Winning Strategic Competition in the Indo-Pacific

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About the Author

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His tenure as a squadron commander (2014-2017) coincided with the liberation of the Philippines' city of Marawi from Islamic State, and the South China Sea legal case between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China. Prior to his Fellowship, he oversaw surveillance, cyber and information operations at Australia's Joint Operations Command Headquarters, and since returning to Australia now heads up his Air Force's Air Power Center.
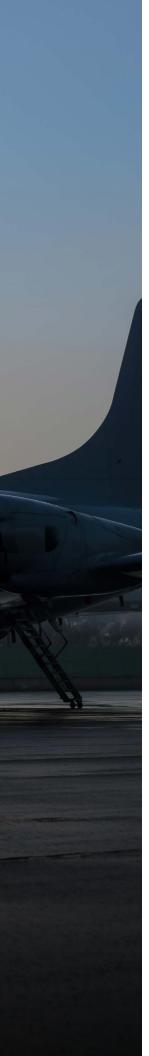
Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

A 10 Squadron AP-3C awaits its crew as the sun rises over RAAF Base Edinburgh, Australia.

Photograph by Wade Roberts

Executive Summary

The strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific involving the United States (U.S.), Australia and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is arguably the most significant contemporary international relations issue. It spans all aspects of state power: hard, sharp and soft; diplomatic, information, military and economic; and all domains: air, sea, land, space, cyber, technology and innovation. But in their rush to recover ground perceived to be already lost to the CCP, neither the U.S. nor Australia have paused to devote sufficient attention to understanding the nature of strategic competition, to comprehend what winning it actually means, and therefore to grasp how best to approach it. As a result, they both continue to cede the initiative to the CCP, while it continues to compete on the terms most favorable to it.

Most current interpretations of strategic competition view it as a constant state, one that therefore defies clear articulation of end-states and the metrics that demonstrate progress towards their attainment. Such interpretations are not only imprecise but unhelpful, as they prevent development of concrete strategies, leaving only abstract visions against which executable planning and commitment of resources is unachievable. A more exact approach views strategic competition structurally—poised atop a hierarchy made up of a range of smaller competitions, which are themselves comprised of discrete, single-issue contests. In this context, the objective of strategic competition can be best understood and expressed as the effort to gain and maintain a relative advantage over an adversary regarding contested goods such as power, security, wealth, influence, and status. This is achieved by winning the component competitions and contests that contribute to that strategic end-state without escalation to conflict. To win strategic competition necessarily requires a clear grasp of its key terrain. Approaches that focus on a single domain are too narrow and tactical to achieve a strategic end-state. Instead, reference to conflict, decision-making and power theories reveal that, from a Western perspective, the human-cognitive process is the critical element of strategic competition, a view also reflected in the CCP's adoption of the Three Warfares.

In concrete terms, this key terrain is best understood as the observe, orient, decide and act (OODA) loops of strategic competition's actors.

The CCP's use of the Three Warfares demonstrates its implementation of this concept. Its actions indicate a deliberate effort to increase its own influence among foreign actors by: 1) promoting a positive narrative of Chinese culture, society and ideology, 2) incrementally establishing 'facts on the ground' regarding the CCP's territorial claims and political and economic relationships, 3) building critical bilateral partnerships to limit multilateral challenges to CCP interests, while 4) not provoking the U.S. or its partners to respond effectively. While the CCP has suffered a number of setbacks as a result of its aggressive use of sharp power, it has also gained a relative advantage overall compared to both the U.S. and Australia. More importantly, it will continue to do so unless those latter two choose to compete more effectively in future.

The CCP is largely immune to efforts by external actors to control its OODA loop directly. Its use of sharp power against the leaders and citizens of the U.S., Australia and other Indo-Pacific and global actors exploits their open societies. However the CCP is insulated against similar approaches by the People's Republic of China's (PRC) craving for stability and unique interpretation of democracy, the Han nationalism the CCP nurtures and carefully manages, and its dominance of the PRC's information environment. Consequently, the U.S. and Australia need to employ an indirect approach to Indo-Pacific strategic competition, one in which they identify and engage those actors, both regional and global, who play significant roles in either enabling or obstructing the pursuit of objectives by the U.S., Australia or the CCP. While current U.S. and Australian approaches are mostly indirect in nature, analysts identified shortcomings within them that include their focus on military presence and deterrence, U.S. unreliability as a partner and ally, conditionality associated with investment and development aid, treatment of regional middle and minor powers as pawns in a strategic 'Great Game', and the absence of robust and repeatable processes to integrate and synchronize multinational, multiagency competitive efforts.

The procedural shortcomings could be swiftly addressed by adaptation and adoption of extant military processes for multinational, multiagency use. This represents the area in which the U.S. and Australian militaries could make their most significant, immediate contribution to strategic competition, providing support to the political instruments Clausewitz viewed as decisive in cases where conflict was absent, rather than increasing their posture and presence in potentially counterproductive attempts to deter or coerce. These processes could help ensure executable policies were articulated rather than immeasurable abstractions, enabling generation of the detailed intelligence on target audiences necessary to determine critical actors' customer needs, as well as the development and deployment of resonant narratives among them to build enduring brand loyalty. Such processes could also help ensure that U.S. and Australian efforts to compete with the CCP were integrated and synchronized with each other, including efforts to cooperate with the CCP or to concede to it on certain issues. This would allow mutually supportive, measurable strategic outcomes to be achieved instead of engaging in piecemeal and potentially conflicting activities.

Such a shift to 'Model II' (process-oriented) decision-making by 'Model III' (agenda-driven) organizations faces multiple challenges. These include the inherent inertia and friction of bureaucracies, an aversion to treating potential partners as 'targets', and the resourcing the intelligence community requires to enable effective planning and targeting efforts. This resource demand is particularly problematic, as it will likely come at the opportunity cost of the hard power capabilities, those traditionally viewed as the military's crown jewels, that will be necessary to win should competition escalate to conflict.

However, the most critical concerns relate to values. The CCP's use of sharp power provides it a greater range of options to seize and control other actors' OODA loops than the U.S. or Australia. But for either of these liberal democracies to employ sharp power themselves presents difficulties. The first is the risk to their integrity and reputation (including the inevitable CCP accusations of hypocrisy) if their use of sharp power is discovered. A second relates to the legality of sharp power's use. While there is no Law of Strategic Competition that defines its norms, sharp power blurs the

threshold of peacetime International Law; it removes volunteerism from its targets' decisions, and its use can have collateral effects whose legality is questionable and ethics unsound. The lack of equivalent professional frameworks for those who engage in strategic competition to that of the military in conflict is a further concern given the complexity of these legal and ethical issues. Given the fiduciary obligations owed by the state to those professionals, significant development in this area would be required to adequately prepare them to use sharp power, and to provide them the necessary protection from the potential consequences of doing so.

If those within the U.S. and Australia who assert the CCP seeks regional, and potentially global hegemony are correct, each nation needs to determine with some urgency exactly what they are willing to do to prevent that outcome. Fundamentally, the U.S. and Australia will remain unable to win in strategic competition, and therefore rely on the CCP to lose it, until they are willing to face that crucial, and potentially existential, question.

1. Introduction

> *Inter-state strategic competition, defined by geopolitical rivalry between free and repressive world order visions, is the primary concern for U.S. national security. In particular, the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, seeks to reorder the region to its advantage by leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce other nations.[1]*
>
> *—Acting U.S. Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan*

'China' is winning the strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific. It occupies disputed territories in the South China Sea. The People's Liberation Army—Navy (PLA-N) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that affords it strategic basing are welcomed by some Indo-Pacific nations, while others have shifted from diplomatic recognition of Taiwan to the People's Republic of China (PRC). Meanwhile, Western nations joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and embraced Confucius Institutes that promote Chinese language, culture and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) narratives, while democratic societies are infiltrated by pro-CCP influence.

Strategic competition became the critical national security issue of the last decade and, with COVID-19 increasing pressure on the global order, will remain so for the foreseeable future. Historians, political scientists, military professionals, policy wonks and pundits generated volumes debating, defining, disputing and refining the concept and its lexicon: hybrid warfare, fourth-generation warfare, grey-zones and confrontation among others. Meanwhile, China rose unabated to allegedly threaten the current rules-based global order, leaving these same commentators to assert that nations such as the United States (U.S.) and Australia faced 'a new Cold War', were caught in 'Thucydides' Trap', or confronted a future characterized by 'constant competition' with China. In response, the U.S. and Australian governments announced their respective 'Pivots' and 'Step-ups', and developed and implemented Indo-Pacific strategies accordingly. But

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1   Patrick M. Shanahan, 'Message from the Secretary of Defense', U.S. Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, (Department of Defense 1 June 2019)

did they understand this competition's nature and what winning it meant? Or were they simply (re)acting based on untested assumptions?

This paper comprises four parts, each of which relates to a key aspect of strategic competition. *Observe* frames the issue, defining Indo-Pacific strategic competition's scope and key concepts as they are used in this paper. These include not only vital distinctions in the way China is described, but also the important role perception plays in creating strategic competition's reality. *Orient* reviews key aspects of international relations theory to identify strategic competition's key terrain, the one that will enable victory for those actors who can best seize and control it. This review includes concepts of conflict, decision-making and power, as well as the CCP's adoption of the Three Warfares, and concludes with an assessment of the CCP's success to date in employing the Three Warfares to seize and control that key terrain. *Decide* examines the potential for the U.S. or Australia to directly seize and control the key terrain in the PRC in contrast to an indirect approach through other regional actors, and considers the major shortcomings of current U.S. and Australian approaches to strategic competition. *Act* identifies how those shortcomings might be addressed, specifically noting the most significant, immediate contribution that the U.S. and Australian militaries can each make to their nation's strategic competitive efforts. It also notes that the implementation of such solutions is likely to be impeded by further challenges that will force both nations to confront hard strategic choices regarding their respective organizational cultures and prioritization of resources. More importantly, the U.S. and Australia may need to reassess their commitment to their core values as liberal democracies if they are committed to ensuring that the CCP does not achieve the Indo-Pacific, and potentially global, hegemony that they seem to fear that it seeks, as the approach that appears to offer the greatest chance of success also entails significant legal and ethical implications.

2. **Observe**

> *Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start.*[2]
>
> —*Maria von Trapp*

Any complex policy question must begin with a common, accurate understanding of its relevant concepts. Imprecise definitions can be misinterpreted or misrepresented, causing critical issues to become mired in unproductive semantic debates. *Observe* defines the key concepts relating to Indo-Pacific strategic competition as they are used within this paper to maintain its focus on important matters rather than unhelpful distractions.

2.1 **The Indo-pacific?**

All definitions of the Indo-Pacific are contextual. While generally understood to comprise the region shown in Figure 1, its borders vary with the speaker's perspective, which derive from their nationality and government, non-government, academic or private sector affiliation. In this paper, precise boundaries do not directly impact our understanding of strategic competition and are therefore irrelevant. Instead, the Indo-Pacific is considered to comprise those instances where the interests of the U.S., Australia and the CCP overlap and the actors involved with these interests, rather than narrow, geographic perceptions of any specific 'area of operations' within it.

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2   Richard Rodgers, Hal Leonard, and Oscar Hammerstein (II), *The Sound of Music* (Hal Leonard Corporation, 1960).
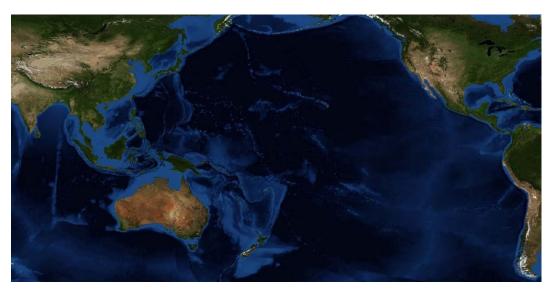
Figure 1: A geographic perspective of the Indo-Pacific[3]

2.2 **China, Chinese and the CCP**

Care is required when describing 'China'. Its history and international relations are complex, and mislabeling any of the diverse groups involved can offend one or more of them, inviting accusations of misrepresentation, Sinophobia or racism.[4] To avoid such distractions, in this paper 'China' refers specifically to the geographic entity, 'the PRC' refers to the nation-state, 'Chinese' refers to the PRC's citizens irrespective of their physical location, while ethnic Chinese diaspora are described as Chinese-Australian or similar. Finally, the PRC's party-state government is referred to as 'the CCP' with its leadership identified individually where required.

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3   Royal Australian Air Force, *Overview of Indo-Pacific*, Falcon View (Air Warfare Centre: Georgia Tech Research Institute (used under license), 12 June 2020).

4   John Fitzgerald, 'Mind Your Tongue - Language, Public Diplomacy and Community Cohesion in Contemporary Australia–China Relations', Policy Brief (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, October 2019), 3.

2.3 Strategic Competition: cooperation, confrontation, contestation or conflation?

Strategic competition's vocabulary is imprecise. Post-Cold War thinkers created a lexicon that included effects-based operations, transformations, revolutions in military affairs, complex warfighting, multi-block wars, grey-zone conflict and hybrid warfare. As a result, RAND observed in 2018 that there was no clear understanding of the term, despite a common belief that it would define the future.[5] Yet, to win in strategic competition, it would seem helpful to first understand what both 'strategic competition' and 'winning' in it actually mean.

2.3.1 Defining strategic competition

Definitions of strategic competition vary widely. Simplified 'geometric' descriptions permit wide consumption, but have inherent limitations. Of these, 'linear' approaches treat competition as either a 'Phase 0' preceding conflict, or a loosely-bound area of the international relations spectrum between peace and war. Such one-dimensional views fail to accommodate the multiple, dynamic circumstances of these complex relationships, such as nations confronting each other over one issue while cooperating on another. 'Prismatic' concepts, such as Australian Army strategist Grant Mason's (Figure 2), better represent the multi-dimensional complexity of interstate relations, treating competition as a constant state of tension between actors and issue-related vectors of collaboration, cooperation, contest, confrontation, compromise and violent conflict. However, while competition and cooperation regularly coexist, viewing the latter as a

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5   Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives*, (RAND, 2018), 2. See also Kurt M. Campbell and Jake Sullivan, 'Competition Without Catastrophe: How America Can Both Challenge and Coexist With China', *Foreign Affairs* 98, no. 5 (2019), 96–110; Michael Greeen 'The Gray Zone on a Black-and-White Board: A Discussion with Kath Hicks', *The Asia Chessboard (podcast)*, 5 November 2019. In this podcast Hicks notes the importance of remaining focused on meaning, vice terminology, "And let me just say for some people the term they prefer is hybrid, for some it's irregular warfare, malign influence, grey zone. And I very much believe we should not get hung up, too hung up on the terms or the precise definition because we like to get, often in Washington, we like to get into the debates over definitions and terms and then we kind of miss the forest for the trees...there's this range of tactics that are being undertaken that fit somewhere between routine statecraft and direct conflict. And the desire is to seek relative gain from one side or the other.

subset of the former is a *non sequitur*.[6] The lack of clear boundaries for the vectors is also problematic—what separates cooperation from collaboration, contest from confrontation? Most seriously, for this and similar definitions, treating strategic competition as an unstructured, constant state hinders effective policy development. Actionable strategic policy begins with articulation of *end-states* that represent winning and *metrics* by which progress towards them can be measured. How can the U.S. and Australia plan to compete effectively if their concept of strategic competition makes no distinction between the current and future states? Worse, as RAND senior analyst Ali Wyne asked, how can nations prioritize their resource commitments to engage in this infinite competition of an indefinite nature?[7]

Figure 2: Mason's "Competition Prism"[8]

Descriptive approaches are also not without their issues, indicating that the problem is more conceptual than methodological. One version defines strategic competition as "active rivalry between states that perceive their

6   John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 2001), 53.

7   Ali Wyne, 'America's Blind Ambition Could Make It a Victim of Global Competition', *The National Interest*, 11 February 2019. See also Sungmin Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, ed. Scott D. McDonald and Michael C. Burgoyne (Honolulu, Hawaii: Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2019), 71.

8   Grant Mason, 'A New Model for Strategic Competition', *The Forge*, 11 September 2019, 4.

fundamental interests under threat by the opposite party."[9] This excludes cooperation and collaboration from competition, but not conflict. Of greater concern, however, is its focus on *active rivalry*. This excludes from competition those situations where one actor competes while its unwitting rival remains blissfully ignorant that its interests are at risk and fails to act to protect them until it is too late; arguably the acme of competitive skill.

