RESEARCH SHORT

CATALYST Designed to spark positive conversations on the future of the IC

July 22, 2025

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A *Culture-General* Foundation To Empower IC Mission Effectiveness

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Intelligence work inherently requires exceptional intercultural competence to understand adversaries and foster collaboration with partners and assets to address threats. Academics have identified *culture-general* skills and knowledge as key to adapting and operating in intercultural contexts. If gained early in an Intelligence Community (IC) career, culture-general competencies can provide scaffolding for future foreign language and culture-specific learning that together strengthen an intelligence professional's overall intercultural competence and contribute to an agile, culturally astute IC workforce. This *Research Short* offers resources that are tailored to IC missions to kickstart learning about, and fostering the spread of, culture-general understanding.

Reading the Intercultural Room: A Scenario

Imagine a foreign intelligence service invites you to dine with senior political leaders after a day of exchanges on a shared threat. Although these liaison partners expressed appreciation for your briefing, the lack of follow-on discussion and eye contact makes you wonder if your points resonated. That evening, after an hour of painfully extracting small talk, political leaders arrive. A senior official you have just met introduces you to the room in the local language and invites you to give a toast. You hesitate. You are confident in your 3+ language skills, but *what* do you toast: joint efforts against the shared target or the camaraderie developed that day? Or do you use the opportunity to praise your liaison partners in front of their leadership? Or steer clear and praise the food? You default to the familiar and open with a light-hearted rib at the host, praise the day's work, and reiterate your expectation about quick results. Your liaison partners remain stone-faced, diverting their eyes. You raise your glass and quickly chug a bitter concoction, making a joke about the burn. The room follows, sipping their drinks. It feels distant. You feel flushed.

What inadvertent signals might you have sent about US respect for, or trust in, this partner? Did your actions undermine cooperation, and is it recoverable? How? The answers depend on a

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DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS USED IN THIS *RESEARCH SHORT*

Culture: A web of meaning shared by members of a particular society or group within a society that forms the basis for how people interpret, understand, and respond to events and people around them. Learned over time through socialization, although not static and can change depending on other conditions (Army FM 3-24).

Culture-General: A set of skills to help one quickly adapt to new cultures and work effectively with diverse people. Includes knowledge of the universal elements that constitute a cultural environment (Rasmussen and Sieck; Van Dyne).

Intercultural Competence: A fuller set of culture-general skills and knowledge. Combines with culture-specific knowledge and language skills to inform one's ability to operate effectively across any culturally complex environment (Earley and Ang).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): A type of intelligence defined by academics as existing alongside emotional or social intelligence. Refers to an ability to adapt effectively to new cultural settings. Often used interchangeably with *cross-cultural competence* or *intercultural competence* (Deardorff), but CQ

models are generally categorized into four main categories: cognitive, behavioral, motivational, and metacognitive skills that can more readily be taught and developed (Earley and Ang).

- Another definition of "cultural intelligence" found in national security literature relates to social-cultural information or analysis for purposes of national security that pertains to foreign customs, rituals, behaviors, norms, etcetera (McFate).

Sources: US Army and US Marine Corps, *The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Louise Rasmussen and Winston Sieck, *Save Your Ammo: Working Across Cultures for National Security* (Global Cognition, 2019); Linn Van Dyne et al., "Sub-Dimensions of the Four Factor Model of Cultural Intelligence: Expanding the Conceptualization and Measurement of Cultural Intelligence," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 6, no. 4 (2012): 295–313, https://culturalq.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Compas-2012-Van-Dyne-et-al-Sub-dimensions.pdf; Darla K. Deardorff, "Intercultural Competence: Mapping the Future Research Agenda," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 48 (2015): 3–5; Christopher Earley and Soon Ang, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures* (Stanford University Press, 2003); Montgomery McFate, "Cultural Intelligence: Far More Difficult Than Counting Tanks and Planes," *American Intelligence Journal* 31, no. 2 (2013): 19, https://www.jstor.org/stable/44327050.

combination of strategic, national, and organizational cultures; the history of US relations with this unit and its members; and their perceptions of you and your organization. What should you have considered beforehand? How can you help colleagues or policymakers prepare for these engagements? The IC's ability to anticipate and navigate these dynamics can affect mission success. So, what is the *right* kind of knowledge to accomplish *this* mission, be it strategic, operational, or tactical? More broadly, what skills can ensure this knowledge is put to best use, whether during a one-off meeting or a years-long effort? An academically validated set of *culture-general* competencies and approaches provides answers.

