DOD Awards Minerva Program Grants to Study Peer and Near-peer Competition and Foreign Malign Influence

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The Department of Defense has awarded $6.7 million in grants to four university-based Minerva faculty teams to support research in social and behavioral science. Congress funded these awards to examine issues related to peer and near-peer competition and foreign malign influence.

This research will increase understanding of the social aspects that underlie security and stability and how they may result in challenges to national security.

Proposals were selected based on their potential to make foundational contributions to basic social science in social media analytics for foreign malign influence and the interactions of peer and near-peer state actors. Faculty awardees were selected for the awards following a merit competition.

The following four university-based faculty teams were selected for the following projects:

1. **Multi-Level Models of Covert Online Information Campaigns**
   Principal Investigator: Kathleen Carley, Carnegie Mellon University

2. **Algorithmic Personalization and Online Radicalization: A Mixed Methods Approach**
   Principal Investigator: Brian Ekdale, University of Iowa

3. **Total War: Multi-Agent Network Theory of Connective Action in a Cross-Domain Coupled World**
   Principal Investigator: Neil Johnson, The George Washington University

4. **Measuring China's Political Influence along the Belt and Road**
   Principal Investigator: Jacob Shapiro, Princeton University

The Minerva Research Initiative supports social science research aimed at improving our basic understanding of security and is jointly administered by the Basic Research Office in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and the Strategy and Force Development Office in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Minerva projects are supported by the Basic Research Office, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research and the Office of Naval Research.

For more information on the Minerva Research Initiative, click here.