RAND's 2018 report provides the most useful definition for strategic competition to date, having approached the topic from first principles. This defined it as "the attempt to gain advantage, often relative to others believed to pose a challenge or threat, through the self-interested pursuit of contested goods such as power, security, wealth, influence, and status."[10] This differentiates competition from cooperation by its *self-interested* pursuit of relative advantage, and from conflict because it *did not intend* death or destruction, despite being "unconstrained by any sense of others' interests."[11] Importantly, RAND's report also defined *contests* as discrete, single-issue activities. This enables us to view strategic competition as a structure that comprises multiple smaller competitions, each of which contain discrete contests, as shown in Figure 3.[12]
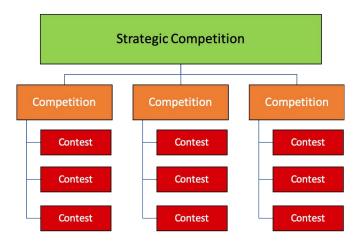
Figure 3: A Structural Perspective of Strategic Competition

9   Scott D. McDonald, 'Strategic Competition?', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 26.

10   Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 5.

11   Mazarr et al., 4.

12   Mazarr et al., 3.

1.1.1 Winning' in competition

RAND did not define 'winning' in strategic competition, nor did its focus on gain recognize cases in which actors sought only to maintain their existing state of relative advantage. Regardless, merging RAND's definition with a 'preferred status quo' option and the generic "victory in a game or contest,"[13] allows us to explain winning in strategic competition as, *a gain in, or maintenance of, a relative advantage over a perceived rival with regard to contested goods.'* This definition provides a foundation from which strategic end-states can be more clearly articulated, which then inform how to approach the range of subordinate competitions and contests that overlap in time, space, and objectives. In the absence of both this structural appreciation of strategic competition's nature and a coherent definition of winning, the problematic misperception by many strategic thinkers of competition as a constant was understandable, if not inevitable.

The following examples help clarify these definitions. Consider the Olympic Games. Each Games is a competition made up of multiple events, and each event a contest for which medals are awarded. The medal tally represents winning for each Games, but this competition exists within a larger strategic one for global sporting supremacy which involves further competitions in each sport, such as World Championships. This range of competitions between nations overlap in time, scope, participants and venues, but each outcome represents measurable progress toward their desired end-state of sporting supremacy. This example also usefully highlights the possibility for actors to define winning differently. Major sporting nations are likely to focus on gold medals or the overall tally, while smaller ones might only pursue medals in events that have some specific value to them. A second example, shown in Figure 4, represents one possible Indo-Pacific competition. In this hypothetical, the U.S. and Australia both seek to increase the number of Pacific Island nations that recognize Taiwan to maintain asymmetric pressure on the CCP. Discrete contests within each of the Pacific Island nations shown would aim to maintain or alter their support. Each contest would be planned and executed to optimize its chances to achieve that goal, the success or failure of which represents measurable progress towards the overall objective.

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13   'Win, n.1', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 20 December 2019.

Figure 4: Increase diplomatic recognition of Taiwan

2.4 Perception is reality

2.4.1 Western perceptions of the CCP

Political scientist and 'offensive' realist John Mearsheimer argued in 2001 that engagement with the PRC would fail. Rather than democratize as it rose and integrated globally, he argued that it would instead become an adversary to the U.S.[14] Despite awareness of the 'security dilemma' and understanding of its inherent irrationality among Western analysts, such views became entrenched among many of them.[15] Through this lens, PRC

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14   Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 4, 385, 397–402.

15   Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999). Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 36, 43. Stacie Goddard, *When Right Makes Might : Rising Powers and World Order*, (Cornell University Press, 2018), 1-15. See also Susan L. Shirk and Orville Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', *Task Force Report* (Asia Society), 25. Allison refers to Jervis's Perception and Misperception in International Relations, "a state that has no aggressive ambitions can nonetheless create fears among its neighbors just by strengthening its own defensive capabilities." Mearsheimer refers to Herz in *Political Realism and Political Ideal*ism, "The 'security dilemma', which is one of the most well-known concepts in the international relations literature, reflects the basic logic of offensive realism. The essence of the dilemma is that the measures a state takes to increase its own security usually decrease the security of others states. Thus it is difficult for a state to increase its own chances of survival without threatening the survival of other states." Goddard explores the way in which uncertainty regarding a rising power's intent leads an existing

behaviors were inevitably interpreted in ways that reinforced this perception, leading to widespread assertions that the CCP sought not just regional hegemony in pursuit of its China Dream, but to eventually challenge the existing rules-based global order.[16] Such interpretations of the CCP's intent led many in the U.S. and Australia to now view themselves as forced to compete against the CCP to defend that global order against, "a brutal authoritarian regime that represses its critics, is riddled with corrupt and venal officials, and is in danger of collapse if it does not sustain rapid economic growth."[17]

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power to interpret that intent and its actions through the efforts it makes and methods it uses to legitimize them.

16   The references stating this position are legion, so the following presents a selection broken into policy, think tanks and military thinking, and academia:
Policy. 'Remarks by Vice President Pence on the Administration's Policy Toward China', The White House, accessed 27 September 2019; 'Remarks by Vice President Pence at the Frederic V. Malek Memorial Lecture', The White House, accessed 4 March 2020; The White House, *United States National Security Strategy, December 2017*', accessed 4 March 2020; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*' (Commonwealth of Australia 2017); *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*; Linda Reynolds, 'Australia in an Age of Strategic Competition', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 3–7.
Think tanks and military publications. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 5; Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation: Present Realities and Emerging Trends*, (RAND, 2019), 111–12; Liza Tobin, 'Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 39; Dr Bibek Chand, Dr Zenel Garcia, and Mr Kevin Modlin, 'Southeast Asian Hedging and Indo-Japanese Strategies for Regional Balance: Managing China's Rise', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 1, no. 2 (Winter 2018): 23; Jared Morgan McKinney and Nicholas Butts, 'Bringing Balance to the Strategic Discourse on China's Rise', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 73; General CQ Brown, 'Demystifying the Indo-Pacific Theater', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 4; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 7; Michael J. Mazarr, 'US/China Competition', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, SMA (NSI, 2019), 131; Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 57; Peter Jennings, 'National Security Strategy Can Help Us Build Key Alliances to Counter China', *ASPI.org*, 2 May 2020; Peter Jennings, 'New Cold War Traps Australia between Our Traditional Rock and Global Hard Case', *ASPI.org*, 13 August 2019; Carsten Schmiedl, 'Great Power Competition and Relative Advantage: Lessons from Thucydides for U.S. Strategic Thinkers', *Small Wars Journal*, n.d. Of note, Cho argues that the CCP is unlikely to seek global hegemony in the near term. Instead it is more likely to limit itself to regional hegemony and then further exploit the opportunities afforded by the current rules-based order, rather than be drawn into the responsibilities of global leadership.
Academia. Graham T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), vi; Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 3-4; Nathan Swire, 'Water Wars: Pence Accuses China of Domestic Interference and Warships Have Close-Call in South China Sea', *Lawfare* (blog), 23 October 2018; Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, 'The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations', *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 2 (2018): 60–70; Robert D. Blackwill, 'America Needs an "Engage and Contain" Strategy for China', *The National Interest*, 15 March 2017.

17   Bruce J. Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party's Strategy for Survival* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–2. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 44. See also Chand, Garcia, and Modlin, 'Southeast Asian Hedging and Indo-Japanese Strategies for Regional Balance: Managing China's Rise'. Chand et al provide a detailed analysis of hedging strategies among the small and middle powers of the region as a contrast to Mearsheimer's polarized perspective of international relations. For the various arguments describing the CCP's fragility, see Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); David L. Shambaugh, *China's Future* (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2016); David L. Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, D.C. : Berkeley: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; University of California Press, 2008); Richard

2.4.2 **CCP perceptions of the West**

The CCP, meanwhile, appeared to conclude not only that competition with the West existed, but that this was a natural situation. This realpolitik interpretation aligns with arguments that status quo powers engage in their own form of revisionism to maintain their dominant position over rivals in the global order. This is consistent with game theory interpretations of Sun Tzu which note that when the battlefield is unclear, it is "better to be the one who dictates which game is to be played or…which player is to be assigned which position in the game."[18] It also explains why the CCP views behavior by Western nations, such as their insistence on the PRC's compliance with rules the West sets but does not itself consistently observe, or activities within the PRC's sphere of influence, as threatening to the CCP's core interests. For example, PRC academics highlighted U.S. handling of the EP-3E/F-8 mid-air collision off Hainan Island in 2000 and ongoing reconnaissance operations as evidence of its efforts to maintain global hegemony.[19] Meanwhile the CCP and state media construed Western nations' support for color revolutions and regime change as part of a comprehensive propaganda campaign, one that eventually compelled it to respond with policies such as 2013's infamous Document Number 9.[20]

McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers* (London: Allen Lane, 2010); Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006). Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, 'How Development Leads to Democracy.(Essay)', *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 1 (2012). Minxin Pei, *China's Crony Capitalism: The Dynamics of Regime Decay* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016); Andrew Nathan, 'Authoritarian Impermanence', *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 3 (2009): 37–40; Blackwill, 'America Needs an "Engage and Contain" Strategy for China'.

18 Emerson M. S. Niou and Peter C. Ordeshook, 'A Game-Theoretic Interpretation of Sun Tzu's: The Art of War', *Journal of Peace Research* 31, no. 2 (1994): 168. McDonald, 'Strategic Competition?', 34–36. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2. See also Tiankai Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 3 October 2018; Allison, *Destined for War*, 151. Allison cites Kevin Rudd and Bret Scowcroft's assessment of the CCP's perspective in 2014. For a more detailed explanation of the application of game theory to strategy and international relations, see also Emerson Niou and Peter C. Ordeshook, *Strategy and Politics: An Introduction to Game Theory* (Taylor and Francis).

19 Dexin Tian and Chin-Chung Chao, 'The American Hegemonic Responses to the U.S.-China Mid-Air Plane Collision', *International Journal of Communication* 2 (17 January 2008): 19. See also Allison, *Destined for War*, 160; McDonald 'Strategic Competition', 34. Campbell and Ratner, 'The China Reckoning'.

20 Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 24, 244. See also Willy Wo-Lap Lam, 'Xi Jinping Warns Against the "Black Swans" and "Gray Rhinos" of a Possible Color Revolution', *China Brief*, 19, no. 5 (Jamestown 25 March 2019); Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 108; Thomas G. Mahnken, Ross Babbage, and Toshi Yoshihara, *Countering Comprehensive Coercion: Competitive Strategies Against Authoritarian Political Warfare* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, 30 May 18), 47–48; Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *China Tomorrow: Democracy or Dictatorship?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 28; McDonald 'Strategic Competition' 36; Glenda Korporaal, 'Xi Jinping Puts Chinese Communist Party Cadres on a War Footing', *The Australian*, 9 July 2019; Campbell and Ratner, 'The China Reckoning'. Mazarr cites Shi Anbin and Peiyan Wang (original not available online in English).

2.4.3 **So what?**

This paper's scope is limited to how the U.S. and Australia can win the strategic competition in which they perceive they are enmeshed. The validity of these perceptions, and the many alternatives to strategic competition, such as grand bargains, offshore balancing and neo-containment, are outside that scope.[21] However, the role they play is crucial to fully comprehending strategic competition. As long as one actor perceives that competition exists, and acts to achieve or maintain relative advantage, their perception makes it a reality.[22] This is the case with unwitting rivals, as occurred during the early stages of the PLA's reclamation and militarization of the South China Sea, or the CCP's more recent efforts to shape global technology standards. Actors perceive the nature of the competition, the character of its contests, the intentions of other actors and their interactions with each other, through the lens of their own cultures, objectives and norms.[23] From this perceptive baseline, they compete in the manner they consider most advantageous to their interests. Consequently, strategic competition is fundamentally premised on "the social process of states coming to see their relationship as competitive."[24]

Two aspects of this social process are critical to our grasp of strategic competition. The first is the significance of the actors' perceived stake in the competition's outcome. Given "outbreaks of hegemonic struggle have most frequently been triggered by fears of ultimate decline and the perceived erosion of power,"[25] this has major implications for the U.S-China relation-

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21 McKinney and Butts, 'Bringing Balance to the Strategic Discourse on China's Rise'. McKinney and Butts assessed the validity of the US perception of China's regional and global intentions. For a range of alternative approaches to strategic competition, see Allison, *Destined for War*, 221–31; Henry Kissinger, 'The Key Problem of Our Time': A Conversation with Henry Kissinger on Sino-U.S. Relations, 20 September 2018; Campbell and Sullivan, 'Competition Without Catastrophe'. Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why America Should Share Power* (Collingwood, Vic.: Black Inc, 2012); John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy', *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016): 70–83; Joseph Wheatley, 'Does Australia Face a "China Choice"?', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 199 (July 2016): 49–54.

22 Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*'. Mahnken et al define the CCP's activities as comprehensive coercion. In a similar manner to McDonald and Burgoyne's definition that involves 'active rivalry', they argue that that competition must involve two or more engaged actors, a position with which this paper disagrees, given its exclusion of an unwitting rival.

23 Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 4-5, 10.

24 Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 15. For the role interpretation plays regarding signaling in this social context, see Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 10.

25 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 239. See also John J. Mearsheimer, 'The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia' *Michael Hintze Lecture in International Security* (The University of Sydney, 4 August

ship. While Harvard political scientist and national security expert Graham Allison noted this when linking the current situation to the Peloponnesian War in *Destined for War*, his colleague Joseph Nye expressed more practical concerns. Nye worried that global perceptions of U.S. decline might "lead to dangerous policy implications if it encourages China to engage in adventurous policies or the United States to overreact out of fear."[26] At the same time, according to Harvard's Robert Kagan, CCP leaders "chafe at the constraints on them and worry that they must change the international system before the international system changes them."[27] The second aspect of this social process is the potential it creates for rivals to more easily misread each other's intent. This is particularly problematic when their political and social systems are founded on different traditions, cultures and values, a situation that hinders unambiguous signaling. More importantly, when each actor firmly believes their respective cause or claim to be just, that sense of legitimacy and its implied interpretation that any challenge to that claim is therefore inherently unjust, may lead them to escalate the situation, rather than seek to ease tensions.[28]

With this paper's scope, and the relevant concepts and context of Indo-Pacific strategic competition it uses clearly outlined, we now need to *Orient* ourselves within this competition to understand how victory in it might be achieved.

2010); Richard Betts and Thomas Christensen, 'China: Getting the Questions Right', *National Interest* 62 (2001): 17–30.

26   Joseph Nye, *The Future of Power* (Public Affairs, New York, 2011), 203. See also Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon, 'How Hegemony Ends', *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (7 August 2020): 143–56.

27   Robert Kagan, 'What China Knows That We Don't: The Case for a New Strategy of Containment', *The Weekly Standard* , 2, no. 18 (1997): 22. See also A. Waldron, 'How Not to Deal with China', *Commentary*, 103, no. 3 (1997): 44–49.

28   Harry Harding, 'How the Past Shapes the Present: Five Ways in Which History Affects China's Contemporary Foreign Relations', *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 16, no. 1–2 (2009): 125. "[S]ince each country regards its international conduct as highly moral and principled, it may view the other as acting irresponsibly when the other's behavior runs counter to its own preference." See also McDonald 'Strategic Competition', 29; Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 33; Robert Jervis, *System Effects:Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

3. Orient

> *The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.*[29]
>
> *—Carl von Clausewitz, On War*

We must understand strategic competition's environment to pursue victory within it. Some analysts argue it is centered on specific domains, such as cyberspace, artificial intelligence (AI), military technology, trade, reserve currencies, innovation or aid and investment.[30] But treating a *contested* domain as the key terrain for strategic competition, the one that when seized and controlled, would provide a decisive advantage over our adversary across the entirety of competition, ignores Clausewitz's advice, fundamentally misunderstanding that competition's nature by elevating the tactical to the strategic. To identify the key terrain and begin to grasp how the U.S and Australia can feasibly achieve their respective objectives while denying the CCP its own, we must return to the fundamentals of conflict, decision and power theory.

3.1 Western concepts

3.1.1 'On Competition'

Competition is not war and therefore Clausewitz is irrelevant. Perceptions such as this reinforce clichés regarding how often Clausewitz is quoted, read and understood, and perpetuate *On War*'s conflation with de Jomini's

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29   Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Peter Paret and Michael Howard, trans. Peter Paret, [Rev. ed.]. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 88.

30   Nicole Peterson, 'Executive Summary', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, viii–xi. Peterson's executive summary provides examples of the sort of domain-focused approach many analysts take to the decisive environment in which strategic competition unfolds. See also Marcus Thompson and Edward Morgan, 'Information Warfare: An Emergent Australian Defence Force Capability', Discussion Paper, Building Allied Interoperability in the Indo-Pacific Region (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 4 October 2018).

obsession with decisive battle.[31] Actual analysis of *On War* reveals early insight into the political intercourse short of conflict we now label as competition. Clausewitz observed that the social conditions and relationships between civilized actors moderated how they resolved issues, and that coercion might occur more often than open conflict between these more civilized societies.[32] He also noted that the incremental pursuit of limited objectives by one actor could avoid provoking an adversary to use force to deny them those small gains, foreshadowing the CCP's approach to the South China Sea.[33] And he maintained that tensions between actors short of conflict still originated from a political purpose, the key difference being that it would be political rather than military instruments that "dominate and tend to be decisive."[34]

The absence of violence in strategic competition neither altered the fundamental goal to "*compel our enemy to do our will*,"[35] nor the political objective's status as "the supreme consideration."[36] *On War*'s view of the key terrain for strategic competition was therefore still centered on will—the decision to act. It also alluded to the primary role of the military in those cases where violence was absent—to support the political instruments that sought to compel others to act in accordance with our preferences. Unfortunately, *On War* did not further explore how those political instruments would dominate and tend to decide strategic competition's outcomes, forcing us to look further afield.