The Case for Culture-General

The time is ripe in an era of tightening budgets and renewed focus on foundational IC skills to consider cost-effective ways to develop an agile workforce that can surge to quickly address threats ranging from drug-trafficking to cyber-crime to China's encroachment in the Indo-Pacific. Intercultural mastery is foundational to this agility, enabling personnel to quickly assess adversary motivations and intentions and to better identify vulnerabilities and US opportunities. Such skill is also critical to effectively communicate goals and expectations, and to secure cooperation from assets and allies to inform and execute effective countermeasures. Foreign partners can be force multipliers, exercising their understanding of regional languages and cultures to provide intelligence and enable disruption operations,[1] particularly during times of dramatic and rapid change in the international system when unilateral collection takes time to adjust.[2] Trust is crucial in this sensitive information space,[3] where adversaries will try to drive wedges.[4] To build trust, national security professionals and policymakers need to exercise culturally competent practices to assess foreign perspectives and motivations, interpret cues and behaviors, and anticipate and mitigate differences across dimensions such as communication, decisionmaking, risk-taking, and workstyle preferences.

A broadly applicable set of skills, tools, and knowledge, known as *culture-general,* can guide preparation and facilitate a deeper *culture-specific* exploration of how people in a particular cultural domain are shaped by their larger environment to think and behave.[5] Culture-general is both the foundation and scaffolding upon which on-the-job, foreign language, and region-specific learning can be put into context and further built.[6, 7] Department of Defense (DoD) academics characterize culture-general as a pillar of intercultural competence—alongside foreign language and region-specific knowledge—that is essential for military leaders to function in today's decentralized operational environment.[8, 9, 10] They posit that this set of skills can make up for deficiencies in culture-specific training by enabling officers to learn and adapt in the moment.[11] Global businesses, religious ministries, and health industries also recognize its importance to their missions and dedicate considerable resources to develop culture-general in their workforces.[12, 13, 14, 15] Some academics suggest the return-on-investment can

> "The failure to determine an adversary's intention may simply be the result of missing information or, just as likely, it may be the result of missing hypotheses or mental models about an adversary's potential behavior."
>
> – Rob Johnston, *Analytic Culture in the US Intelligence Community* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2005).

be higher in some cases for culture-general education than for foreign-language study[16] as the latter—while enriching culture-general competence and key for building rapport—requires significantly more time, can come at the expense of developing primary job expertise, and is difficult to predict or surge to match evolving mission needs.[17, 18]

An informal review of IC curriculum suggests little attention to culture-general education, with focus instead on foreign language and region-specific courses for assignments as needed. Although IC work offers ample on-the-job learning, the lack of earlier culture-general attention in intelligence careers risks signaling IC indifference to the value of this competency and missing early opportunities to put lived experiences into valuable context. Without this helpful framing, early negative experiences could risk entrenching ethnocentric beliefs and discourage future learning. DoD academics made this case for culture-general training during the Global War on Terror (GWOT), which prompted investment in service cultural centers, although most were subsequently shuttered as the military's attention to culture dissipated.[19]

The IC's Unique Intercultural Challenge

Despite the IC's fundamentally intercultural mission, unique challenges that stem from its national and organizational culture risk impeding the intercultural competence of intelligence officers. As US academics point out, US national culture and ethos are predisposed to overlook foreign histories and to underestimate others' challenges and security concerns.[20, 21] This ethnocentric tendency is rooted in the United States' frontier history, characterized by material abundance and rapid expansion, which fostered a belief in US exceptionalism and its immunity from the obstacles, limitations, or rules of other nations.[22, 23] Defensible borders have somewhat insulated the United States from competition with other countries that would challenge this wisdom. In addition, the prevalence of English as the *lingua franca* of international cooperation further limits exposure to other cultures' worldviews and patterns of thought.[24] Although IC officers are more likely to seek alternative perspectives, there is still a tendency to mirror image and default to deep-seated cognitive biases or heuristics to deal with uncertainty and complexity, particularly when the operational tempo is high.[25] Additionally, the IC's unique security and counterintelligence needs often preclude valuable touchpoints with foreigners that could enable intercultural broadening. IC members who regularly live and work overseas with foreign partners have an advantage;[26, 27] others, often analysts with fewer long-term opportunities to immerse themselves in foreign environments, may struggle to broaden their cultural lens without intentional strategies for continued intercultural learning.

The IC's need for a culturally agile workforce combined with these engrained roadblocks require tailored strategies to close the gap, yet some proposals are likely to fall short.[28] For example, calls to hire more intercultural specialists, such as anthropologists and social scientists,[29] risk absolving IC members from developing the cultural competency required as a fundamental job skill. Some military leaders raised similar concerns when the US Army surged anthropologists and social scientists to GWOT war zones under the Human Terrain System to fill debilitating gaps in deployed

units' cultural knowledge.[30] Although many commanders hailed the effort for adding ethnographic intelligence, others argued it would fail to foster a culturally intelligent force and a generation of knowledge would be lost when the program ended.[31, 32, 33, 34] Another frequently proffered solution is to develop deep country and cultural expertise by keeping analysts on a primary account for the majority of their careers. Although maintaining expertise within regional accounts is undoubtedly valuable, the inclusion of generalists with broader intercultural perspectives is vital to ensuring agility and avoiding groupthink. A 2003 ethnographic study of IC analysts found that, in fact, expertise *fostered* bias and precluded the development of broader mental models, resulting in poor creative thinking and lower predictive capacity.[35, 36]

> "American military theory and doctrine have centered on the concrete and quantifiable factors of war at the expense of the human component . . . Broad reluctance to embrace culture as a pervasive and inevitable part of all military operations is consistent with American reluctance to accept the uncertain and all too human nature of warfare."
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> – Ben Connable, "Human Terrain System Is Dead, Long Live . . . What?" *Military Review* (January-February 2018).

