

International Relations Field Exam
August 2009

Please answer one question from each section. Keep in mind that you will be evaluated not only on your knowledge of the relevant literature, but also on your ability to think independently and make a compelling argument.

Answer one (1) of the following:

I A. Modern deterrence theory was developed primarily during the Cold War, to deter leaders of other states while not provoking them. Discuss critically several major contributions to deterrence theory, evaluating their logic and evidence that supports their theoretical perspectives. In particular, compare rational action and psychological perspectives, and how they compete with or complement each other. How applicable is this work to deterring non-state actors in the current era?

I B. According to structural realism, states cater best for their self-defense by creating alliances and maintaining a balance of power. How adequate is that strategy for dealing with the problem of terrorism confronting the United States? Are there theoretical approaches that help us understand better how to deal with the current problem of terrorism?

Answer one (1) of the following:

II A. Discuss the future of relations between the United States and China, from at least three different theoretical perspectives. What logic and evidence do these perspectives offer on the conditions and likelihood of peace and war between those two big countries? Discuss the strengths and limitations of each of the perspectives you consider. What predictions and policy advice follow from your complete review?

II B. Summarize the main tenets of Waltz's (1979) and Gilpin's (1981) theories of the international system and inter-state war. Can these two theories be reconciled and are they still useful in explaining post-Cold War patterns of war and peace in the Middle East? (Focus on the recent wars in Iraq and Lebanon as examples.) To what extent does the influence of non-state actors like Al Qaeda or Hizbullah require a reconsideration of theories of international order and inter-state war?

Answer one (1) of the following:

III A. Critically review the main studies on the political economy of civil war. Do these studies consider any significant international influences on civil war occurrence? What might be some of the channels through which domestic political instability, including civil war, can increase the risk of interstate war and vice-versa? Consider all relevant theories and assess available empirical evidence bearing on these questions.

III B. We have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the level of global trade and financial exchanges since the end of WWII. Without international institutions, this would not have come to pass. Do you agree or disagree with the second statement? Offer both theoretical and empirical defense for your view.