3.1.2 **'Essence of competition'**

Allison's masterpiece, *Essence of Decision*, analyzed in detail the decision-making dynamics between rival states in order to determine which of three models best explained the events of the Cuban missile crisis. It concluded that no single model perfectly explained why events occurred,

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31   John Shy, 'Jomini', Gordon Alexander Craig, Felix Gilbert, and Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

32   Clausewitz, *On War*, 76-77.

33   Clausewitz, 81.

34   Clausewitz, 81.

35   Clausewitz, 75.

36   Clausewitz, 87.

nor could they reliably predict whether tensions would escalate to conflict or not. Even so, this analysis of each model furthers our grasp of strategic competition's key terrain.[37]

Model I treated governments as individuals who behaved in a rational, logical manner. To determine why events occurred, analysts substituted themselves into the shoes of that rational actor and assessed which factors shaped their choices for action or inaction. They then used that understanding to predict what the actor would do in other situations to then develop strategies to drive the actor toward or away from particular choices.[38] Model I reinforces *On War*'s suggestion that strategic competitions' key terrain involves the decision to act, but also shows the importance of understanding how an actor arrives at their decision. Model I's utility relies on the analyst's understanding of the rational actor; intelligence is critical to gauge the extent to which specific factors influence past decisions, and which ones might shape future choices. But it is also limited by the analyst's interpretation of facts which can be distorted by unconscious biases caused by political, cultural and social differences. They might therefore interpret an actor's actions as irrational, or be surprised when their 'rational' predictions are not realized, reinforcing this need for objective intelligence.

Model II viewed states as governed by their component organizations, each of which operated according to its own logic, procedures and culture. In this model, organizations generated 'decisions' as process outputs. Analysts explained how outcomes occurred, and predicted future ones, based on their understanding of those organizations and processes, including how innovative their cultures were.[39] Model II is also limited by the accuracy of the analyst's understanding of the target system; they need to know how adaptive the organizational processes are to then predict how the model will respond in specific contexts; the more dynamic and complex the system, the shorter the validity of their predictions and the greater the need for further, updated intelligence. If the organizational culture allows innovation, the analyst also needs to know whether individuals exist within the organization that might alter those processes, and if so, whom. Despite

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37   Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 379–82.

38   Allison, 3, 5. For a detailed explanation of this model, refer 13-54.

39   Allison, 6, 143, 153–56. For a detailed explanation of this model, refer 143-185.

its procedural determinism, humans implement Model II's processes and, whether bottom-up or top-down, adapt them to address perceived shortcomings, even where AI is used.[40] Model II indicates that strategic competition's key terrain is more associated with the factors that shape how and why decisions to act are made rather than the acts themselves.

Model III understood decisions as the outcome of relationships between leaders of governments' key departments. In this case, Allison emphasized that decisions were "formed, and deformed" by their individual agendas, interactions and relative influence within the government. To employ Model III, analysts therefore need, "to identify the games and players, to display the coalitions, bargains and compromises, and to convey some feel for the confusion."[41] This model shares Model I's limitations, albeit increased by an order of magnitude in scale and complexity. Analysts now need to understand the factors that shape multiple actors' choices, as well as grasp how their respective influence and the dynamics between them shapes the final outcome, exponentially increasing the demand for accurate, timely intelligence.

All three of *Essence of Decision's* models further reveal strategic competition's key terrain. To compel others to act, without violence, in ways that provide us a relative advantage with regard to contested goods, we have to understand the cultural, social and political factors that shape how and why they choose to act, or not. In other words, how they orient their understanding of their situation and develop options to pursue their objectives, and how we might affect that orientation so that their choices are favorable to our interests. Crucially, *Essence of Decision* highlights the importance of intelligence to any effort to seize and control that key terrain.[42]

40   Robin Caplan, Joan Donovan, Lauren Hanson and Jeanna Matthews, 'Algorithmic Accountability: A Primer', *Data & Society* (blog), accessed 18 February 2020.

41   Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 257. For a detailed explanation of this model, refer 255-313.

42   Allison, 33, 41. See also Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Harvard University Press, 1960); Roger B. Myerson, 'Learning from Schelling's Strategy of Conflict', *Journal of Economic Literature* 47, no. 4 (2009): 1109–1125.

3.1.3 **Power**

Interpretations of power have long been central to international relations theory. While realist descriptions mostly focus on balance of power, other political and social theorists emphasize the interactions between states, known as 'faces of power', rather than their relative economic or military might.[43] In the mid-1950's, Robert Dahl identified the first face of power as the ability to control or influence others to act according to your wishes through coercion or inducements. Essentially, A had power over B to the extent that A could get B to do something that B would not otherwise choose to do.[44] Shortly thereafter, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz defined a second face of power; the ability to frame and set agendas. Stronger nations used this face of power to portray weaker or developing nations' preferences as irrelevant or illegitimate within the global system. Rather than being coerced, those nations were rendered unable or unwilling to pursue their interests. Examples of this framing power included the post-war institutions that enshrined Western values into international relations, then included or excluded nations depending on their compliance with those norms.[45] In the 1970s, Stephen Lukes identified a third face of power that recognized the important role that ideas and beliefs played in shaping states' preferences in the first place. In this case, A had power over B to the extent that A could influence B's preferences so that they aligned with A's without any need for coercion or framing.[46] A key benefit of this power was its creation of 'shared' interests, which A might use in future to co-opt B as an ally to support its efforts to coerce other nations or frame their options.

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43   Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2, 43, 55. See also Nye, *The Future of Power*, 19, 51. Realists such as Mearsheimer believed a comparative advantage in the balance of power was core to international relations, so while, "the intensity of their competition waxes and wanes, great powers fear each other and always compete with each other for power." They primarily saw power originate from economic strength (sometimes referring to it as 'latent power'), which then translated into actual power through military strength relative to potential adversaries, "embedded mainly in its army and the air and naval forces that directly support it."

44   Robert A. Dahl, 'The Concept of Power', *Behavioral Science* 2, no. 3 (1957): 202–3. See also Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 57; Robert A. Dahl, 'Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City', *Yale Studies in Political Science*, 4 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

45   Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, 'Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytical Framework', *The American Political Science Review* 57, no. 3 (1963): 632–642. See also Nye, *The Future of Power*, 18; Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 5.

46   Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1974).

In the 1990s, Nye conceived soft power. Soft power achieved A's objectives through the willing support of B, C, D and others who were attracted to A's values and social, political or economic success, and sought to copy them. Soft power differed from the three faces of power by retaining 'volunteerism'; it did not shape or constrain others actors' freedoms to choose their own preferences, ideas or beliefs.[47] More recently, a National Endowment for Democracy team argued that, when used by authoritarian states, soft power was more accurately described as 'sharp power'. Sharp power actively manipulated other nations' information environments to alter target audiences' perceptions and shape their decisions. It diverged from the third face of power due to its methods, which were neither overt nor transparent, but sought to exploit the target society's free speech and compromise its institutions in order to achieve its objectives. Sharp power not only removed volunteerism, but its insidious nature made its detection and provenance challenging, and its defeat almost impossible.[48]

These power theories refine our understanding of strategic competition's key terrain. Without violence, exercise of power over an adversary's will to choose is a function of the information they observe, how they orient themselves within their environment to develop their options to act (or not), and how they then select from those options. Historian and social commentator Noah Yuval Harari argued in *Sapiens* that it was humanity's social nature and its cognitive revolution, the ability to create collective foundational myths on which societies were based, that allowed the large-scale cooperation necessary for the creation of nation-states.[49] Nye recognized these narratives' role in power's exercise in our information-saturated, globally interconnected modern world, reflecting that strategic outcomes were now more likely to be determined by whose story won rather than whose army. Even so, he cautioned against weaponizing narratives, arguing that while they all framed issues to make some facts

47   Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*, Kindle Edition (Public Affairs, 2009), 5. See also Nye, *The Future of Power*, 13.

48   Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, 'From "Soft Power" to "Sharp Power": Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World', in *Sharp Power - Rising Authoritarian Influence* (National Endowment for Democracy, 2017), 8–25. See also Christopher Walker, Shanthi Kalathil, and Jessica Ludwig, 'The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power', *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 1 (2020): 127; Eleanor Albert, 'China's Big Bet on Soft Power' (Council on Foreign Relations, 9 February 2018); Alexander L. Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 163.

49   Yuval N. Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (London: Harvill Secker, 2014), 22–27. Harari notes the centrality of this cognitive concept to nationalism.

important and others irrelevant, their persuasive power would be lost if they were overtly manipulative or became viewed only as propaganda.[50]

3.2 CCP concepts

3.2.1 Unrestricted Warfare

The CCP's approach to competition and conflict derives from 1999's *Unrestricted Warfare*, which was widely circulated among PLA and CCP officials. Its two PLA authors reviewed traditional Chinese concepts (such as Sun Tzu's description of supreme excellence being to break the enemy without fighting), and observed U.S. interventions and operations through the 1990s, the Asian Currency Crisis, and the control international institutions exerted over nations, then asserted the importance of non-military efforts in achieving future political victories.[51] They noted that while smaller powers relied on rules to protect their interests, great powers such as the U.S. created rules that they then used to control others. *Unrestricted Warfare* concluded that military power alone could no longer achieve nations' objectives, so successful strategies needed a broader view of the battlespace that would enable psychological, financial, media, technological, resource, economic aid, cultural and international law warfare to deliver victory.[52]

3.2.2 The Three Warfares

The CCP refined and implemented these concepts, beginning with the PLA's Three Warfares in 2003, comprising psychological, public opinion

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50   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 19, 93–94.

51   Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 1999. See also Michael Clarke, 'China's Application of the "Three Warfares" in the South China Sea and Xinjiang', *Orbis* 63, no. 2 (1 January 2019): 191; Sangkuk Lee, 'China's "Three Warfares": Origins, Applications, and Organizations', *Journal Of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 200–202; Peter Mattis, 'China's "Three Warfares" in Perspective', *War on the Rocks* (blog), 30 January 2018; Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Lionel Giles, Kindle (Digireads.com, 2004), 6; Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 166–67.

52   Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 55–56, 130–31, 183, 186.

and legal warfare.[53] Psychological warfare was the coercive first face of power. It intended to intimidate and break others' will through diplomatic pressure, false narratives, harassment and real or perceived threats. Legal warfare was the second, framing face of power. It sought to establish international standards and regulations and selectively employ domestic and international law to legitimize PRC actions and objectives. Public opinion warfare comprised the third, preference-shaping face of power in both soft and sharp forms. It aimed to guide, alter or suppress global views of the PRC's culture and interests by manipulating the media, academia and public discourse.[54] As well as being enshrined in core PLA texts, the Three Warfares were also embraced by other state instruments who recognized that controlling the will of others through the information environment was now "a determinative factor in the ongoing competition among states writ large."[55]

3.3 Strategic Competition's Key Terrain

Despite their different cultural and conceptual origins, strategic competition's key terrain is common to both the West and CCP. Both aim to gain or maintain a relative advantage over an adversary by altering other players' wills to act without resort to conflict. Both recognize that exercise of overt or covert power in this context shapes the way those players perceive

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53   Lee, 'China's "Three Warfares"', 199. See also Mattis, 'China's "Three Warfares" in Perspective'.

54   Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 55–56. See also Lee, 'China's "Three Warfares"', 200–203. Clarke, 'China's Application of the "Three Warfares" in the South China Sea and Xinjiang'. P. W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), 184.

55   Dean Cheng, 'Chinese Views of Information and Implications for the United States', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, 7. See also Shirk and Schell, 41; Mattis, 'China's "Three Warfares" in Perspective'; Dr Skye Cooley and Dr Robert Hinck, 'China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Media Ecology: Primary Drivers and Narrative Themes within China's Communication Strategy', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities,* 39; Elsa B. Kania, 'The PLA's Latest Strategic Thinking on the Three Warfares', *China Brief*, 16 no. 13 (Jamestown 22 August 2016); Daniel J Flynn, 'China's Evolving Approach to "Integrated Strategic Deterrence"', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, 26; Lee, 'China's "Three Warfares"', 204. Shirk and Schell list a range of institutions connected to the CCP's United Front Work Department, including the International Department, and Propaganda Department, as well as the State Council's Ministry of State Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, State Council Information Office, National People's Congress, and Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, Xinhua News Agency, and Voice of China. Mattis drily notes, "[t]he purpose of influence operations is political power…precisely what the 'Three Warfares' are intended to do." Kania provides a detailed synopsis of the Academy of Military Science's 2013 edition of *Science of Military Strategy*, the National Defense University's (NDU) 2015 edition of the same, and NDU's *An Introduction to Public Opinion Warfare, Psychological Warfare, and Legal Warfar*e.

their situations and options, a perception derived from their observations of their environment. This human cognitive process was precisely described by United States' Air Force pilot and strategic thinker John Boyd as the 'observe, orient, decide and act (OODA) loop, shown in Figure 7.[56] He argued that the perception an adversary drew from its information environment, the narratives it created to make sense of that information and on which it based its decisions, and the ability to alter or disrupt those perceptions and narratives, were more critical to strategic success than action in the physical domains. This OODA loop is strategic competition's key terrain.
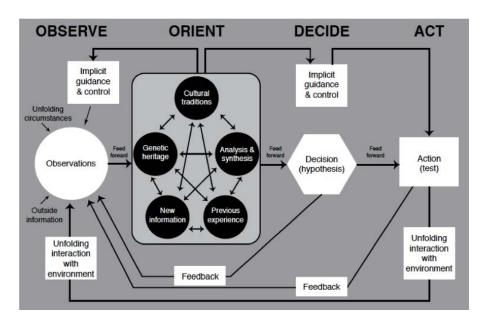
Figure 7: Boyd's OODA Loop[57]

On reflection, this central role of narrative and implicit recognition of the OODA loop's function in strategic competition is evident throughout history. Allison concluded in *Essence of Decision* that "[H]ow a group responds to a problem, or indeed, whether it responds at all, often depends on the way the problem is framed and reaches the group's agenda,"[58] more

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56 Ian T. Brown, *A New Conception of War: John Boyd, the U.S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare*, First edition, 2018. (Quantico, VA: MCUP, Marine Corps University Press, 2018), 107. Much like Clausewitz, Boyd's OODA loop is often oversimplified. In Boyd's case, the OODA loop is normally interpreted as a tactical or operational process and therefore its strategic utility is either overlooked or misunderstood.

57 Brown, 119.

58 Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 280. See also Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 11-12. For detailed discussion of the potential power of framing in decision-making, see Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 1st pbk. ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 363–74.

recently noting that "war for Chinese strategists is primarily psychological and political; military campaigns are a secondary concern."[59] Harari concurred, stating that, "[S]ince large-scale cooperation is based on myths, the way people cooperate can be altered by changing the myths—by telling different stories.[60] Mazarr brought this into our specific context when he surmised that, "strategic competition is… a struggle over the context, or the field, in which world politics unfolds—*the prevailing ideas, narratives, norms*, rules, and institutions that shape states' interests [emphasis added]."[61] Going further, University of Wollongong academics Travis Wall and Teodor Mitew specifically identified the OODA loop as a fundamental feedback process for memetic warfare campaigns.[62] But a complete orientation of our understanding of strategic competition's key terrain, one from which the U.S. and Australia consider how each can best engage in that competition, cannot be based on theory alone. In competition, as in conflict, the adversary gets a vote. So we must also consider how the CCP is competing in the Indo-Pacific to confirm that theory and reality are not in conflict.