Developing Culture-General Knowledge for IC Mission Impact

A vast body of academic work on intercultural competence, knowledge, and learning offers a ready backbone for IC training in culture-general that could be incorporated into existing curriculum or as a stand-alone course. Academics continue to expand on the pioneering works of anthropologist Edward Hall on verbal versus nonverbal communication styles[37] and social psychologist Gerard "Geert" Hofstede on differences among national culture dimensions.[38, 39] In the 1990s, international businessman Richard Lewis categorized national cultures and detailed their communication styles, worldviews, and behaviors with implications for multinational leaders and teams.[40, 41, 42] In 2003, Christopher Earley and Soon Ang published a seminal work, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures,* that delineated four facets of CQ: metacognition (ability to learn and adapt), cognition (knowledge of others, self, and nature of differences), behavior (adjusting one's behavior), and motivation (interest in learning and confidence in overcoming challenges).[43] As global business continued to expand in the 2000s, so did studies unpacking the skills expatriates need for success abroad.[44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49] Self-awareness of one's own cultural influences, open-mindedness, perspective-taking, cultural sensemaking, and learning to learn are commonly recognized as among the most important skills.[50, 51, 52, 53]

As a basis for IC workforce culture-general training, Appendix A provides a consolidated list of cultural competencies—drawing on the scholarship of Nicole Franziska Richter et al., Allan Bird et al., and Kwok Leung et al.[54, 55, 56]—distinguishing between those capabilities or attitudes that can be shaped through education and personality traits that may be less malleable, yet important for hiring. More recent works, such as Erin Meyer's *The Culture Map*[57] and Andy Molinsky's *Global Dexterity,*[58] have offered new lenses through which to perceive cultural differences in the workplace. Louise Rasmussen and Winston Sieck's *Save Your Ammo: Working Across Cultures for National Security*[59] tailors intercultural lessons for use by military practitioners with utility for

IC professionals. Appendix B provides an introductory overview of many of the possible cultural differences at play when analyzing or working with foreign actors.

This robust body of research can be of great service to IC operators, intelligence analysts, and professional staff in service to their missions. For operators working closely with foreign allies and sources, the full suite of culture-general knowledge holds promise. This includes best practices in understanding one's own culture, embodying patience and perspective, weighing the tradeoffs of tailoring one's behaviors (or not), and navigating intercultural communication and bureaucratic challenges—all vital to establishing trust and rapport with partners. An ability to read human behavior across cultures is also fundamental to human intelligence. Familiarity with differences in cultural value dimensions is key to knowing what constitutes good versus bad, selfish versus selfless, or risky versus cautious behavior in a source's own cultural context. For those working closely with foreign assets or intelligence partners, a cursory understanding of *national* cultural attitudes, behaviors, and worldviews is informative, although resources focused on the subject's *organizational* culture may be more relevant.

For analysts, culture-general knowledge related to how national and organizational cultures vary in behaviors, motivations, values, and identities—particularly how US values and approaches diverge—may be of more utility. The consistent application of such framing is essential to break through cognitive biases and protect against mirroring, particularly as part of predictive or opportunity analysis. On this point, anthropologist Montgomery McFate advances a nuanced case for social-cultural approaches to understand exceedingly complex, nonstate actors. She cautions, however, against overreliance on static inputs, such as tribal maps, which may be less relevant in some cultures and subject to shifts, particularly during conflict.[60, 61, 62]

For professional staff involved in IC recruiting, hiring, and preparing officers to operate and live abroad, or developing an intercultural curriculum, a range of intercultural competency studies are helpful. Support personnel responsible for negotiating logistics or procurement deals with foreign partners could benefit from general awareness of differing communication and negotiating styles. For hiring officers, several studies have validated the backgrounds and traits that correlate to high intercultural acumen and success in overseas missions, offering screening instruments that could be a useful reference.[63, 64] Academics have also worked with the US military to craft performance reviews tied to intercultural competence.[65] Additional literature and workbooks offer valuable lessons on navigating both "country shock" and "culture shock" and the impact overseas work has not only on IC officers, but also on their families.[66] Spousal dissatisfaction is a leading reason that expatriates shorten tours,[67, 68] and the IC may benefit from tailoring curriculum to include comprehensive intercultural education for IC dependents. Lastly, Pauline Vromans et al. offer a thoughtful overview of why cultural training typically falls short and how it can be improved with a focus on culture-general approaches, tailored to the learner's occupation and tasks.[69]

In service to IC tasks, Appendices C-F offer a list of both culture-general and culture-specific resources for use in curriculum or for reference by IC professionals seeking to develop intercultural competence. Raising the IC's collective awareness of culture-general approaches is only the first step.

