helped build a robust international coalition, provoking widespread condemnation of Russia’s actions and taking hold of the narrative. Sharing intelligence directly with Ukrainian forces enhanced their lethality and effectiveness against Russian forces, decreasing Russian military strength without putting American forces in the line of fire. CIA Director William Burns argued, “You can see the benefit of very systematic intelligence sharing in support of the Ukrainians’ ability to defend themselves.”¹⁴ The example of Ukraine provides a roadmap to how the U.S. can best enable its allies’ and partners’ understanding through intelligence-sharing. However, it is essential that the U.S. not look to Ukraine as an example of how quickly the U.S. can ramp up intelligence-sharing and still have successful outcomes. Ukraine’s success was driven just as much by Russian incompetence as any other factor, and the U.S. should not rely on China or North Korea to be equally incompetent.

¹² John Grady, “Intel Sharing Between U.S. and Ukraine ‘Revolutionary’ Says DIA Director,” *USNI News*, 18 March 2022, <https://news.usni.org/2022/03/18/intel-sharing-between-u-s-and-ukraine-revolutionary-says-dia-director>.

¹³ Michele A. Flournoy, “How to Prepare for the Next Ukraine: Washington Must Ramp Up Support for Vulnerable Partners – Before It’s Too Late,” *Foreign Affairs*, 23 May 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-05-23/how-prepare-next-ukraine>.

¹⁴ Kimberly Underwood, “Strategic Intel Sharing Aids Support of Ukraine,” *AFCEA*, 9 September 2022, <https://www.afcea.org/signal-media/intelligence/strategic-intel-sharing-aids-support-ukraine>.

Sharing intelligence with allies and partners is a part of integrated deterrence. The NDS defines *integrated deterrence* as “working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, all instruments of U.S. national power, and our network of Alliances and partnerships.”¹⁵ This approach requires consideration of “how competitors perceive U.S., Ally, and partner stakes, commitment, and combat credibility,” which emphasizes the importance of close relationships with critical allies to accomplish deterrence.¹⁶ The strategy also discusses the role of information in this strategy, noting the need to improve operability in the information domain while working with allies and partners. The NDS specifically discusses integrated deterrence against the PRC, calling for “collaboration with Allies and partners [to] cement joint capability with the aid of multilateral exercises...greater intelligence and information sharing, and combined planning for shared deterrence challenges.”¹⁷ Effective, integrated deterrence against threats such as ballistic missiles and cruise missiles targeting U.S. and partner bases demands robust intelligence-sharing.

Developing More Robust Intelligence-Sharing with Indo-Pacific Partners

Among Indo-Pacific nations, perhaps the U.S.’s most robust intelligence-sharing relationship is with Australia. In addition to the Five Eyes signals intelligence agreement, the U.S. and Australia agreed in 2008 to “intensified co-operation and intelligence-sharing in the field of [geospatial intelligence].”¹⁸ Strategically, Australia also provides the U.S. basing access from a beneficial location that is out of range of most Chinese ballistic missiles, compared to existing U.S. Japan and Guam bases. It is possible that “Canberra would enable the United States

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 14.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 9.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 10.

¹⁸ Ariel Stenek, “Toward a Quadrilateral Intelligence Sharing Network?” *The Diplomat*, 7 January 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/toward-a-quadrilateral-intelligence-sharing-network/>.

to use Australia's remarkable geography as a base for power projection into Asia,"¹⁹ providing a safe haven for logistics and long-range military capabilities in the event of a conflict with the PRC.

The U.S. and Australia work closely together in the region, regularly conducting high-end joint military exercises. Australia has a long history of fighting alongside the U.S. during the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf Wars, and Afghanistan. However, Australia's willingness to defend Taiwan against PRC aggression is unknown.²⁰ However, by continuing a long-running, multi-source intelligence-sharing relationship with Australia, the U.S. has a solid foundation to build upon in the event of future coalition operations. Due to their complex nature, modern military operations require shared intelligence "for the effective conduct of these operations."²¹ If Australia determines that joining in defense of Taiwan is in its national interest, the solid intelligence-sharing relationship with the U.S. will make the coalition run more smoothly.