3.4 The CCP in Competition

3.4.1 CCP policy and strategy for strategic competition

The CCP's opaque nature precludes an accurate understanding of its intent. Its public statements are broadcast to audiences that includes party cadres, domestic and international Chinese, and the international community, each of whom interpret them through their own lens. Even so, its policy implicitly recognizes the OODA loop as strategic competition's key terrain, consistently directing the party-state to increase its global influence. Hu Jintao directed the PRC in 2008 to "enhance culture as the country's soft power… a factor of growing significance in the competition in overall

59   Allison, *Destined for War*, 149.

60   Harari, *Sapiens*, 32.

61   Mazarr, 'US/China Competition', 135.

62   Travis Wall and Teodor Mitew, 'Swarm Networks and the Design Process of a Distributed Meme Warfare Campaign', *First Monday* 23, no. 5 (30 April 2018): 5.

national strength."[63] Similarly, Xi Jinping's aim for the PRC to lead global influence by 2035, and his encouragement to the PRC to tell China stories well, demonstrates the CCP's expectation that all its citizens act to "promote and testify to official Chinese views and opinions and to strengthen the international influence of China."[64]

The CCP's strategy for competition is also not explicitly stated. However, the 2017 objectives for the United Front Work Department, the entity leading the CCP's 'soft' power projection efforts, were "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, safeguarding the state's core interests, and maintaining the long-term stability of Hong Kong and Macao and completing the unification of the motherland."[65] Despite this loose phrasing, the CCP's employment of the Three Warfares reveals its strategy to achieve this, by: (1) increasing CCP influence globally by exporting a positive narrative of Chinese culture, society and ideology to multiple audiences; (2) incrementally establishing 'facts on the ground' favorable to CCP objectives regarding its territorial claims and political and economic relationships; (3) building critical bilateral partnerships that can be leveraged to limit multilateral challenges to CCP interests; while (4) provoking neither a U.S. unilateral response nor the U.S. building coalitions to counter-balance CCP objectives.[66]

3.4.2 Three Warfares in action

Allison succinctly described the CCP's effective use of the Three Warfares, stating it had mastered the use of hard instruments to create soft power.[67]

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63   'Hu Urges Enhancing 'soft Power 'of Chinese Culture', *China Daily*, 15 October 2017. See also Albert, 'China's Big Bet on Soft Power'.

64   Zhao Alexandre Huang and Rui Wang, 'Building a Network to "Tell China Stories Well": Chinese Diplomatic Communication Strategies on Twitter', *International Journal of Communication* 13 (30 June 2019): 24. Xi Jinping, 'Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era' (19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 18 October 2017). See also Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 41.

65   Timothy Heath, 'Beijing's Influence Operations Target Chinese Diaspora', *War on the Rocks* (blog), 1 March 2018.

66   Heath. See also Cheng, 'Chinese Views of Information and Implications for the United States', 9. Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 57. Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 155–56. Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 6–8, 34. Allison, Destined for War, 149.

67   Allison, *Destined for War*, 21.

It employed the Three Warfares in a concurrent and mutually reinforcing manner, both directly against regional actors and indirectly against others whose role in global forums could enable or impede pursuit of its Indo-Pacific interests. A complete list of these activities greatly exceeds this paper's scope; however the following overview demonstrates the CCP's efforts to control the way these actors observe, orient and decide to act in the Indo-Pacific.

Psychological warfare

Xi outlined a vision of bilateral partnerships based on "dialogue, non-confrontation, and non-alliance;"[68] partnerships the CCP then used for leverage, portraying its trust as betrayed when 'partners' disagreed with it to justify retaliation. Reductions in rare earth exports to Japan followed a PRC fisherman's arrest for ramming a Japanese Coast Guard vessel off the Senkaku islands, and Norwegian salmon was embargoed for six years after Liu Xiaobo won the Nobel Peace Prize, the CCP describing the award as an act that undermined mutual trust between the two nations.[69] Tourism bans and harassment of South Korean businesses in the PRC followed deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system to Korea in 2016. Britain was warned in 2018 that Royal Navy transits in the South China Sea would harm bilateral ties and endanger post-Brexit free trade agreement discussions. PRC Customs delayed Australian coal exports and the CCP postponed the China-New Zealand (NZ) Year of Tourism and issued a travel advisory warning after those nations restricted foreign ownership of their 5G infrastructures.[70]

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68   Xi Jinping, 'Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-Win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind' (Statement, General Debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 28 September 2015).

69   Maia Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 18. *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 44–45. Nye, *The Future of Power*, 63. Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 62.

70   Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 62. Dr Allison Astorino-Courtois and Dr Belinda Bragg, 'THAAD's All Folks: How China Turned Deployment of the US System into a Win', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, 116–17. 'UK Should Try to Have More than One Friend' *China Daily*, 6 September 2018. See also Ben Packham, 'Huawei or the Highway, Chinese Academics Warn', *The Australian*, 25 September 2019; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 25; Flynn, 'China's Evolving Approach to "Integrated Strategic Deterrence"', 26.

Costs imposed by the CCP following one nation's OODA loop then oriented others', creating a self-perpetuating cycle of kowtowing and self-censorship. This allowed the CCP to block multilateral action indirectly—Burma and Cambodia impeded the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) efforts to progress resolution of South China Sea disputes, while Greece prevented unanimous European Union (EU) condemnation of the CCP's human rights record. NZ's weak comments regarding militarization of the South China Sea were seen by its Five-Eyes partners as being soft on the CCP, and Taiwan's diplomatic partners shrank to fifteen after the Solomon Islands and Kiribati recognized the PRC in 2019.[71] Psychological warfare was not limited to nation-states; corporate and individual behavior was also shaped by concerns over access to the lucrative PRC market. After the Houston Rockets' Daryl Morey tweeted the same innocuous image used by millions globally as a token display of support for Hong Kong's protestors in late 2019 (Figure 8), the National Basketball Association's initial response, coupled with LeBron James's accusations that Morey was uneducated because he failed to consider the financial and other consequences on the league and its players before tweeting, demonstrates the extent of the threat such self-censorship poses to free speech and human rights around the globe.[72]

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71 *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 44–45, 62. Robin Emmott and Angeliki Koutantou, 'Greece Blocks EU Statement on China Human Rights at U.N.', *Reuters*, 19 June 2017. Ann-Marie Brady, 'Magic Weapons: China's Political Influence Activities under Xi Jinping (Wilson Center', 18 September 2017), 14–15. Derek Grossman and Michael S. Chase, 'What Does Beijing Want from the Pacific Islands?', *RAND* (blog), 9 December 2019. See also Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 66; Pankaj Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 59; Rowan Callick, 'The China Challenge', Occasional Paper, *China and Free Societies* (Centre for Independent Studies, 28 July 2019), 15; Valbona Zeneli, 'China and Europe', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 134; Frank Mouritz, 'China's Economic Coercion', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 175; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 13, 28; Glenda Korporaal, 'Taiwan Leader under Pressure as Friends Turn to Beijing', *The Australian*, 23 September 2019; Glenda Korporaal, 'Solomons "Not Paid" to Break Ties', *The Australian*, 24 September 2019; Denghua Zhang, 'Perceiving China's Influence in the Pacific: The Case of Solomon Islands', *The Diplomat,*18 October 2019; Derek Grossman, 'China Will Struggle to Shut Taiwan Out of the Pacific', *RAND* (blog) 3 October 2019; Nye, *The Future of Power*, 76. The CCP has historically used inducements and partnerships to isolate Taiwan. In 2002, Nauru accepted $130m from the PRC to switch relations from Taiwan, however reversed this position in 2005. Despite recent changes in government in Tuvalu and Nauru, both have reaffirmed a pro-Taiwan policy. Since then it has been a strong supporter of Taiwan unwilling to kowtow to CCP demands; in 2018 it insisted that the PRC delegation to the 2018 Pacific Islands Forum comply with its national visa requirements, and that the head of the PRC delegation had to wait until after the Pacific Islands leaders had each addressed the forum, resulting in a walk-out. Following the 2019 switch by the Solomons and Kiribati, Vice Premier Hu Chunhua attended the third China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development Cooperation Forum in Samoa. This level of representation to promote the BRI sends a strong message of respect to the leadership of these Pacific Island states.

72 Richard Bernstein, 'The Brands That Kowtow to China', *The New York Review of Books* (blog), 2 March 2018. Rosie Perper, 'China and the NBA Are Coming to Blows over a Pro-Hong Kong Tweet. Here's Why.', *Business Insider Australia*, 11 October 2019. See also Andrew Keane Woods, 'China and

Figure 8: Daryl Morey's tweet

Studies revealed other notable psychological elements to the CCP's communications. One linked the PRC's improved gross domestic product ranking to increased aggression towards the media by its diplomats when discussing sensitive issues. Another noted the CCP's use of military parades involving anti-access/area denial assets to signal its capacity and will to militarily pursue its core interests, while a third noted sophisticated use of 'timid polyphonic features' on Twitter by PRC Embassies. This technique, also heavily employed within the PRC's domestic information environment, involves generation of social media threads containing what appear to be multiple voices expressing diverse perspectives, although the discussion between them ultimately endorses the CCP's actions and interests. These discussions and their outcomes create an artificial impression of wider support for, and validation of, the CCP's narrative of itself as a tolerant and responsible rising power than is actually the case.[73]

the Hypocrisy of American Speech Imperialism', *Lawfare* (blog), 18 October 2019; Walker, Kalathil, and Ludwig, 'The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power', 125; Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 140–41; Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, 'Did China Just Ban Maroon 5?', *Foreign Policy* (blog),16 July 2015; Mouritz, 'China's Economic Coercion', 185–86; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 42. Perper's article provides an excellent timeline of the NBA events.

73   Feng Wu and Jiahui Zhang, 'Aggressiveness in Chinese Foreign Ministers' Responses to Journalists During Press Conferences, 1996–2016', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (14 June 2018): 24. Jie Gong, 'Asserting an Ancient, Emergent Superpower: 2009 Beijing Military Parade, Public Memory, and National Identity', *International Journal of Communication* 7, (15 April 2013): 23. Huang and Wang, 'Building a Network to "Tell China Stories Well"', 2985, 3000. See also Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 66; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 30. Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 18, 30. Wu and Zhang's study measured Chinese foreign ministers' aggressiveness in response to journalists' questions at press conferences between 1996 and 2016 based on a framework of initiative, directness, assertiveness, adversarialness, and accountability. Of note, Foreign Ministers with overseas educational experience were observed to be less aggressive on the whole

Legal warfare

The framing form of power is a critical means for the CCP to gain legitimacy, and through it, exercise OODA control. Legitimacy was the foundation from which it claimed to contribute its wisdom and strength as it sought to shift norms of the international system in its favor, and through which it represented its behavior as consistent with that of a responsible, rule-bound and non-threatening power.[74] Despite rejection of its claims in the South China Sea, the CCP asserted it was upholding international law, blaming the U.S. (yet to ratify the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea) for a number of close calls at sea and its need to continue reclamation and militarization efforts (Annex B). Its Coast Guard and maritime militia harassed neighboring navies, and seized foreign fishing boats and arrested their crew based on the CCP's extension of domestic law into the South China Sea, while it simultaneously advocated for resolution of disputed claims bilaterally or through an ASEAN Code of Conduct that it could influence without Western interference.[75]

than those who did not. Huang and Wang identify a number of techniques used to conveyed CCP views in a pluralistic way. The @mention function was used to link stories with foreign counterparts. Hashtags were employed thematically to connect tweets into an online narrative. Tweets featured multiple types of discourse, using news releases and comments by foreign political leaders alongside imagery heavy with implicit meaning to convey a favorable interpretation of the CCP's attitude toward global cooperation and to increase dissemination. Goddard notes he important role that 'multi-vocal' approaches play in legitimization strategies.

74 Goddard, *When Right Makes Might*, 2, 4, 12-13, 15-17. Mazarr, 'US/China Competition', 134–35. Jonathon G. Odom, 'Understanding China's Legal Gamesmanship in the Rules-Based Global Order', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 201. Timothy R. Heath, 'China's Endgame: The Path Towards Global Leadership', *Lawfare* (blog), 5 January 2018. Julian Ku, 'Why China's Disappearance of Interpol's Chief Matters', *Lawfare* (blog), 9 October 2018. See also Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 32. Ku notes the CCP's long-term effort to build influence through key international forums, including promoting Chinese nationals to leadership roles such as President of the International Court of Justice, members on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the World Trade Organization Appellate Body, the International Law Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the Executive Board of the World Health Organization.

75 'Remarks of Ambassador Cui Tiankai at Center for Strategic and International Studies (China Embassy (U.S.), 13 July 2016). Swire, 'Water Wars: Pence Accuses China of Domestic Interference and Warships Have Close-Call in South China Sea'. Allison, *Destined for War*, 159–60. Doug IV Stephens, 'Water Wars: Disjointed Operations in the South China Sea', *Lawfare* (blog), 21 May 2019. Odom, 'Understanding China's Legal Gamesmanship in the Rules-Based Global Order', 200–201. Julian Ku, 'It's Time for South China Sea Economic Sanctions', *Lawfare* (blog), 1 June 2018. Ulises Granados, 'The China Coast Guard: Shifting from Civilian to Military Control in the Era of Regional Uncertainty', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 45, 53–54.See also Kania, 'The PLA's Latest Strategic Thinking on the Three Warfares'; Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 168–69; Julian Ku and Christopher Mirasola, 'The South China Sea and China's "Four Sha" Claim: New Legal Theory, Same Bad Argument', *Lawfare* (blog), 25 September 2017; Chand, Garcia, and Modlin, 'Southeast Asian Hedging and Indo-Japanese Strategies for Regional Balance: Managing China's Rise', 36–37; *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 7–8. Admiral Phil Davidson, 'Introduction to Indo-Pacific Security Challenges', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 6; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies',

Meanwhile, the CCP also sought to define the 'international playground' and 'create the rules of the game' in the technology sector. It advocated for Internet Sovereignty to align its own need to control information flow to its citizens with physical international legal norms. It (mis)represented this concept as a well-accepted premise, referring to the jurisdiction of its domestic law over all aspects of its Internet infrastructure and use, proposing that this would best protect the digital interests of the developing world.[76] Meanwhile, its efforts to have the PRC lead 5G development became widely considered "a clear attempt to influence the world's future communication infrastructure by setting the standards upon which that communication technology will operate."[77] Huawei was accused of flooding the 5G standards process with large volumes of lower-tech patents as its experts pursued key committee leadership positions, leading other nations to recognize the risk this posed to any viable competitor emerging should global standards be formed around PRC intellectual property and its already dominant market share further increased. This market domination technique had already proven effective in the PRC's domestic market, where foreign technology companies were forced to adopt local standards and store data on local servers because it was too costly do otherwise, only to then be gradually edged out of the market.[78]

17; Elizabeth C. Economy, 'China's New Revolution: The Reign of Xi Jinping', *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 3 (2018): 69; Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', 59; Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 62. Odom describes how the ROC surveyed the SCS in 1946 and generated the map containing nine-dash line subsequently used by the CCP as the basis for long-standing historic claims within that body of water, even making pursuing claims made by the ROC after 1949. Similarly, CCP claims that foreign warships violated international law never specified which law was breached, but were employed to create the perception of illegal behavior from which the CCP sought to establish a norm that required transiting warships to obtain permission from it to operate in the SCS, and thereby reinforce de facto recognition of its territorial claims. Ku states, "the U.S. objects to Chinese requirements that military vessels seek permission before conducting an innocent passage within a country's territorial waters. But if the Chinese adopted the U.S. legal position, it could still maintain its sovereign claims to control those territorial waters and a right to demand foreign warships follow rules of innocent passage."

76   Sarah McKune and Shazeda Ahmed, 'Authoritarian Practices in the Digital Age| The Contestation and Shaping of Cyber Norms Through China's Internet Sovereignty Agenda', *International Journal of Communication* 12 (18 September 2018): 3835–3838. See also Economy, 'China's New Revolution', 65; Cheng, 'Chinese Views of Information and Implications for the United States', 7–8; Peter Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War against Reality* (New York: Public Affairs, 2019), 82.

77   Cooley and Hinck, 'China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Media Ecology: Primary Drivers and Narrative Themes within China's Communication Strategy', 39.

78   Elsa B. Kania, 'Technology and Innovation in China's Strategy and Global Influence', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 243–45. See also Ben Packham, 'Beijing to Legalize "Theft" of Our Secrets', *The Australian,* 9 December 2019.

Public opinion warfare

The CCP didn't just 'tell China stories well'. It recognized the powerful effect that shaping ideas and beliefs had in framing choices on key issues, and increasingly explored how best to deploy its core narratives to exercise this form of power (Figure 9).[79] The first of these marketed the PRC's progress towards its China Dream, a 'path to peace, prosperity, and modernity' that other nations could follow. It boasted about lifting 800 million people out of poverty as its diplomats tweeted about an attractive and thriving China.[80] But as Nye noted, international politics required actors to undermine their rivals' credibility as well as promote their own.[81] So the CCP also emphasized the efficiency of one-party rule over Western democracies crippled by public opinion, intransigent oppositions and potential electoral upsets, while Xi informed the UN that capitalism was amoral, widened the gap between rich and poor and would lead to crisis.[82] Meanwhile, CCP diplomats noted that children in the PRC had better prospects than American ones, as state media highlighted democratic failures in the Middle East, turmoil in South-East Asia, and xenophobic populism in the West.[83] This consistent argument, that non-liberal democracy now offered better results than capitalism without threatening to disrupt the social and political status quo, found fertile soil in the OODA loops of several developing nations' leaders. In contrast to the 'Washington Consensus', with its insistence on liberal market economics and democratic government, the CCP's stance of non-interference on sovereign matters, one that did not

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79   Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, Rev. and expanded ed. (New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 2009), 68.