IC agencies could also consider strategies and tools to broaden their workforces' cultural horizons through actual or virtual exposure to other cultures, as well as efforts to capture, collate, and share intercultural lessons learned, both from the IC perspective and ideally from that of foreign partners.

Re-Reading the Intercultural Room

To underscore the value of culture-general to hone culture-specific preparations, let's briefly revisit the opening scenario. Now armed with broad knowledge about how different cultures can communicate, you know you need to research verbal and nonverbal communication styles and what specific behaviors mean in this culture. You learn that with this partner a lack of eye contact and long pauses signal respect and reflection on what you have said. When soliciting questions, you know to pause longer than might be comfortable and look for brief eye contact that indicates a partner's interest in being personally invited to ask a question. Culture-general has also reinforced the need to understand your partner's organizational culture, history, and their perspectives of you, your organization, and the United States. You learn that this partner is frustrated with frequent US asks that exceed their capacity. You soften your messaging and focus on low-cost opportunities to address the threat. The conversation is robust. During cocktail hour, you know that what warrants appropriate small talk can vary across cultures. In your pre-travel research, you learn to avoid personal questions about family and bond over shared hobbies. You focus on baseball. As for the toast, you know that national values and concepts of trust vary. You learn that trust here is built on personal relationships versus task performance. You focus on praising the partnership and evoke a joint success from decades ago, while avoiding any pressure to deliver results. As for social etiquette, culture-general has taught you that some behaviors are so dynamic and situation-dependent that you will always need to stay vigilant and take cues in the moment. You slow your pace to mirror others, taking a sip. The room feels close. You feel confident.

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Appendix A: A List of Intercultural Competencies

A recent study reconciled overlap among more than 250 proficiencies found in intercultural competency instruments, assigning each to one of three categories: perception-management, relationship-management, and self-management.[70] Each competency was then matched to a subdomain and labeled as a capability, attitude, worldview, or personality trait.[71] Academics posit that attitudes, worldviews, and capabilities can readily be shaped through education and training, while personality traits may be less malleable but still adjustable through dedicated effort.[72]

PERCEPTION-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES		
Subdomains	**Definition**	**Domains**
Suspending Judgment	The ability to respond to others in a nonevaluating and descriptive way.	Capability
Inquisitiveness	An openness toward—and an active pursuit of understanding—new or different ideas, values, situations, and behaviors comprising...	Personality trait; Attitude/worldview
Open-mindedness/ openness	An open attitude toward and readiness to learn from other cultures, and...	Personality trait
Multicultural attitude	The attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and recognition of one's own and of others' cultures.	Attitude/worldview
Acceptance of risk/ uncertainty and ambiguity	The acceptance of and ability to handle (cross-cultural-related) risk, uncertainty, and ambiguity.	Personality trait
Cosmopolitanism	A natural interest in and curiosity about different countries and cultures, as well as the degree of interest in world and international events.	Attitude/worldview
Curiosity	The drive to search for and explore new situations.	Personality trait
Category inclusiveness	The tendency to cognitively accept people and situations based on commonalities rather than dividing them into categories (even though these categories may exist and be noticeable).	Attitude/worldview
Ethnocentrism vs. ethnorelativism	A continuum between centricity around one's own cultural perspective and a perspective on culture that is relative to the (cross-cultural) situation.	Attitude/worldview
Cultural knowledge/ cognition	The knowledge of norms, traditions, and customs in different cultures.	Capability
Cultural meta-cognition	The ability to plan and monitor cross-cultural interaction and revise mental models based on these observations.	Capability
Global business savvy	Having practical knowledge, good judgment, and common sense about global business.	Capability
RELATIONSHIP-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES		
Subdomains	**Definition**	**Domains**
Relationship interest (cross-cultural)	The extent to which people exhibit interest in and show an awareness of their (cross-cultural) social environment.	Capability
Motivation	The attention toward learning about cultures and the drive to engage in cross-cultural interactions.	Capability