In contrast, the U.S. intelligence-sharing relationship with Japan is less mature and narrower in scope. Like most intelligence-sharing agreements, the relationship between the U.S. and Japan is bilateral, emphasizing "participants' protection of their intelligence."²² This relationship is limited not because of its importance for U.S. strategy, which necessitates a strong relationship with Japan due to its proximity to the PRC and the U.S.'s treaty commitments to Japan's defense, but because of security concerns. Among these concerns are "Japan's counter-

¹⁹ Andrew Carr, "A Model Alliance? The Strategic Logic of US-Australia Cooperation," *The Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2021), 58.

²⁰ Andrew Carr, "A Model Alliance? The Strategic Logic of US-Australia Cooperation," *The Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2021), 53.

²¹ David Letts, "Intelligence sharing among coalition forces: Some legal and ethical challenges and potential solutions," in *National Security Intelligence and Ethics*, ed. Seumas Miller et al. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 124.

²² Stephane Lefebvre, "The Difficulties and Dilemmas of International Intelligence Cooperation," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 16, no. 4 (2003), 533.

intelligence capabilities...[and] Tokyo's credible capability to maintain tight control over shared information."²³ Sharing U.S.-sourced intelligence with additional countries would open those sources up to compromise. In the case of a human source, that compromise can be fatal; with technical sources, compromise can eliminate the utility of costly collection systems intended to last for decades.

Japan's desire to assure the U.S. of its ability to protect information led to the passage of a state secrets law within the last decade to alleviate concerns about possible intelligence releases after previous leaks.²⁴ Japan hopes to gain membership in Five Eyes – the ultimate signal of trust between the U.S. and its allies.²⁵ The state secrets act will not be enough to allay security concerns among the existing members of Five Eyes. In addition to intentional compromise through leaks, the U.S. must consider its cyberspace exposure. Any intelligence that makes it onto foreign networks needs protection from digital attacks. Evaluating Japan's ability to protect information will be part of the calculus for determining what intelligence will be shared and how it can be transmitted.

In addition to its principal regional allies in Australia and Japan, the U.S. must consider intelligence-sharing opportunities with other countries in the Indo-Pacific, such as South Korea and the Philippines. These countries, which may be pivotal for the success of the U.S.'s warfighting concepts, need goodwill and trust in the U.S. for its strategy to succeed. By developing and deepening intelligence-sharing relationships with other countries in the region,

²³ Ankit Panda, "Is the Time Right for Japan to Become Five Eyes' 'Sixth Eye'?" *The Diplomat*, 15 August 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/08/is-the-time-right-for-japan-to-become-five-eyes-sixth-eye/>.

²⁴ Mina Pollmann, "Japan's Controversial State Secrets Law: One Year Later," *The Diplomat*, 9 December 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/japans-controversial-state-secrets-law-one-year-later/>.

²⁵ Ankit Panda, "Is the Time Right for Japan to Become Five Eyes' 'Sixth Eye'?" *The Diplomat*, 15 August 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/08/is-the-time-right-for-japan-to-become-five-eyes-sixth-eye/>.

the U.S. can build a foundation for negotiating future access. These states will face challenges demonstrating their ability to secure data from digital attacks and opportunistic leaks. However, regarding geographic access, the U.S. should determine whether the risks outweigh the potential rewards.

The How: Making Vision Reality

Growing intelligence-sharing relationships with vital partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific is more complex than signing an agreement and immediately starting to share secrets. The U.S. must consider what types of intelligence it would like to share with allies and partners depending on the level of trust in those nations' ability to protect U.S.-generated products. Agreements may be the traditional bilateral type, or they may be minilateral or multilateral. To ensure intelligence reaches allies and partners in time to be relevant and actionable, the U.S. must identify pathways to share not only paper and digital products but also near real-time information. Finally, if sharing classified intelligence is not a viable option due to a lack of partner capacity to process such information, the U.S. can use alternative means to get the necessary information to the appropriate parties, such as declassification and open-source production.