80   Allison, *Destined for War*, 107–9. Tiankai Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 1 October 2019). Huang and Wang, 'Building a Network to "Tell China Stories Well"', 2999. See also Tobin, 'Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies', 42; Cooley and Hinck, 'China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Media Ecology: Primary Drivers and Narrative Themes within China's Communication Strategy', 41; Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 107; Lavina Lee and John Lee, 'Chinese Bank on a Charm Offensive', *The Australian,* 14 February 2020; Ben Packham, 'China "Delivers Dream"', *The Australian,* 30 September 2019; Joe Kelly and Ben Packham, 'Row Developing as China Hails "Miracle" Data', *The Australian,* 25 September 2019.

81   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 104.

82   Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 27. Xi, 'Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-Win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind'. See also Keping Yu, 'China's Search for Good Governance', in *China's Search for Good Governance*, ed. Zhenglai Deng and Sujian Guo, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 15–21. Qingqing Chen and Sheng Yang, 'US Protests Expose a "failed State" as Officials Resort to Blame Game', *Global Times*, 1 June 2020.

83   Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.'. Woods, 'China and the Hypocrisy of American Speech Imperialism'. See also Yu, 'China's Search for Good Governance', 15–16. Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 66.

'lecture' others on human rights, democracy or transparency, had strong appeal for some nations.[84]
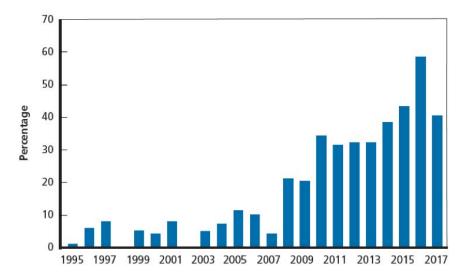
Figure 9: *International Communications* articles on shaping foreign public opinion[85]

A second narrative portrayed PRC aid and investment as 'no-strings-at-tached' opportunities within Xi's vision of a 'fairer world of inclusive globalization'. It employed unthreatening Silk Road imagery, supported by tweets detailing mutually beneficial collaboration and flattering nations and states who signed up to BRI, to market the CCP's activities as some-thing "foreign audiences should accept and not try to change or oppose," and reinforce the perception of its central role in global affairs.[86] Its

84   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 86. Gawdat Bahgat, 'Chinese Relations with the Middle East and North Africa', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 101. Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', 58. See also Yu, 'China's Search for Good Governance', 15–16; 郭凯, 'The West Once Again Gets It Wrong on China', *China Daily*, 7 September 2018; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 26; Campbell and Ratner, 'The China Reckoning'. Amanda Hodge, 'Xi Jinping Visit to Prop up Isolated Aung San Suu Kyi', *The Australian*, 17 January 2020. Hodge notes, "Writing in the pro-government Global Light of Myanmar newspaper this week, Mr Xi underlined Beijing's support for Myanmar "in safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests and national dignity in the interna-tional arena".

85   Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 154.

86   Mazarr et al., 133. Dominic Ziegler, 'China Wants to Put Itself Back at the Centre of the World', *The Economist*, 6 February 2020. See also Jing Xin and Donald Matheson, 'One Belt, Competing Metaphors: The Struggle over Strategic Narrative in English-Language News Media', *International Journal of Communication* 12 (28 September 2018): 4249; 'China Is Making Substantial Investment in Ports and Pipelines Worldwide', *The Economist*, 6 February 2020; 'Will China Sit Again at the Heart of Its Own Cosmos?', *The Economist*, 6 February 2020; Huang and Wang, 'Building a Network to "Tell China Stories Well"', 2999; Cooley and Hinck, 'China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Media Ecology: Primary Drivers and Narrative Themes within China's Communication Strategy', 42; Anthony Bergin, 'Victoria Takes Wrong Track with China's Belt and Road Initiative', *ASPI.org*, 3 November 2019; Callick, 'The China Challenge', 11; Xi, 'Working Together to Forge a New Partnership

increasing aid contribution in Oceania (Figure 10) suggested an intent to exploit regional states' sensitivities to Western neglect in order to secure their voting allegiance in international forums. Some analysts claimed that Oceania's nations only sought to play the 'China card' to revive Western interest and funding and that voting preferences were not at risk. However this ignored the region's history regarding recognition of Taiwan, multiple visits to Beijing by its leaders, and cases such as Vanuatu, who became the first nation to recognize the CCP's claims in the South China Sea following extensive infrastructure investment.[87]
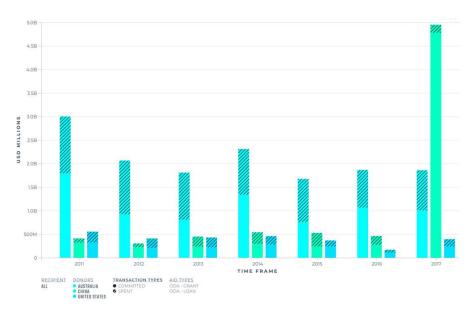
Figure 10: Aid to Oceania 2011-2017[88]

of Win-Win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind'; Lee and Lee, 'Chinese Bank on a Charm Offensive'.

87   Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 26–27. Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', 59. Grossman and Chase, 'What Does Beijing Want from the Pacific Islands?' Ben Packham, 'PNG Played on China Fear for $442m Bailout', *The Australian,* 29 November 2019. See also Grossman, 'China Will Struggle to Shut Taiwan Out of the Pacific'; Nye, *The Future of Power*, 76; Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', 62–70. Vanuatu has only 270,000 people and $US440m in foreign debt, almost half to the PRC. It used PRC loans to build a sports stadium, Presidential residence and the Luganville Wharf, whose location, scale, dual-use potential and low profitability paralleled Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port. Baker addresses a number of the nations in Oceania, highlighting the emphasis on leadership engagement and a lack of long-term consequence assessment. For example, "China's close relationship with Papua New Guinea (PNG) was on ostentatious display during the Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC) forum at Port Moresby in 2018. President Xi has incorrectly labelled China as PNG's largest development partner, while Chinese aid and development loans dovetail with China's exploitation of PNG's natural resources. China accounts for the majority of PNG's timber exports, both legal and illegal, which has driven unsustainable logging practices and deforestation."

88   'Pacific Aid Graphing Tool', *Pacific Aid Map*, (Lowy Institute accessed 4 April 2020). If commitments are met by actual expenditure, the PRC will become the largest provider of funding.

The CCP's portrayal of the PRC (and itself) as the victim of a century of humiliation, and its rise and assertiveness as the return of balance to the global order, undermined revisionist depictions of the CCP, enabling it to counterattack.[89] It accused the U.S. of seeking to maintain hegemony compared to the more collaborative norm of great power relations it proposed, insisting that it was the presence and provocative maneuvers by extra-regional navies in the South China Sea's disputed territories that escalated tension, endangered maritime safety and destabilized the region. In contrast, the CCP argued that its rejection of the 2016 International Court of Arbitration ruling ensured that justice remained available to all nations in future, having prevented the setting of a dangerous precedent, given the extensive coercion that it claimed occurred throughout the case.[90] Where valid arguments eluded them, the CCP defaulted to *ad hominem* attacks, accusing its targets of ignorant subscription to 'China threat theories' due to 'Cold War mindsets', lecturing other nations and individuals that they should learn Mandarin, visit China to better understand its history and culture, and then pay it greater respect.[91] In response to charges of foreign influence in Australia, it exploited Australia's history of anti-Asian

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89 Cynthia Dr Watson, 'The Politics of Humiliation as a Driver in China's View of Strategic Competition', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, 18. See also Allison, *Destined for War*, 111–13; Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.'; Callick, 'The China Challenge', 13–14.

90 'Remarks of Ambassador Cui Tiankai at Center for Strategic and International Studies'. See also Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 3 October 2018; Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 1 October 2019; International Court of Arbitration, 'PCA Case No 2013-19 The South China Sea Arbitration Award of 12 July 2016', 12 July 2016; Kania, 'The PLA's Latest Strategic Thinking on the Three Warfares'; 'UK Should Try to Have More than One Friend'; Xin and Matheson, 'One Belt, Competing Metaphors', 4249; Watson, 'The Politics of Humiliation as a Driver in China's View of Strategic Competition', 19; Cooley and Hinck, 'China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Media Ecology: Primary Drivers and Narrative Themes within China's Communication Strategy', 40; Lee and Lee, 'Chinese Bank on a Charm Offensive'. The Ambassador stated that, "Such absurd proceedings were taking place in combination with military coercion—with mounting activities by destroyers, aircraft carriers, strategic bombers, reconnaissance planes and many others. I believe this is an outright manifestation of 'might is right'." He has also made several comments emphasizing PRC sovereignty over its claims in the SCS and the need for these to be resolved by the regional nations without disruption from the US and its allies.

91 Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 3 October 2018. Xining Wang, 'Studying Mandarin Would Be a Good Start', *The Australian,* 20 November 2019. See also Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 1 October 2019; Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 170; 'Remarks of Ambassador Cui Tiankai at Center for Strategic and International Studies'; Cooley and Hinck, 'China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Media Ecology: Primary Drivers and Narrative Themes within China's Communication Strategy', 39; 'Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on May 18, 2020', (Consulate-General of the PRC in Adelaide 18 May 2020). Zhao's belligerent posture, reshaping of the historical narrative and ad hominem approaches are exemplified in this session. Of particular note are his references to the U.S.'s "entrenched Cold War mentality and ideological prejudice" and comments on Secretary Pompeo's accusations about the origins of COVID, "this US politician has been a lying blabbermouth. It's a waste of time to comment on his fabrications." This latter portion is particularly ironic, given Zhao was the CCP member who leveled the accusation on Twitter that the U.S. Army brought the virus to Wuhan.

sentiment to reinforce self-censorship among not only intellectuals and elites who believed that, "in polite circles these are not the kinds of things that you should be talking about,"[92] but the average Australian's perception of themselves as a reasonable person by alleging, "a typical anti-China hysteria… [that] unscrupulously vilified the Chinese students as well as the Chinese community in Australia with racial prejudice, which in turn has tarnished Australia's reputation as a multicultural society."[93]

The United Front Work Department pursued this OODA control of public opinion through its sharp power 'magic weapons'.[94] It 'traded up the chain', injecting false news into the information ecosystem and capitalizing on plausible uncertainty surrounding a range of topics; CCP speculation that the U.S. created COVID-19 eerily paralleled Soviet-era accusations regarding the Human Immunodeficiency Virus.[95] It 'borrowed a boat to go out on the ocean,' a phrase that meant co-opting influential foreigners "to rally

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92   Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 170. Gabrielle Burgess, 'Campuses No Place for Bias', *The Australian,* 24 September 2019.

93   'Remarks of Spokesperson of Chinese Embassy in Australia' (Chinese Embassy (Australia) 6 December 2017). 'West Suspicion of China Infiltration Absurd', *Global Times*, 12 December 2017. See also 'A Proposal to Help a Few Foreigners Settle in China Triggers a Furore', *The Economist*, 12 March 2020; Tom Uren, Danielle Cave, 'Why Australia Banned Huawei from Its 5G Telecoms Network', *ASPI.org*, 30 August 2018; Geoff Chambers, 'Chinese Fury over Dutton's "Slur"', *The Australian,* 11 October 2019; Callick, 'The China Challenge', 4, 11–12. The Global Times article states, "But widespread and ill-meant questioning of Chinese involved in these exchanges is logically absurd and takes the moral low ground… Western elites shouldn't believe that they have taken the upper hand in relations with China and Beijing and Chinese expats will bear whatever insults come their way… the esteem with which Chinese regard certain Western countries will be downsized as it becomes necessary for Beijing to retaliate. China needs to figure out tactics that can silently make Western institutions and individuals truly feel the pain. China has effectively punished some individuals in Western show business that have tried to find fault with China. We can apply this to provocative Western politicians as a form of deterrence." There is a certain irony in such accusations given it makes the sort of threats about which it claims to have been offended, and that the China Dream's patriotism is heavily founded on Han chauvinism.

94   Gerry Groot, 'United Front Work after the 19th Party Congress', *China Brief* 17 no. 17 (Jamestown 22 December 2017). See also Jamil Anderlini, Lucy Hornby, and James Kynge, 'Inside China's Secret "Magic Weapon" for Worldwide Influence', *Financial Times*, 26 October 2017; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 12; Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 45; Ben Packham, 'Ambassador Slams Influence Claims', *The Australian,*30 September 2019.

95   Tom Whipple, 'Scientists Quash Rumour That Coronavirus Was Made in a Lab', *The Times*, 14 February 2020. Adam B Ellick and Adam Westbrook, 'Operation InfeKtion: How Russia Perfected the Art of War', *NYT Opinion*, 12 November 2018.Ryan Holiday, *Trust Me, I'm Lying: Confessions of a Media Manipulator* (London: Portfolio/Penguin, 2013), 19–33. See also Philip Sherwell, 'Coronavirus Mutates into US Import as China Tries to Shift Blame', *The Times*, 15 March 2020; Max Walden, 'Chinese Official Suggests Coronavirus Started in United States', *ABC News*, 13 March 2020; Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 208; Deeks, Ashley, Sabrina McCubbin and Cody M. Poplin, 'Addressing Russian Influence: What Can We Learn From U.S. Cold War Counter-Propaganda Efforts?', *Lawfare* (blog), 25 October 2017. Trading up the chain is explained by Holiday as a technique by which a story is planted in a part of the media with low editorial standards or capacity to fact check. Attention of more reputable, but still lower-capacity platforms are drawn to the story, lending it wider visibility and credibility until such time as it is picked up in global media who are neither able to trace its original source nor to verify or disprove it. It relies on 'delegation of trust' (p 181).

our true friends to attack our true enemies."[96] CCP-linked businesses and organizations hired prominent former political leaders, and were alleged to have compromised or undermined current politicians, or even to have insinuated their own candidates into other nations' political systems to promote or protect CCP interests.[97]

96   Mattis, 'China's "Three Warfares" in Perspective'. See also Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 8; Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 167; Bates Gill and Benjamin Schreer, 'Countering China's "United Front"', *The Washington Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2018): 155–170; Matt Schrader, 'Huawei's PR Campaign Comes Straight From the Party's Playbook', *Foreign Policy* (blog), 6 June 2019. Brady identifies a number of United Front influence activities being employed in New Zealand as and proposes that these represent an exemplar for the CCP in expanding its influence more broadly among Western nations.

97   Mouritz, 'China's Economic Coercion', 175. Josh Rogin, 'How China Got a U.S. Senator to Do Its Political Bidding', *The Washington Post*, 17 December 2017. Nick McKenzie et al., 'China's Operation Australia: The Party Line', *SMH: China's Operation Australia* (The Sydney Morning Herald 2017, Cached accessed 22 May 2020). Nick McKenzie et al., 'China's Operation Australia: Payments, Power and Politicians', *SMH: China's Operation Australia* (The Sydney Morning Herald 2017, Cached accessed 22 May 2020). Baker, Richard, Nick McKenzie, and Philip Dorling, 'China's Operation Australia: The Go-Betweens', *SMH: China's Operation Australia* (The Sydney Morning Herald 2017). Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 19–21. See also Evelyn Douek, 'What's in Australia's New Laws on Foreign Interference in Domestic Politics', *Lawfare* (blog), 11 July 2018; Peter Mattis, 'What We Talk About When We Talk About Chinese Communist Party Interference in the Public Square', *War on the Rocks* (blog), 7 March 2018; Callick, 'The China Challenge', 18; Cave, 'Why Australia Banned Huawei from Its 5G Telecoms Network'; Dr Robert Spalding III, 'How Does China View Strategic Competition?', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities,* 23; Darren E. Tromblay, 'Congress and Counterintelligence: The Unique Vulnerabilities of the U.S. Congress to Malign Foreign Influence', *Lawfare* (blog), 13 July 2017. Nick McKenzie, James Baker, Richard Massola, 'All at Sea: "Shanghai Sam" Dastyari, the "Whale" and the "Lost" Tape Recording', *The Age*, 29 November 2017; Quentin McDermott, 'Sam Dastyari Defended China's Policy in South China Sea in Defiance of Labor Policy, Secret Recording Reveals' *ABC News* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 29 November 2017); Brad Norington, 'Wong Told Me to Stick with Lie: ICAC Witness', *The Australian,* 20 September 2019; 'LNP Whip Rob Molhoek Flies into a Chinese Drone Storm', *The Australian,* 16 August 2019; Deborah Cornwall, 'Tycoon "Short $171m on Tax Returns"', *The Australian,* 24 September 2019; Brad Norington, 'Donor "Switcheroo" Warning', *The Australian,* 4 October 2019; Brad Norington, 'MP Told Me to Lie, Witness Says', *The Australian,* 14 October 2019; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 18; David Penberthy, 'Huawei "Smeared, Vilified": Xenophon', *The Australian,* 18 February 2020; Rachel Baxendale, 'China-Linked Victorian Government Staffer Nancy's Coronavirus Conspiracy', *The Australian*, 2 June 2020. Mouritz identifies leaders that included, Britain's David Cameron, France's Jean-Pierre Raffarin and Germany's Philipp Rösler. U.S. Senator Steve Daines secured beef exports to the PRC then was alleged to have undermined Congressional meetings with a Tibetan delegation and praised the CCP's performance in Tibet. Daines also opposed an effort to name a street in Washington D.C. after the Nobel Laureate and dissident Liu Xiaobo. Australian Senator Sam Dastyari's career ended abruptly following two incidents involving wealthy businessman and donor Huang Xiangmo and directly led to Australia's foreign interference laws. Dastyari first publicly supported PRC sovereignty in the SCS (in conflict with his own Party's stated policy), and shortly thereafter was alleged to have advised Huang his phone may be subject to surveillance. Dastyari's alleged links to CCP interests continued to plague his former Party after his protégé was alleged to have hidden illegal donations from Huang, whose Australian visa had since been cancelled on advice from the Australian Security Intelligence Organization. Brady notes that Yang Jiang, a NZ Member of Parliament was a former CCP member and PLA officer prior to gaining NZ citizenship. Prior to this revelation he had become a key government policy advisor on CCP relations given his knowledge of the PRC and Chinese ethnicity. Along with pointing out that Yang Jiang did not disclose his previous connections to the CCP, Brady notes that, much like Australia, MPs are not subject to the same scrutiny as Government and Defence employees to achieve a security clearance, they are automatically provided access to classified material by virtue of being elected. Following a change in Government, Prime Minister Ardern still sees no reason to impose laws on foreign interference similar to those in Australia.