Interpersonal engagement	The degree to which people have a desire and willingness to initiate and maintain relationships with cross-culturally different individuals.	Capability
Interaction management	The readiness to initiate and terminate interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of (cross-cultural) others.	Capability
Sociability	The preference to socialize with (cross-cultural) others, rather than to be alone.	Capability/ personality trait
Emotional sensitivity/ empathy	The ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of different (cross-cultural) individuals.	Personality trait
Respectfulness	The ability to demonstrate respect for the (cross-cultural) beliefs and values of people.	Capability
Self-awareness	The degree to which people are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, values, and emotions, as well as an understanding of how one's beliefs, capabilities, and limitations impact others.	Capability
Social/behavioral flexibility	The ability to modify ideas and behavior, to compromise, and to be receptive to new ways of doing things (in cross-cultural situations).	Capability
Social influencing	The ability to influence and manipulate others.	Capability
Communication ability	The ability to initiate meaningful dialogue with cross-culturally different individuals and to effectively deal with communication misunderstandings.	Capability
Diplomacy	The ability to find compromises and reach mutually acceptable solutions with (cross-cultural) others.	Capability
Language ability	The ability to communicate in the foreign language of an international conversation partner (or partners).	Capability
SELF-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES		
Sub-domains	**Definition**	**Domains**
Optimism	The extent to which people maintain a positive, buoyant outlook toward other (cross-cultural) people, events, situations, and outcomes.	Personality trait
*Positive Explanatory Style**	The extent to which people perceive negative cross-cultural experiences as "temporary, local, and changeable" versus a negative explanatory style that interprets negative experiences as "permanent, pervasive, and personal."	Attitude/worldview
Self-confidence/efficacy	The degree to which people have confidence in themselves and exhibit a tendency to take action to overcome (cross-cultural) obstacles and master the challenges.	Personality trait
Proactive initiative	Tendency to act, show initiative, and address problems proactively.	Personality trait
Self-identity	The extent to which people maintain personal values independent of situational factors and have a keen sense of personal identity.	Personality trait

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* *This subdomain of "positive explanatory style" was added to Richter et al.'s list, drawing from work by Gillham et al. (2001) that finds this specific competency, related to optimism, strongly correlates to cross-cultural competence.*

Sources: Jane Gillham et al., "Optimism, Pessimism, and Explanatory Style," ch. 3 in *Optimism & Pessimism: Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice,* ed. Edward C. Chang (American Psychological Association, 2001), 53-76.

Emotional resilience	The extent to which a person has emotional strength and resilience to cope with challenging cross-cultural situations.	Personality trait
Stress ability/nonstress tendency	The degree to which someone possesses an innate disposition to respond with calmness and serenity to the stressors that are encountered.	Personality trait
Stress management	The degree to which individuals actively use techniques to reduce (cross-cultural) stress.	Capability
Interest flexibility	The willingness to substitute important personal interests from one's own background and culture with similar, yet different interests in the host culture.	Personality trait
Creativity	The ability to find creative, novel, and unusual solutions for complex (cross-cultural) challenges.	Personality trait/ capability**

** *While "creativity" is categorized as a personality trait in Richter et al.'s review, it is also noted here as a capability, which can be nurtured through training and education, based on other academic studies.*[73]

Sources: Allan Bird et al., "Defining the Content Domain of Intercultural Competence for Global Leaders," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 25, no. 8 (November 2010): 810–28, https://doi.org/10.1108/02683941011089107; Kwok Leung et al., "Intercultural Competence," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 1 (2014): 489–519, https://www.soonang.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-AnnRev-Intercultural-competence_-Leung-Ang-ML.pdf; Nicole Franziska Richter et al., "Reviewing Half a Century of Measuring Cross-Cultural Competence: Aligning Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Measures," *International Business Review* 32, no. 4 (August 2023), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2023.102122.

Appendix B: Cultural Value Dimensions

The chart provides an introductory overview of how cultural norms, behaviors, motivations, identities, and worldviews can vary. These spectrums can be a useful guide for professionals engaged in intercultural work to consider where an individual, organizational, or national cultural average may fall relative to their own or others, but with the caveat that any entity's position is not absolute, and some values do not fall neatly within a two-dimensional spectrum. A brief explanation of the priorities or preferences for each end of the spectrum follows within parentheses.

This collated list draws on dimensions identified by leading culture academics, such as Florence Rockwood Kluckhohn,[74] Edward Hall,[75] and Geert Hofstede,[76] and expanded on by others, such as management scholar Robert J. House with the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior (GLOBE) study[77] and organizational theorist Fons Trompenaars.[78] Later academic works on global teams, leadership, and management, namely those by Erin Meyer[79] and Andy Molinksy,[80] have emphasized other notable differences relevant to intercultural work and are also included below.

UNDERSTANDING NORMS AND WORLDVIEWS:

|		
MAN-VERSUS-NATURE:	Subjugation to Nature (fatalist)	Mastery over Nature (controllable)
TIME ORIENTATION:	Short-Term (immediate results)	Long-term (perseverance, future focus)
JUDGMENT:	Universalist/Institutional (rules apply to all)	Particularistic/Individual (case dependent)
RULES:	Tight/Closed/Formal (strict rules, formality)	Loose/Open/Informal (flexible norms and rules)
DECISIONMAKING:	Consensual (group buy-in, consultative)	Top-down (boss makes decision)
GENDER ROLES:	Equality/Egalitarian (less distinction)	Inequality/Traditional (set expectations)
STATUS:	Achievement (basis of achievement)	Ascription (basis of age, class, gender, etc.)

UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATIONS:

IDENTITY:	Individual (personal achievement, autonomy)	Collectivist (societal goals, relations) Family/In-Group (protect in-group needs)
POWER DISTANCE:	Low (egalitarian, OK to challenge authority)	High (hierarchical, unequal power)
ACHIEVEMENT:	Competitive (material success, achievement)	Cooperative (value quality of life, care)
UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE:	Low (OK with ambiguity, risk-taking, change)	High (low risk, need clear rules, structure)
DESIRES:	Indulgent (free gratification)	Restraint (control of desires)
PERFORMANCE:	Achievement prioritized and rewarded	Achievement not prioritized or rewarded
WORK-LIFE BALANCE:	Doing (work-centric, career first)	Being (life-centric, leisure time)

COMMUNICATING AND PERSUADING:

MESSAGES:	Low-context/direct (explicit, verbal, clear)	⟷	High-context/indirect (implicit, nonverbal)
EXPRESSIVENESS:	Affective/Expressive (show emotion)	⟷	Neutral/Nonexpressive (straight face)
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK:	Direct (critique clear, up front)	⟷	Indirect (positive framing, save face)
EYE CONTACT:	High (direct eye contact to show interest)	⟷	Low (indirect, reflects thought)
CONVERSATION:	Interruptions (shows enthusiasm)	⟷	Long pauses after comments (shows reflection, respect)
PERSUASION:	Applications-first (key points first, case studies)	⟷	Principles-first (data, methodology first)

BUILDING RELATIONS AND WORKING:

|			
TRUST:	Task-based/cognitive (competence and reliability)	⟷	Relationship-based/affective (personal bond)
PERSONAL DISCLOSURE:	Share openly (all topics on the table)	⟷	Guarded, work-focused (no personal small talk)
CONFLICT:	Disagreeable (debate, confrontation)	⟷	Agreeable (avoid conflict, save face)
RELATION TO TIME:	Punctual (schedules)	⟷	Relative (flexible, relations first)
WORKSTYLE:	Monochronic/linear (one task at a time)	⟷	Polychronic/Nonlinear (multitask)
LEADERSHIP VALUES:	Task-oriented (focus on results and productivity)	⟷	Relationship-oriented (maintain harmony)
INVOLVEMENT:	Specific (segregate work vs. private life)	⟷	Diffuse (relations transcend life spaces)
SELF-PROMOTION:	Lean-in (tout successes, self-promote)	⟷	Self-effacing (never brag, humble)

Appendix C: Culture-General Resources for Intelligence Operations Officers and Foreign Partner Training Leads

For intelligence officers working closely with foreign partners or human sources over a prolonged period, the following resources offer helpful starting points in preparation for sustained intercultural engagements:
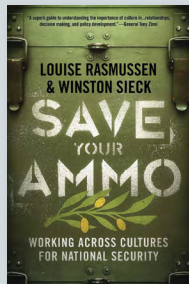

Louise Rasmussen and Winston Sieck, *Save Your Ammo: Working Across Cultures for National Security* (Global Cognition, 2019). An excellent, succinct guidebook tailored for navigating intercultural challenges in service to national security missions.
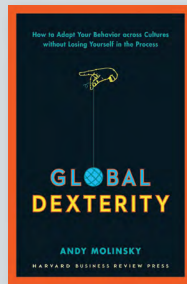
Andy Molinksy, *Global Dexterity: How To Adapt Your Behavior Across Cultures Without Losing Yourself in the Process* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013). Another succinct guide to when and how to adjust specific behaviors in intercultural contexts without losing oneself in the process.
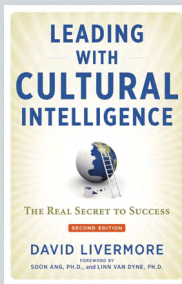
David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success,* 2nd ed. (American Management Association, 2015). An easy-to-read, how-to guide to develop cultural intelligence, including an overview of 10 primary cultural value dimensions and how they influence the behavior of the 10 largest cultural clusters in the world.
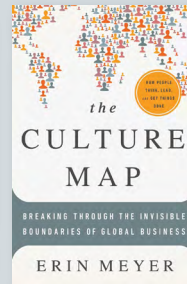
Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business* (Public Affairs, 2014). Although this work is focused on business practices, its discussion of how cultures differ regarding feedback, leadership, decisionmaking, trust-building, and persuasion offers critical insights for evaluating and tailoring behaviors to match liaison partner preferences. Excellent overviews of this author speaking on her work are available on *YouTube.*
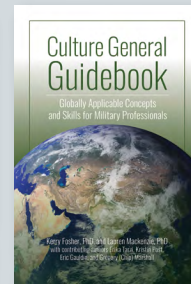
Kerry B. Fosher and Lauren Mackenzie, *Culture General Guidebook: Globally Applicable Concepts and Skills for Military Professionals* (Marine Corps University Press, 2023). A great introduction to "culture-general" concepts and skills, drawing on real-world case studies. Although focused on the value for military missions, IC personnel managing foreign intelligence partnerships will find significant overlap and utility. For example, sections on social control, managing conflict, and communicating offer key lessons for combat-zone collection.
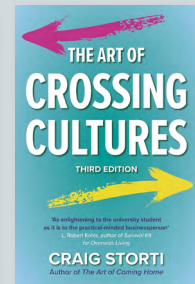
Craig Storti, *The Art of Crossing Cultures,* 3rd ed. (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2021). An outstanding overview of what to expect when moving abroad, addressing the challenges of country shock and culture shock. Chapters on the impact on spouses and families are invaluable references to help them navigate challenges alongside the IC member.