As discussed earlier, bilateral agreements are the most common method states use to share intelligence. Such arrangements provide maximum security by exposing classified products to the smallest possible number of outside entities. However, the threats imposed by competitors in the Indo-Pacific require greater collaboration than bilateral agreements can provide. Countering PRC influence concerns Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and many other countries that have territorial or political disputes with the PRC. The U.S. has recently expanded minilateral initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. Minilateralism is "an approach to collective problem

solving involving the smallest number of countries necessary to address a particular problem.”²⁶ Initiatives such as the Quad, which includes the U.S., India, Australia, and Japan, and AUKUS, which includes Australia, the U.K., and the U.S., are minilateral – allowing the U.S. to work towards shared goals with small numbers of partners in a focused way. The U.S. should consider additional minilaterals to counter regional threats, such as a partnership between the U.S., the ROK, and Japan to counter the DPRK. On the other hand, if the U.S. wants to be truly prepared for a Taiwan invasion scenario, it must go even further and explore a multilateral intelligence-sharing agreement in the Indo-Pacific. Putting such a network in place before a potential contingency would allow for its use in training and exercise environments, demonstrating a high level of trust between the U.S. and its regional allies and partners.

The U.S. must determine how to share intelligence once it has secured agreements with regional allies and partners. Current methods for sharing intelligence can be clunky and slow. Often, a limited number of systems are approved for coalition intelligence-sharing. It is not uncommon for organizations to pass intelligence by phone or face-to-face due to the challenges of passing digital products outside classified U.S. networks. This approach is woefully insufficient to combat the threats the U.S. faces in the Indo-Pacific. If the DPRK or the PRC launches a surprise missile attack, there will be precious little time to send a runner to tell partner forces what is happening. The U.S. should streamline and expand the reach of classified coalition networks to support additional intelligence-sharing.

Simultaneously, the U.S. must increase its points of entry into partner intelligence agencies. These steps can increase the U.S.’s ability to share finished products today so that there

²⁶ Andrew A. Latham and Kai Perket, “Minilateralism: A Strategy to Stop China from Dominating the Indo-Pacific?” *19FortyFive*, 12 November 2021, <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2021/11/minilateralism-a-strategy-to-stop-china-from-dominating-the-indo-pacific/>.

is a foundation of partnership, collaboration, and trust before any potential conflict. Further, the U.S. must include allies and partners in near real-time dissemination networks and intelligence feeds. This inclusion is particularly critical for rapidly moving threats such as ballistic missiles and cruise missiles and will become even more relevant as hypersonic weapons become operational. Incorporating allies into the Joint All-Domain Command & Control (JADC2) initiative will improve interoperability for combined operations while increasing information sharing at speed.

Finally, there will be partners who lack the infrastructure necessary to process classified products securely and who cannot provide appropriate safeguards against counter-intelligence threats. In such cases, the U.S. must prepare to strategically declassify products for releasability to ensure accessibility by its partners. Despite the CIA's long history of carefully safeguarding its secrets, CIA Director Burns acknowledged, "If used carefully and selectively, I think this technique, this tool of declassifying some of our secrets, in a way that serves a broader strategy, can pay big benefits."²⁷ Declassifying selected intelligence about Russia's buildup on Ukraine's border prior to the February 2021 invasion enabled global understanding of the nature of the threat to Ukraine's security and sovereignty. The National Security Agency began declassifying cyber threat intelligence several years ago to improve global responsiveness to malware from nation-state cyber actors. Although such efforts can be culturally challenging for intelligence agencies that are secretive by nature, they can be an ace in the hole when there are no other options to get information to the necessary parties.

²⁷ Kimberly Underwood, "Strategic Intel Sharing Aids Support of Ukraine," *AFCEA*, 9 September 2022, <https://www.afcea.org/signal-media/intelligence/strategic-intel-sharing-aids-support-ukraine>.

Conclusion

While Ukraine is a success story for the U.S.'s ability to rapidly share and declassify intelligence when needed, the U.S. must be more proactive in building alliances and partnerships through intelligence-sharing in the Indo-Pacific. The situation in Asia is vastly different than in Europe regarding geography. Ukraine was easily accessible by land, enabling its supporters to provide aid across ground lines of communication. However, if Taiwan is ever at risk, the U.S. will be hard-pressed to gain direct access to the island due to China's anti-access, area denial capabilities. Intelligence-sharing is a cost-effective component of the U.S.'s integrated deterrence strategy, allowing for a shared understanding of threats between the U.S. and its regional allies and partners. The U.S. should work to improve and expand its sharing infrastructure, including classified coalition networks and near real-time pathways, to improve the accessibility of shared intelligence with its partners. Finally, the U.S. needs to fortify intelligence-sharing relationships with critical allies now to create a shared understanding of the nature of the situation in the Indo-Pacific region. By doing so, it will be prepared to operate in harmony with its allies and partners in the event of conflict.

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