A more significant weapon was control of the medium itself. The CCP increased its state media's reach by acquiring other platforms and designing advertising to appear as Op-Ed pieces, as it expelled foreign journalists from China that published material about the Party.[98] Xinhua became a de facto wire service in many developing nations, and CCP propaganda one of their primary news sources. Meanwhile, those nations' journalists were offered training in the PRC, allowing the CCP to further promote its success story narrative while also recalibrating journalistic standards and building networks that could be exploited in the future.[99] Partnerships with independent diaspora platforms turned them into Xinhua mouthpieces, while those with Western publishers led to either pressure to remove articles on sensitive issues from their PRC-based Mandarin platforms, or in the case of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, from *everywhere* its Mandarin services reached. Meanwhile, Wikipedia's Mandarin edition suffered over 1,600 edits that rewrote geographical and historical events in a manner more aligned to the 'correct' CCP versions.[100]

The United Front's final magic weapon exploited open societies' own values to overwhelm dissenting views with CCP narratives. Confucius Institutes established to promote Chinese culture and language were alleged to promote CCP versions of history and its territorial claims, while their host institutions' reliance on those Institutes, Chinese students and research

98   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 88. Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 7. Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 119–20, 156. Will Glasgow, 'Man in Black Shadows Farewell Party in Beijing', *The Australian,* 24 February 2020. See also Mattis, 'China's "Three Warfares" in Perspective'; Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 165; Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 7; Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 23; Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 63; Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda*, 189–90; Albert, 'China's Big Bet on Soft Power'; Lawrence Chung, 'Taiwan Gets Tough over Fake News Blamed on Beijing "Disrupting Democracy"', *South China Morning Post*, 27 July 2019; Lara Jakes and Steven Lee Myers, 'U.S. Designates China's Official Media as Operatives of the Communist State', *The New York Times*, 18 February 2020.

99   Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 119. Christopher Walker, 'What Is "Sharp Power"?', *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (2018): 16. Herman Wasserman and Dani Madrid-Morales, 'How Influential Are Chinese Media in Africa? An Audience Analysis in Kenya and South Africa', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (14 May 2018): 20.

100 Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 10, 35. Mazarr et al., 'Hostile Social Manipulation', 118–19. Walker, Kalathil, and Ludwig, 'The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power', 124. Carl Miller, 'China and Taiwan Clash over Wikipedia Edits', *BBC News*, 5 October 2019. See also Heath, 'Beijing's Influence Operations Target Chinese Diaspora'; John Fitzgerald, 'Beijing's Guoqing versus Australia's Way of Life', *Inside Story*, 27 September 2016; McKenzie et al., 'China's Operation Australia: The Party Line'; Walker, 'What Is "Sharp Power"?', 9, 14; Holiday, *Trust Me, I'm Lying*, 212–15. Cambridge University Press and Sage and Springer were pressured through their partnerships to remove articles that discussed PRC politics, human rights, Taiwan, and Tibet. On Wikipedia's Mandarin edition, Tiananmen Square became the June 4th incident that quashed riots and Taiwan became a province of the PRC. Holiday explains the psychology through which initial understanding of facts establish a framework through which all subsequent facts are processed, known as cognitive rigidity, which makes altering that initial understanding difficult. He highlights Wikipedia's specific vulnerability to manipulation for this purpose, given its central role as a global research starting point, particularly among students.

partnerships for funding seems to constrain their freedom to criticize the CCP. Some of those institutions appeared to impede visits by the Dalai Lama and protests against the CCP, to fail to act against Chinese students who responded violently to criticism of the CCP, or to support their own academic staff when they were harassed by students 'hurt' by their factual remarks. The CCP threatened exchanges and refused visas for think tanks and politicians that published articles, expressed views or sponsored events they deemed offensive, establishing its own policy forums led by high-profile former politicians and public servants who parroted CCP talking points to promote its interests or to defend decisions and legacies from their own time in office.[101] Chinese Students and Scholars

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101   Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 118–19, 138–40. Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 9–10, 38–39. Andrew Greene, 'Government MPs Alarmed over Chinese Influence at Australian Universities after Pro-Beijing Rallies' *ABC News*, 18 August 2019. Peter Varghese, 'Australian Universities and China: We Need Clear-Eyed Engagement', *The Strategist* (blog), 23 August 2019. Bob Carr, 'Australians with Chinese Origins Need to Come Together', *China Daily*, 30 April 2019. See also Walker, 'What Is "Sharp Power"?', 13–17; Walker, Kalathil, and Ludwig, 'The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power', 127–28; Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 148–149; Mattis, 'China's "Three Warfares" in Perspective'; Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 34–35; Peter Mattis, 'Reexamining the Confucian Institutes', *The Diplomat,* 2 August 2012; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 22;Tim Dodd, '"Catastrophe" Looms as Uni Losses Skyrocket', *The Australian*, 9 April 2020; Burgess, 'Campuses No Place for Bias'; Albert, 'China's Big Bet on Soft Power'; 'Red Flags', *Four Corners* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 14 October 2019); Salvatore Babones, 'The China Student Boom and the Risks It Poses to Australian Universities', *China and Free Societies* (Centre for Independent Studies, 20 August 2019); Alex Joske, 'The China Defence Universities Tracker'(Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 25 November 2019); Walter Russell Mead, 'The People's Republic of Queensland', *Wall Street Journal*, 20 May 2020; McKenzie et al., 'China's Operation Australia: The Party Line'; 'Australian Universities Are Accused of Trading Free Speech for Cash', *The Economist*, 19 September 2019; *Power and Influence* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2017); Economy, 'China's New Revolution', 66–68; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 42; Andrew Probyn and Stephanie Dalzell, 'Andrew Hastie, James Paterson Reject China's Request to "repent" for Criticism of Communist Party', *ABC News*, 17 November 2019; Holiday, *Trust Me, I'm Lying*, 139–40; Amy Searight, 'Countering China's Influence Operations: Lessons from Australia', *CSIS.org*, 8 May 2020; Paul Monk, 'Keating Rides Roughshod over Reality of China's Aims', *The Australian,* 22 November 2019; 'Expert Urges Australia to Step out of U.S. Footsteps' *Xinhua*, 14 May 2020. Mazarr makes reference to Cai Yintong's, "Study Abroad Students: An Important Force for People-to-People External Propaganda" ["留学生: 民间 外宣的重要力量"], International Communications, March 2009; Hou, 2012. Brady recounts how, in 2015, Chinese polar officials pressured the University of Canterbury, Antarctica New Zealand, the Christchurch City Council, and New Zealand diplomats in China regarding her unpublished research on China and Antarctica. In numerous recent examples from Australia, students have posted on WeChat accounts the personal information of professors who referred to Taiwan as a separate country or described border territories to which China lays claim as Indian territory, leading to a flood of online complaints against the schools where the faculty were employed, and in some cases, apologies by those academics for offending the students. Varghese argues that discussion regarding the role and influence of Confucius Institutes and foreign student funding needs to be more balanced, given the extent to which this supports Australian research efforts. Joske identifies the links between state security and military organizations and a range of PRC universities with whom foreign nations partner for research programs. The online version can be found at https://unitracker.aspi.org.au. Holiday highlights the utility of seemingly credible research groups that exist merely to portray a particular perspective or market a product based on false or biased data. Searight notes that Huang Xiangmo, a billionaire property developer from China who came to Australia in 2011 and quickly gained permanent residency and political clout, gave generously to Australian universities, including a AU$1.8 million donation to the University of Technology Sydney in 2014 to set up the Australian-China Relations Institute (ACRI). ACRI was described by its director, former Foreign Minister Bob Carr, as taking an "unabashedly positive and optimistic view of the Australia-China relationship," and Carr became known as a frequent defender of Beijing.

Association members were alleged to monitor their peers, with Ministry of Education support through diplomatic posts. Those who showed dissenting views were apparently reported to the CCP, and their families in China harassed, creating a fear among the 70 million Chinese diaspora that was reinforced by 2017's security laws that ensure they promote Han nationalism and maintain correctness of thought, further isolating Dalai Lama supporters and Falun Gong practitioners.[102] Open societies' concept of justice and their insistence on evidence to support allegations against the CCP allowed it to exploit uncertainty, obfuscate and misrepresent events to fob off concerns, as elite fears of *ad hominem* attacks and allegations of Sinophobia suppressed any notion they might criticize the CCP or demand explanations for its actions without possessing incontrovertible proof. Consequently, academic efforts to provide genuinely balanced views derived from hard facts alone were often left repeating CCP talking points, inadvertently adding to its legitimacy.[103]

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102 Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 113, 120, 138. Economy, 'China's New Revolution', 66–68. Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 9, 42. Heath, 'Beijing's Influence Operations Target Chinese Diaspora'. Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 34. See also McKenzie et al., 'China's Operation Australia: The Party Line'; 'Australian Universities Are Accused of Trading Free Speech for Cash'; 'Australian Universities Are Accused of Trading Free Speech for Cash'; Greene, 'Government MPs Alarmed over Chinese Influence at Australian Universities after Pro-Beijing Rallies'; Alex Joske, 'Picking Flowers, Making Honey', Policy Brief (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 30 October 2018), 10–11; Thomas E. Kellogg, 'No Exit: China's Growing Use of Exit Bans Violates International Law', *Lawfare* (blog), 16 January 2019; Han Zhang, 'The "Post-Truth" Publication Where Chinese Students in America Get Their News', *The New Yorker*, 19 August 2019; Brady, 'Magic Weapons', 4; Cave, 'Why Australia Banned Huawei from Its 5G Telecoms Network'; Rachel Baxendale, 'Communist Nightmares Relived', *The Australian,* 6 October 2019; 'How Sweden Copes with Chinese Bullying', *The Economist*, 20 February 2020. Mazarr references Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, "China's Long Arm Reaches into American Campuses," *Foreign Policy*, March 7, 2018b. Kellogg points out that ethnically Chinese foreign nationals who travelled to the PRC could find themselves banned from departure if their relatives faced legal problems. Gui Minhai, a Swedish national, was abducted from Hong Kong (where he sold books allegedly disparaging to Xi Jinping) and taken to the mainland in 2015. According to CCP officials who denied him access to diplomatic support from Sweden, this refusal of support was at his own request.

103 Spalding, 'How Does China View Strategic Competition?', 23. McKinney and Butts, 'Bringing Balance to the Strategic Discourse on China's Rise', 79. Carr, 'Australians with Chinese Origins Need to Come Together'. Merriden Varrall, 'Four Corners Sees the Party-State in All the Shadows', *Lowy Interpreter* (blog), 6 June 2017. Mattis, 'What We Talk About When We Talk About Chinese Communist Party Interference in the Public Square'. See also Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 211; Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 60; Stephen FitzGerald, 'Stephen FitzGerald: Managing Australian Foreign Policy in a Chinese World', *The Conversation*, 17 March 2017; Rowan Callick, 'China's "Wolf Warriors" Spring from Internal Problems', *The Strategist* (blog), 2 June 2020. In discussing the ABC's 'Four Corners' report, Varrall noted that Huang rescinded an offer to donate $400,000 after the Labor Party's Defence spokesman said it would take a tougher stand on the South China Sea, but claimed this may have been based on personal belief in the CCP position, rather than a means to provide influence on its behalf. She noted Huang's high-level connection with the Australian Council for the Peaceful Reunification of China (linked to the CCP), and his remarks about Chinese politicians in Australia supporting Chinese policy, warranted "further exploration", but did not outline what would constitute sufficient proof to question the CCP's intent to influence through Huang prior to that influence having actually occurred. Mattis's response that this critique had "come dangerously close to accusing those who see a problem as being racist and ignorant… these ad hominem attacks transform what could be a reasonable debate into a political struggle that will probably degenerate into witch hunts," exacerbated

3.5 Is the CCP 'winning'?

While this summary of the CCP's activities suggests a clear relative advantage, assessing its actual achievement of its objectives is more difficult. *Essence of Decision* showed the detailed intelligence required to identify causal paths in human decision-making processes, and the difficulties in accurately predicting outcomes and developing effective plans to alter or disrupt them. As a result, any deliberate actions the CCP took could have several potential outcomes. They may directly lead to its desired outcome as planned. Alternatively, in accordance with the law of unintended consequences, they may lead to entirely different and unexpected outcomes. A further possibility, described by the Raiders Minimization theory, is that irrespective of its intent, the CCP's efforts and actions may have no causal effect on the eventual outcomes whatsoever.[104] Even so, the CCP's policy, strategy and the objectives of its four lines of operation are sufficiently coherent with its actions to enable a plausible macro assessment of its success to be drawn.

The CCP's positive narrative of Chinese culture, society and ideology provided only a marginal increase in global influence, one based on the number of nations accepting it, as distinct from their influence or status as developed nations. While recognized as a great power, its Beijing Consensus also only gained traction in developing or socio-politically fragile nations. Recreation of Ming-era voyages and events leading to the Beijing Olympics detracted from its image, and its state media output was widely considered as propaganda. As Indo-Pacific awareness of its Three Warfares increased, so too did anti-foreign interference legislation in the region, while the PRC's reputation as a nuclear proliferator and major contributor to the global warming that threatened the region further restricted the outcome of its efforts to only a

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this as a wedge issue that unsurprisingly detracted from informed and rational debate, noting that Varrall's remarks were made prior to the full details of Dastyari and Huang's relationship becoming public. McKinney and Butts include remarks such as: "even if the Chinese government did 'dream of hegemony,' an assertion that itself remains unproven," the CCP's challenge to the global order should not be overstated". They observe that the CCP has increasingly supported globalization and fair representation of all nations as the West withdrew from both. They also arrive at the technically accurate but entirely unrealistic deduction that, while the PLA had acquired and deployed A2AD capabilities in the SCS, there was nothing to stop other claimants doing the same.

104 Simon Gallagher, 'How The Big Bang Theory Ruined Indiana Jones For Everyone', *WhatCulture.com*, 15 October 2013. During Episode 4 of Season 7 of *The Big Bang* Theory, Amy, one of the characters analyses causality in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and concludes that the various heroic actions of Indiana Jones, the lead character, can be proven to be causally irrelevant to the eventual outcome of the plot.

minor shift in foreign public opinion.[105] Despite *Global Times'* data showing positive views of the PRC around the world, Pew assessments in Figures 11 and 12 (see also Annex C) revealed a negative regional trend. Lowy's Global Power Index (Annex D) reinforced this, showing the CCP's inability to convert its resource and economic strength to influence, as it continued to lag the West in cultural appeal and military relationships.[106]

Mixed views of China around the globe

% who have a favorable view of China

Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q8b.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
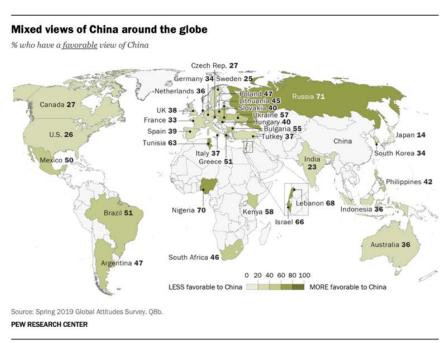
Figure 11: Global favorable views on the PRC [107]

105 Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 40–41. Nye, *The Future of Power*, 88. Hongmei Li, 'The Chinese Diaspora and China's Public Diplomacy: Contentious Politics for the Beijing Olympic Float', *International Journal of Communication* 6, (17 September 2012): 35. Lee Hsien Loong, 'The Endangered Asian Century', *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (7 August 2020): 56. Ali Wyne, 'Yes, Sam Huntington Has Insights to Guide U.S. Competition with China', *RAND* (blog), 25 July 2019. See also Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 151; Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', 59; 'China Is Making Substantial Investment in Ports and Pipelines Worldwide'. Recreations of Zheng He's Ming era voyages to demonstrate the PRC's history as a blue-water nation, and therefore its increasing naval might as nothing sinister, increased, rather than decreased Indian suspicions about its intent. Plans to promote the 2008 Olympics and CCP at the 2008 Pasadena Rose Parade led to public protests and were cancelled, and clashing protestors at torch relays around the world drew attention to Tibet and human rights, particularly given the CCP's links to the organizers. Overall, the Beijing Consensus has been described as a parochial, ethnocentric brand of authoritarian nationalism with limited global appeal.