Appendix D: Culture-General Resources for Intelligence Analysts

Intelligence analysts often are less involved in close and prolonged engagement with foreign partners, but still charged with analyzing foreign actors and informing intercultural engagements. The following resources—focused more on building cultural knowledge of how universal concepts differ across cultures—are helpful starting points, in addition to some of those cited in Appendix C:

Jeannie Johnson and Matthew T. Berrett, **"Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis,"** *Studies in Intelligence* 55, no. 2 (June 2011), https://www.cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Cultural-Topography.pdf. This IC cultural analysis framework is an important starting guide for considering the variety of cultural influences that impact a specific issue.

David Livermore, ***Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success*** (as noted above).

Erin Meyer, ***The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*** (as noted above).

Erin Meyer, ***The Country Mapping Tool,*** https://erinmeyer.com/tools/culture-map-premium/. Based on the framework advanced in her book, *The Culture Map* (cited above), this tool (at a small cost) allows one to receive a "cultural map" of select countries to compare how they generally align or diverge in areas such as building trust, giving negative feedback, and making decisions. This tool is very helpful for anticipating possible friction points between US and partner cultures.

Richard E. Nisbett, ***The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently. . . and Why*** (Free Press, 2003). A notable work that considers the impact of cultural differences between Western and some Asian cultures on various aspects of cognition. Some academics have critiqued

this book as being overly general and presenting a stark East-West dichotomy that overlooks similarities, as well as diversity, of thought within each region; it should be read with these caveats in mind.[81]

Thomas Talhelm, "**Emerging Evidence of Cultural Differences Linked to Rice Versus Wheat Agriculture**," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 32 (2020): 81-89. This article advances a case for the influence of agriculture in shaping human culture, focusing on differences between rice-growing and wheat-growing cultures. Notably, this study speaks to cultural differences within nation-states, such as China, and possible cultural commonalities with other global communities owing to their agricultural roots.

Richard D. Lewis, ***When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures,*** 4th ed. (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2018). Chapters 1-3 offer a valuable breakdown of national clusters into three categories: linear-active (mostly Western cultures), multi-active (mostly African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American), and reactive cultures (mostly Asian cultures) with associated qualities. Chapter 7 notes different models of leadership—with diagrams—across various countries. Lewis unpacks how various concepts, such as communication, use of time, status, and motivation, differ among these cultures. Part 3 provides more than 90 country profiles, although should be read with the caveat that some may be dated.

Appendix E: Culture-General Resources for Intelligence Professional Staff

For intelligence professional staff in charge of recruiting, hiring, or preparing IC officers to work abroad, or for educators and trainers considering intercultural curriculum, the following resources may be of value:
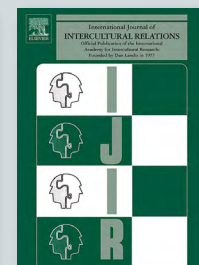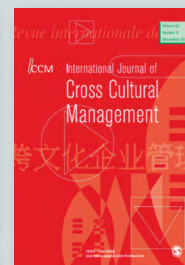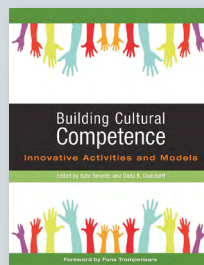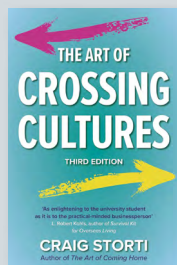
Craig Storti, *The Art of Crossing Cultures.* A key read to prepare IC members and their families for overseas work (as noted above).

Darla K. Deardorff, ed., *SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (SAGE, 2009). A thorough review of intercultural competence, covering theoretical underpinnings, as well as various definitions, models, assessment methods, and training programs.

Darla Deardorff and Kate Berardo, eds., *Building Cultural Competence: Innovative Activities and Models* (Routledge, 2012). An excellent overview of in-classroom exercises to boost intercultural learning and prepare for work in foreign environments. For example, the "5Rs of Culture Change" exercise looks at five key changes faced when moving across cultures; the book also helps unpack why it is normal to experience ups and down and why stress is part of the process.

Ming "Lily" Li, Jinglin Jiang, and Meng Qi, **"The Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence To Learning Flexibility, Cultural Difference, and Expatriate Effectiveness,"** *Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research* 12, no. 4 (2024): 715–37, https://livrepository .liverpool.ac.uk/3179386/. A helpful overview of the importance of testing for learning flexibility in hiring for

global work and the importance of overseas assignments for workforce development.