106 Yusha Zhao, 'China's International Image Improving: Poll', *Global Times*, 22 December 2019. Pew Research Center, 'Global Indicators Database - China on China', *Global Attitudes Project*, (Pew Research Center accessed 4 April 2020). The Global Times poll across 17 countries that found more than half the total respondents agreed that the PRC's global image was improving, and that "China's international influence has also won wide recognition, with over 60 percent of respondents approving of its growth." The Global Times acknowledged that positive views of the PRC were "higher in non-Western countries, such as Egypt (79.2 percent) and Russia (76.8 percent) than in Western countries," but did not provide a breakdown of the PRC's own figures. Pew's data shows the PRC's view of itself as almost universally favorable, which would have significantly contributed to the overall average positive assessments reported by the Global Times.

107 Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, 'China's Economic Growth Welcomed in Emerging Markets, but Neighbors Wary of Its Influence', *Global Attitudes Project*, (Pew Research Center 5 December 2019).

Positive evaluations of China declining in the Asia-Pacific

% who have a favorable view of China

Philippines: 63% (2002) → 42 (2019)
Australia: 52 (2002) → 36 (2019)
Indonesia: 73 (2002) → 36 (2019)
South Korea: 66 (2002) → 34 (2019)
India: 35 → 23 (2019)
Japan: 55 (2002) → 14 (2019)

Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q8b.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
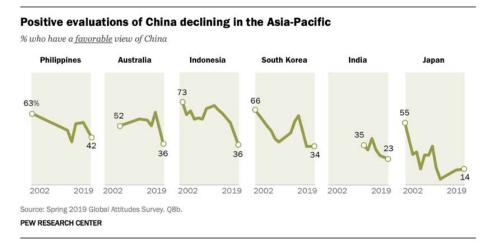
Figure 12: Declining views of the PRC among regional powers [108]

The CCP's efforts to incrementally establish territorial and economic facts on the ground also achieved only mixed results. The PLA clearly consolidated its position in the South China Sea and increased its ability to project forces throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans, while the CCP further isolated Taiwan diplomatically. However its South China Sea outposts were widely considered illegitimate, generating regional pushback, and further gains regarding Taiwan among its remaining Indo-Pacific supporters are unlikely given their strong relationships with the U.S., NZ and Australia.[109] Meanwhile, Figure 13 shows that the CCP's potential leverage as the dominant economic power is undermined by increasing suspicion of its intent. Despite academic studies that identified heavy bias in Western BRI reporting, the appeal of the BRI's lack of transparency to some regimes (that the West inadvertently advertises through criticism of it), and concession by some analysts that Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port repossession was probably not debt-trap diplomacy, Indo-Pacific concerns regarding PRC investment and aid continue to grow. Core concerns such as fears over sovereignty and risk of ballooning costs are also reinforced in some nations by historic resentment of ethnic Chinese economic power, as well as

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108   Silver, Devlin, and Huang.

109   Ankit Panda, 'Indonesia Cites 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award at UN. Is That a Big Deal?', *The Diplomat*, 3 June 2020. Amanda Hodge, 'Manila Spends $44m for Navy', *The Australian,* 10 June 2020. Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 40–41. Korporaal, 'Taiwan Leader under Pressure as Friends Turn to Beijing'. Grossman, 'China Will Struggle to Shut Taiwan Out of the Pacific'. See also Korporaal, 'Solomons "Not Paid" to Break Ties'; Mong Palatino, 'China's COVID-19 Diplomacy Backfires in the Philippines', *The Diplomat*, 9 May 2020; Derek Grossman et al., *America's Pacific Island Allies: The Freely Associated States and Chinese Influence* (RAND 2019); Grossman and Chase, 'What Does Beijing Want from the Pacific Islands?'

widespread cynicism towards CCP pronouncements that "major powers should treat small countries as equals."[110]

110 Tobin, 'Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies', 45. Davidson, 'Introduction to Indo-Pacific Security Challenges', 6. John H. Gill, 'China and South Asia', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 80. Xin and Matheson, 'One Belt, Competing Metaphors'. Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 24. Lee, 'The Endangered Asian Century', 60. See also Jha, 'China in the South Pacific An Emerging Theater of Rivalry', 67–68; Callick, 'The China Challenge', 16. *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 9. Abi-Habib, 'How China Got Sri Lanka to Cough Up a Port'; Roland Rajah, Alexandre Dayant, and Jonathon Pryke, *Ocean of Debt? Belt and Road and Debt Diplomacy in the Pacific* (Lowy Institute, October 2019); Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 42; Mouritz, 'China's Economic Coercion', 175; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 27, 34; William Pacatte, 'Competing to Win: A Coalition Approach to Countering the BRI', *CSIS International Security Program* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2019), 4–10. The U.S. alleges the BRI is building 21st century coaling stations to enable forward power projection, citing low commercial profitability, geo-strategic locations, and a Chinese Academy of Social Sciences researcher's "civilian first, later military," proposal as proof that ports such as Hambantota and Luganville were intended to support the PLA-N. Meanwhile, various analysts and commentators accused the CCP of debt-trap diplomacy, highlighting that Chinese development funds were normally loans rather than grants, and that the developers' use of Chinese workers increased the host nation's risk of indebtedness while offering little benefit to its people. Xin and Matheson's metaphor analysis was conducted on 816 articles from six countries during a Beijing BRI summit to trace the impact of Chinese and Western representations. It highlighted heavy bias in Western perspectives of BRI, containing consistent and conscious efforts to portray it as a geopolitical move which formed, "a global English-language imaginary that both extends beyond long-standing stereotypes of China and displays an ironic and critical attitude toward China's strategic self-positioning." Further research would be necessary to determine the extent to which this analysis was itself biased. Gill conceded that Hambantota's transfer to PRC interests was more likely "the result of a 'middle-income trap' rather than a 'Chinese debt trap.'" Shirk and Schell noted that, "The evidence to date suggests China has not been engaged in deliberate 'debt trap' diplomacy in the Pacific. Nonetheless, the sheer scale of China's lending and its lack of strong institutional mechanisms to protect the debt sustainability of borrowing countries poses clear risks." Regardless, arguments that argued the CCP's 'no strings attached' approach could contribute to regional instability by enabling corruption and undemocratic regimes, consistently failed to recognize that this might be considered appealing by many of those regimes.

Asia-Pacific nations view Chinese investment with suspicion

Investment from China is a good thing because it creates jobs in our country OR investment from China is a bad thing because it gives China too much influence

	Bad thing	Good thing
Philippines	49%	45%
South Korea	61	36
Indonesia	48	32
Australia	66	30
India	54	24
Japan	75	16
MEDIAN	58	31
Tunisia	22	69
Lebanon	27	69
Israel	26	60
Turkey	44	38
Nigeria	14	82
Kenya	35	60
South Africa	35	59
Mexico	30	61
Brazil	29	59
Argentina	47	43
16-COUNTRY MEDIAN	40	52

Note: Don't know responses not shown.
Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q28.

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Figure 13: Suspicion of PRC investment [111]

However, the CCP's leverage of bilateral partnerships delivered clear relative gains. Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar each established close partnerships with the CCP. While this may see them become little more than buffer vassal states on the PRC's borders, it may also further impede or even preclude, any attempt at an ASEAN consensus to pressure the CCP to withdraw from its South China Sea occupations prior to further negotiations on the disputed territories.[112] Similarly, further global partnerships and extensive BRI investment in Central Asian, African and Eastern European states retain strong potential, despite COVID-19 fallout, to sway votes in the CCP's favor in a range of international forums, supporting its efforts to build consensus for an overhaul of the current rules-based system and norms of international behavior.

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111 'How People around the World View China', *Global Attitudes Project*, (Pew Research Center 5 December 2019).

112 Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 40–41. See also Callick, 'The China Challenge', 15.

Finally, the CCP's intent to avoid provoking the U.S. to counter its competitive activities must be considered a failure. Its use of the Three Warfares spurred the U.S., Australia and like-minded nations into action, most of them looking to build economic, diplomatic and military partnerships as counterweights to the CCP's efforts.[113] Figures 14 and 15 show concerns over the PLA's growing might, concerns likely to increase interest in such partnerships. This interest will be reinforced if CCP diplomats continue to make veiled references to use of force against its neighbors if they offend or impede it, despite the doubts many hold regarding the true extent of U.S. commitment to defending Taiwan or the Philippines.[114]

113   Il Hyun Cho, 'Dueling Hegemony China's Belt and Road Initiative and America's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 19. Jens Stoltenberg, 'Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on Launching #NATO2030 - Strengthening the Alliance in an Increasingly Competitive World' (Brussels, 8 June 2020).

114   Heath, 'Beijing's Influence Operations Target Chinese Diaspora'. Hodge, 'Manila Spends $44m for Navy'. Ankit Panda, 'In Sudden Step, Philippines Reverses Course on Ending US Visiting Forces Agreement—For Now', *The Diplomat*, 4 June 2020. Malaysian pro-government protestors denounced the country's ethnic Chinese community and leaders in 2015, to which the PRC's Ambassador to Malaysia responded that it would not "sit idly by" while its national interests were infringed. Rather than conceding to the CCP, the inferred threat to use military force outraged the Malaysian leadership, who summoned the Ambassador to demand clarification. Meanwhile, the CCP's efforts to extend its gains during the period of the COVID-19 crisis resulted in Duterte reversing a decision to terminate the Philippines' Visiting Forces Agreement with the U.S.

Asia-Pacific nations especially concerned about China's military might

% who say China's growing military is a ___ thing for their country

	Bad	Good
U.S.	81%	11%
Canada	82	11
Indonesia	44	28
Philippines	71	24
India	73	12
Australia	84	11
South Korea	90	7
Japan	90	5
MEDIAN	79	12
Lebanon	43	39
Tunisia	40	32
Israel	49	29
Turkey	66	15
Nigeria	27	57
Kenya	39	53
South Africa	57	35
Mexico	46	36
Brazil	49	24
Argentina	59	19
18-COUNTRY MEDIAN	58	24

Note: Don't know responses not shown.
Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q42.

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Figure 14: Regional concern over increasing PLA might [115]

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115 'How People around the World View China'.

Increasing worries about China's growing military in many nations

% who say China's growing military is a __bad__ thing for their country

	2007 %	2008 %	2010 %	2011 %	2019 %	'07–'19 change
Argentina	39	48	43		59	▲20
Kenya	20	-	25	29	39	▲19
Canada	66	-	-	-	82	▲16
U.S.	68	82	79	79	81	▲13
Turkey	53	52	58	66	66	▲13
Japan	80	90	88	87	90	▲10
Indonesia	43	42	39	36	44	+1
South Korea	89	87	86	-	90	+1
Israel	55	-	-	66	49	▼6
Mexico	56	57	46	55	46	▼10
Lebanon	67	62	59	57	43	▼24

Note: Statistically significant differences shown in **bold**.
Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q42.

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Figure 15: Trends regarding increasing PLA might [116]

The CCP's efforts to seize and control the Indo-Pacific's key terrain have not proven entirely successful. However, its growing capacity to influence norm-setting in international forums will allow it to increasingly exert the framing face of power across a range of contests and competitions, including those in which it has no geographic or historical basis for involvement.[117] Unless the U.S. and Australia regain the initiative by seizing and controlling the key terrain themselves, the CCP will, despite setbacks, eventually convert this influence into relative advantage. Mazarr argued that the nature and values of Western society provided it an inherent advantage so long as it was willing to compete, bluntly warning that, "China is starkly ill-equipped to win such a competition—but the United States could, through self-imposed mistakes, lose it."[118] How to avoid those mistakes and plan to win is what we must now *Decide*.

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116   'How People around the World View China'.

117   Luke Slattery, 'China, Russia Block Antarctic Marine Park Plan', *The Australian,* 3 November 2019.

118   Mazarr, 'US/China Competition', 131.

4. **Decide**

> *The World is not run by those who are right; it is run by those who can convince others that they are right.*[119]
>
> —*Jamshid Gharajedaghi*

4.1 **The direct approach**

The U.S. and Australia cannot directly seize or control the CCP's OODA loop in the foreseeable future for several reasons. Foremost among these is the PRC's yearning for stability. Following the Cultural Revolution's turmoil, the CCP re-established itself as the only entity with the organizational capability to govern the PRC, assure the prerequisite social and political stability to achieve its developmental goals, and deal with any potential crisis that might arise. It maintains this apex position by playing on fear of instability and social disruption to justify its suppression of dissent, limiting the emergence of organized groups such as civil society, private enterprise, religion or any other potential threats to CCP rule.[120]

This fear precludes external hopes the PRC might democratize soon. Studies show that 60% of mainland Chinese believe a multi-party system might lead to social chaos, while the PRC's intellectual elites believe its economic success and rise ultimately depend on retaining the current

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119 Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity : A Platform for Designing Business Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, Mass.: Morgan Kaufmann, 2011), 133. Gharajedaghi came to realize the importance of influence in decision-making during his time at IBM, observing that, "I learned that decision makers — despite their willingness to pay handsomely for the work — were not interested in the optimum solution. They were only interested in confirming the choices they had already made. This is when I came to realize that the world is not run by those who are right; it is run by those who can convince others that they are right. After this eye-opening experience, I became preoccupied with the question of why people do what they do, which led me to the fascinating concept of choice. Despite the overwhelming evidence that understanding choice is a requisite to understanding human systems, the dominant analytical culture with a scientific tag had no interest in disturbing its well-groomed analytical approach to include the messy notion of choice."

120 Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 26, 243–45. Cheng, 'Chinese Views of Information and Implications for the United States', 10. See also Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 60. Tobin, 'Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies', 51. Massimo Introvigne, 'The New Religious Affairs Regulation Came into Force in 2018: What Exactly Happened?', *Bitter Winter*, 6 September 2018. Cheng argues influence over the CCP is impossible due to its belief that other states and separatist entities are seeking to undermine its security in this way. Introvigne explains how domestic law is used to shape and contain other organizations, in this case, the Sinicization of religion and its subordination to CCP control.

regime.[121] The CCP reinforces these beliefs, highlighting the ensuing chaos of the Color Revolutions and the Arab Spring, and recent turmoil in Hong Kong, the U.S. and Europe to emphasize liberal democracies' "rising crime rates and insecurity, increasing poverty, uncontrollable illegal migration, and growing xenophobia and social frustration."[122] Even the much-maligned (by the West) social credit system's core objective is to maintain the security and predictability that the PRC craves, which its people prioritize ahead of individual freedoms or privacy.[123]

Such concerns are well-founded. Not only does the PRC lack the alternative structures that historian and political scientist Samuel Huntington saw as prerequisites for democratization, the Chinese concept of democracy differs markedly from Western liberal notions.[124] The Confucian concept of *minben* defines good government as one that serves the people's collective interests; democracy's role in this construct is to make the nation stronger rather than to safeguard a specific process by which that government is elected. As a consequence, when external actors accuse the CCP of political repression, the PRC's citizens respond with resentment as they perceive democracy in the PRC to be increasing. As Sinologist Bruce Dickson noted, for the foreseeable future, the social contract between the CCP and the PRC's citizens will therefore remain firmly founded on "economic prosperity in exchange for political quiescence, and ultimately political support."[125]

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121 Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 128. See also Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 245. Cabestan details PRC intellectual elites more broadly123-128.

122 Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 67. See also G. King, J. Pan, and M. E. Roberts, 'How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression', *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2 (2013): 328; Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 1 October 2019; Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 22, 312–13; Chun Han Wong and Jeremy Page, 'Hong Kong Crisis Is Personal for Xi', *The Australian*, 30 September 2019; Glenda Korporaal, 'Hong Kongers Ready to Die: Lai', *The Australian*, 4 October 2019; Glenda Korporaal, 'Hong Kong in State of Serious Danger Warns Carrie Lam', *The Australian*, 6 October 2019. On the eve of Communist Party's 90th birthday, the state-run Xinhua news agency issued an opinion that western-style parliamentary democracy would lead to a repetition of the turbulent factionalism of China's Cultural Revolution (http://*****McRDXk).

123 Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 96–98. See also Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 33. For a detailed philosophical, legal and historical perspective of the concept behind the social credit system, see Alain Supiot, *Governance by Numbers : The Making of a Legal Model of Allegiance*, vol. 20, Hart Studies in Comparative Public Law (Hart Publishing, 2017).