Johnathan Kochert et al., **"Development of Cross-Cultural Performance Criterion Measures: Critical Issues and Practical Solutions,"** *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management* 22, no. 3 (2022): 517–42, https:// doi.org/10.1177/14705958221138458. A great effort in developing cross-cultural performance criteria and a rating tool that includes applying cultural knowledge, strengthening intercultural relations, using nonverbal communication, collecting cultural information, working with and leading people from other cultures, influencing through persuasion and negotiation, managing conflicts and ethical challenges, maintaining composure, and working with an interpreter.

Pauline Vromans et al., **"Intercultural Learning in the Classroom: Facilitators and Challenges of the Learning Process,"** *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 97 (November 2023), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2023 .101907. An excellent overview of best practices in developing intercultural competence through education and training. Lessons include the role of dissonance, the role of cultural self-awareness, and the use of critical incidents and self-discovery to increase understanding of oneself and others.

Appendix F: Culture-Specific Resources for All Intelligence Professionals

A notable body of resources shed light on various strategic, national, and security and intelligence organizational cultures. Many of the below include country-specific profiles that may be useful starting points for those assigned to a specific region or country. Examples include:
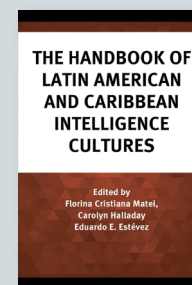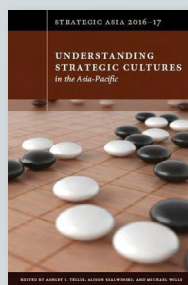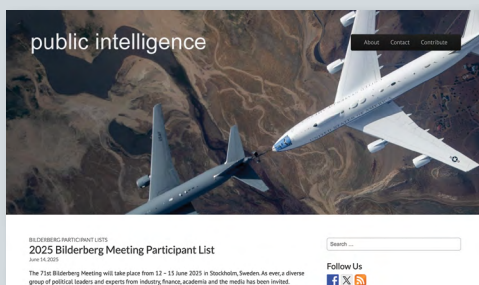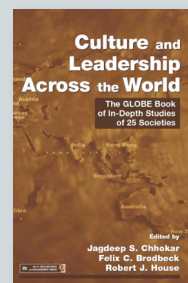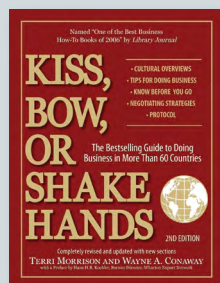
Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway, *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands,* 2nd ed. (Adams Media, 2006). Includes information on history, cultural orientations, business practices, and protocol for more than 60 countries.

US Air Force, *Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) Culture Guide App,* https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/Ready-Airman-Training/Culture-Guide-Mobile-APP/. The AFCLC manages an application for download with deep-dive country profiles and culture-general insights.

Jagdeep S. Chhokar et al., eds., *Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies* (Psychology Press, 2007).

Open Source Center Master Narratives Country Profiles, https://publicintelligence.net.

Ashley J. Tellis, Alison Szalwinski, and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2016-2017: Understanding Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific* (The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2016). A compilation of articles on the strategic cultures of China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, India, Indonesia, and the United States.

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Stuart Farson et al., eds., *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence: National Approaches, Vol. 2-Europe, the Middle East, and South Africa* (Praeger, 2008).

Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, *Florida International University Studies on Latin American Military Cultures (~2016-2020),* https://gordoninstitute.fiu.edu/research/military-culture-series/.
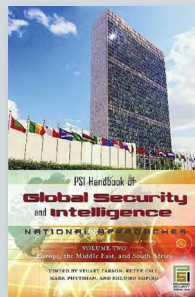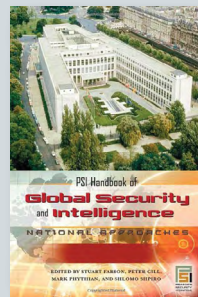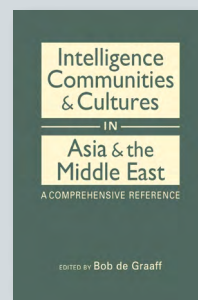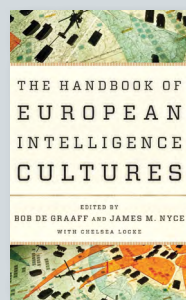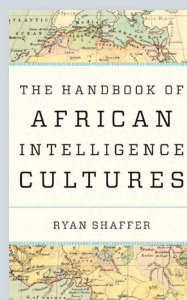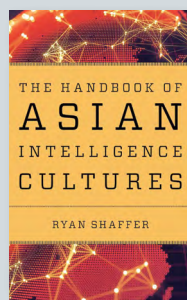
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