124 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lecture Series ; v. 4 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 124–63. See also 208–79. Huntington explains in detail the necessary prerequisites for democratization through transformation, transplacement or replacement of the current regime.

125 Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 8, 262-300. See also Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 61-62; Dazhi Yao, 'Good Governance: Another Kind of Legitimacy?', *Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy* 69 (2018): 449–453; Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The

CCP-nurtured Han nationalism further prevents direct OODA control over the CCP or PRC.[126] The CCP's representation of itself as the natural successor to the two thousand-year-old imperial system that preceded it, a narrative often unintentionally endorsed by Western commentators, reinforces its legitimacy by linking past greatness to its current successes, and deflecting blame for the turbulence of the late Imperial and Republican periods and the PRC's failure to modernize onto the West and Japan.[127] The CCP builds on this foundation, promoting patriotic pride in the PRC's accomplishments and its growing global standing and influence through an education system that bonds citizen and state, so that "China's achievements make them feel prouder about themselves, and foreign criticism of China becomes a personal insult."[128] This approach's success is evident among students studying abroad. Despite exposure to Western freedoms, values and critical thought, they appear easily offended by criticism of the PRC, CCP or its leaders, defending them against what is often indefensible, such as the CCP's human rights record. Dickson noted that over 80% of respondents to one survey agreed that when China was criticized, they felt as if they were being personally criticized.[129] This is significant. When CCP leaders and diplomats claim that other nations' leaders have 'hurt the feelings of the Chinese people', this is no rhetorical device, but a call to arms based on a fundamental truth built from deep indoctrination.

However, the CCP also carefully limits the scope and nature of such patriotism to control the risk it presents to its own interests. Border issues and territorial claims with its neighbors, reunification with Taiwan, and

U.S.', 3 October 2018; Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 6–9. Huntington identified that throughout its history, democracy had been defined in different ways, either in terms of sources of authority for government, the purposes served by government, or the procedures for constituting government. He notes that, following WWII, the latter definition, one in which competitive elections occur to determine the will of the people regarding who governs, has come to dominate the Western interpretation of democracy.

126 Nye, *The Future of Power*, 182. 'A Proposal to Help a Few Foreigners Settle in China Triggers a Furore'. Anna Fifeld, 'China's Communist Party Tries to Create a New Hero for the Masses', *Washington Post*, 4 November 2019.

127 Gong, 'Asserting an Ancient, Emergent Superpower'. Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 39–40, 50. Watson, 'The Politics of Humiliation as a Driver in China's View of Strategic Competition', 19. See also Cui, 'Transcript: NPR's Interview With China's Ambassador To The U.S.', 1 October 2019; Allison, *Destined for War*, 121–22; Tobin, 'Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies', 54–55; Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 2; 'A Proposal to Help a Few Foreigners Settle in China Triggers a Furore'.

128 Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 235. See also Angela Xiao Wu, 'Ideological Polarization over a China-as-Superpower Mind-Set: An Exploratory Charting of Belief Systems among Chinese Internet Users, 2008-2011', *International Journal of Communication*, 2014, 2675.

129 Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 235-236. See also Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 148.

clashes with the U.S. provide CCP propagandists useful fodder to rally the PRC around the party-state. Although the CCP tolerates public displays of anti-foreign sentiment to signal its displeasure to foreign governments and justify its need to respond, these remain a double-edged sword that could evolve into criticism of the CCP itself should its own responses not be seen as sufficiently strident. Surveys that show 65% agreement that national unity and territorial integrity are society's highest interest, and 65% support for the CCP taking any action necessary to defend its national interests, indicate significant constraints on the CCP's capacity to constructively negotiate with other actors on any issues central to patriotic sentiment.[130] Xi appears to personally benefit from this nationalist, imperialist legacy. Sinologist Jean-Pierre Cabestan notes how state media interprets diplomatic meetings in Beijing as vassals paying tribute to "the most august personage of the imperial communist court," reinforcing beliefs "firmly embedded in Chinese society that the emperor is irreproachable and that he is sometimes poorly advised and more important, misled by subordinates."[131] This not only fortifies the PRC's perception of its own centrality in global affairs, but where domestic or international failures occur, such as the mishandling of the COVID-19 outbreak, local authorities can be easily purged to maintain the standing of both Xi and the central leadership of the CCP.[132]

The final reason why the CCP's key terrain cannot be seized directly is its well-documented dominance of its internal information environment.[133] The Great Firewall, selective censorship, the '50-Cent army' of online netizens' ability to drown out domestic dissent in pro-CCP noise, and its tolerance of dissent to lure potential critics into 'uncivil' debate to undermine their credibility all suggest the CCP's control over the OODA loops

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130   Jennifer Pan and Yiqing Xu, 'China's Ideological Spectrum', *The Journal of Politics* 80, no. 1 (2018): 254–73. Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 201. See also Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 28, 233: Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 98–101; Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 135–36; Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda*, 194; Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 16, 216; Watson, 'The Politics of Humiliation as a Driver in China's View of Strategic Competition', 20. Data referenced from Pan and Xu is from Table A1, available only in online version.

131   Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 43.

132   Will Glasgow, 'Truth Falls Victim to Virus', *The Australian*, 13 March 2020. Rowan Callick, 'Xi's China Shows Its True Colours', *The Australian*, 7 February 2020. Henry Ergas, 'Virus Firms up Xi's Position … for Now', *The Australian*, 5 March 2020. 'China Appears Confident That Its Coronavirus Epidemic Has Abated', *The Economist*, 12 March 2020.

133   Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 110. Mazarr cites a Freedom house report that found, "for the third consecutive year, China was the world's worst abuser of Internet freedom."

of the PRC's citizens is near absolute. This allows it to mass their support to its cause irrespective of the crisis or its cause, and more importantly, to "shift responsibility for the ills confronting the country to a minority of unscrupulous economic actors or more simply foreigners and Western capitalism."[134] COVID-19 epitomizes political philosopher Hannah Arendt's assertion regarding totalitarian states' unique ability to turn statements of fact by those who disagree with them into questions of motive.[135] As state media applauded the CCP's handling of the outbreak, it also swiftly denounced all external criticism as politically motivated, reminding citizens that any "who use the crisis to 'smear' the country's politics are 'immoral and despicable.'"[136]

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134 Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 152, 79-83. See also Kristin Shi-Kupfer, Hauke Gierow, and Karsten Luc, 'Governance through Information Control', (Mercator Institute for China Studies accessed 12 March 2020. King, Pan, and Roberts, 'How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression', 326. Min Jiang and Ashley Esarey, '(Un)Civil Society in Digital China| Uncivil Society in Digital China: Incivility, Fragmentation, and Political Stability — Introduction', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (8 May 2018): 17. Gillian Bolsover, *Computational Propaganda in China: An Alternative Model of a Widespread Practice*, Computational Propaganda Research Project, Working Paper 2017.4 (Oxford University Press, 2018), 9–10. Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 31–95. See also Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 33; Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 95–100; Jiayin Lu and Yupei Zhao, 'Implicit and Explicit Control: Modeling the Effect of Internet Censorship on Political Protest in China', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (15 August 2018): 23; Rongbin Han, '(Un)Civil Society in Digital China| Withering Gongzhi: Cyber Criticism of Chinese Public Intellectuals', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (8 May 2018): 1968; Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 126; Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda*, 189; Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, 'How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument', *American Political Science Review* 111, no. 3 (August 2017): 484–501; Guobin Yang, '(Un) Civil Society in Digital China| Demobilizing the Emotions of Online Activism in China: A Civilizing Process', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (8 May 2018): 21; Gabriele De Seta, '(Un)Civil Society in Digital China| Wenming Bu Wenming: The Socialization of Incivility in Postdigital China', *International Journal of Communication* 12, (8 May 2018): 21; Han, '(Un)Civil Society in Digital China| Withering Gongzhi'. Samuel C. Woolley and Philip N. Howard, *Computational Propaganda: Political Parties, Politicians, and Political Manipulation on Social Media* (Oxford University Press, 2018). Shi-Kupfer characterizes the Chinese system as "governance through information control," that aims to "win the 'battle for public opinion.' King, Pan and Roberts provide a detailed analysis of censorship at work within China at this time, including a potentially surprising examples of blog content regarding the one child policy and Tiananmen Square that were not censored because they did not entail any call to collective action. Lu and Zhao explain that posts that criticize the state, its leaders, and its policies are not more likely to be censored, but that the censorship program is aimed at curtailing collective action by silencing comments that represent, reinforce, or spur social mobilization, regardless of content. It also aims to use psychological perception of Internet censorship to weaken political protest or indirectly limit it by curtailing young people's online political expression. Meanwhile, the CCP also employed a sophisticated divide-and-conquer strategy online. It encouraged 'uncivil' engagement between netizens and regime critics, while publicly calling for civility (wenming) and attacking the emotional and irrational nature of the debate. This creates a toxic environment in which the space for respectful debate is minimized and regime critics' credibility can be diminished. The outcome is "a strategic technology and tool for governance and self-governance, including the governance of the Internet," that increases CCP control.

135 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Harvest Book 1968) 385.

136 'China Appears Confident That Its Coronavirus Epidemic Has Abated'. See also Eric Li, 'Xi Jinping Is a "Good Emperor"', *Foreign Policy* (blog), 14 May 2020; Ben Packham, 'World Coalition Backs Australia', *The Australian*, 17 May 2020; Geoff Chambers, 'China's Latest Threat "Deeply Concerning"', *The Australian*, 10 May 2020; Jennifer Oriel, 'The Truth Threatens China, so It's the Big Lie', *The Australian*, 3 May 2020.

Some of the earliest writing on propaganda noted the difficulty in changing an individual's firmly established opinions, and that the most effective propaganda built on existing beliefs, needs and social constructs.[137] While the PRC and CCP face many challenges due to their inherent fragility, these are not sufficient, even under pressure, to undermine the current social contract between the CCP and the PRC's citizens, no matter how unequal external analysts perceive it to be. Coupled with the CCP's demonstrated ability to not only weather COVID-19, but to attempt to exploit its soft power opportunities, the CCP's collapse can neither be considered imminent, nor the PRC likely to democratize any time soon. Arguments to the contrary conflate, as Dickson elegantly states, "their preference for what they *want* to happen with a prediction of what is *likely* to happen."[138]

4.2 The indirect approach

The alternative to misplaced efforts to directly control the PRC and CCP's OODA loops is an indirect approach. This is not the narrow 'horizontal escalation' concept some analysts use as a straw man, contrasting U.S. and CCP interests in places such as the Philippines to justify acquisition of greater numbers of technologically advanced forces able to defeat aggression towards Taiwan or in the South China Sea—strategic competition by definition aims to avoid conflict.[139] A valid indirect approach to strategic

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137 Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, [1st American ed.] (New York: Knopf, 1965), 33–39.

138 Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, 21. McKinney and Butts, 'Bringing Balance to the Strategic Discourse on China's Rise', 73. Hinnerk Feldwisch-Drentrup, 'How WHO Became China's Coronavirus Accomplice', *Foreign Policy* (blog), 2 April 2020. Graham Pinn, 'WHO Missing in Action as Contagion Takes Hold', *The Australian*, 2 April 2020. See also Campbell and Sullivan, 'Competition Without Catastrophe'; Simina Mistreanu, 'Beijing's Diplomacy Faces Blowback', *The Australian*, 28 April 2020; Palatino, 'China's COVID-19 Diplomacy Backfires in the Philippines'; Stephanie Nebehay, 'WHO Chief Says Widespread Travel Bans Not Needed to Beat China Virus', *Reuters*, 3 February 2020; Cabestan, *China Tomorrow*, 7. Nebehay reported that World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in early February that there was no need for measures that "unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade" in trying to halt the spread of a coronavirus that has killed 361 people in China. "Because of this strategy and it weren't for China, the number of cases outside China would have been very much higher." Referring to the virus' spread abroad, he said it was "minimal and slow", while warning that it could worsen. Tedros, who held talks in Beijing a week prior with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders, coughed and interrupted his speech to take a drink of water, quipping: "Don't worry, it's not corona". Pinn's timeline demonstrates the extent to which the WHO was unwilling or unable to fulfil its role to the world, while lauding the CCP's performance. Mistreanu shows how the CCP has overplayed its hand in seeking to exploit soft power opportunities, a tendency that can be exploited by the U.S. and Australia.

139 Elbridge A. Colby and David Ochmanek, 'How the United States Could Lose a Great-Power War', *RAND* (blog), 30 October 2019.

competition must focus on the key terrain. It must identify the key competitions and contests that offer the U.S. and Australia a potential relative advantage in those areas most critical to their interests. And it must target audiences within them to seize and control their OODA loops to ensure that their leaders' choices reflect the preferences of the U.S. or Australia, rather than those of the CCP.

Nye's two-stage model for soft power projection offers a useful framework to describe this indirect approach to strategic competition. Rather than directly persuading a target nation's elites through existing networks, he recommends first attracting and persuading its population and domestic third parties to create "an enabling environment for decisions."[140] This environment shapes how decision-makers perceive their options to act, creating what economists Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein described as a 'nudge' towards the best choice.[141] This concept applies not just within target nations, but internationally—domestic publics, third parties and elites being replaced by the international community, its nations, and the CCP respectively. In this context, groups of nations can create the enabling environment to control the CCP's OODA loop in a way that direct action by the U.S. or Australia cannot. The utility of this approach was long ago recognized by Vietnam which has sought to draw additional external actors into its territorial disputes with the CCP to force multilateral rather than bilateral discussions. A more recent example is Australia's success in building a coalition of nations to pressure the CCP into accepting an international investigation into the origins of COVID-19.[142]

4.2.1 The U.S. and Australian approaches

Current U.S. and Australian approaches to strategic competition are primarily indirect in nature. They both affirm the goal of a free and open Indo-Pacific, governed by the extant rules-based global order that assures the sovereignty of all nations free from coercion, and access to the global commons (air, maritime, cyber and space). They both pursue increased presence of more capable military forces throughout the region so that the CCP

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140   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 94.

141   Thaler and Sunstein, *Nudge*, 3–8.

142   Packham, 'World Coalition Backs Australia'. Oriel, 'The Truth Threatens China, so It's the Big Lie'. Nye, *The Future of Power*, 186.

is forced to pursue its interests through internationally-accepted practices. They both seek further partnerships to facilitate this deterrent posture and deeper regional engagement to allow greater access to basing and limit CCP influence. Finally, they both aim to promote a networked security architecture to uphold the international rules-based order.[143] Given the demand for regional infrastructure through to 2030 shown in Figure 16, they intend to achieve this through Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) to challenge the excessive maritime claims that they argue threaten access to the global commons, coupled with aid and investment that supports governance and transparency, such as the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act and Pacific Step-Up, the latter of which also seeks to help guard against the impacts of climate change.[144]
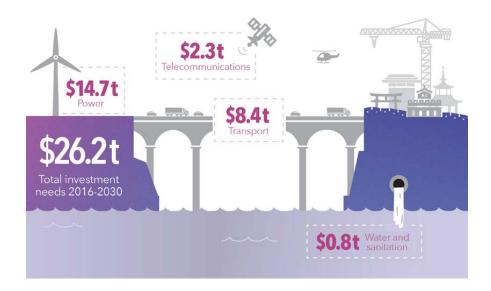
Figure 16: Asian infrastructure investment needs 2016–2030 (US$tn)[145]

143 *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, v, 4, 18. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 25–27, 79–83, 101–5, 109–15. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Stepping-up Australia's Engagement with Our Pacific Family', accessed 7 April 2020. Philip Green, 'Australia-Japan-ASEAN Strengthening the Core of the Indo-Pacific', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 10–11, 13. Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Commonwealth of Australia), 39–46, 74–77, accessed 7 April 2020. See also U.S. Department of State, *A Free and Open Indo-Pacific - Advancing a Shared Vision*, 4 November 2019; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, '2019 in Review: Stepping up Pacific Engagement', 19 December 2019; Campbell and Sullivan, 'Competition Without Catastrophe'; Robert S. Ross, 'The End of U.S. Naval Dominance in Asia', *Lawfare* (blog), 18 November 2018; Peter Jennings, 'Letting the Beijing Bully Know This Is Our Neighbourhood', *ASPI.org*, 22 February 2020; Glen Carey, 'U.S. Pentagon Chief Wants to Reallocate Forces to Indo-Pacific', *Bloomberg.Com*, 8 December 2019.

144 *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 9, 43. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 37–47. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Stepping-up Australia's Engagement with Our Pacific Family'. Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, 54–58. See also Ross, 'The End of U.S. Naval Dominance in Asia'; Reynolds, 'Australia in an Age of Strategic Competition', 6.

145 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 45.

Australia also aimed to specifically empower regional organizations to uphold the rules-based system. Through forums such as ASEAN and 'minilateral' groups including the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and the Quad, Australia sought to promote cooperation on strategic, political and economic issues, reinforce international law, encourage continued U.S. engagement in the region, and leverage the growing strategic weight of actors such as Indonesia to shape regional affairs.[146] It also planned to maintain bilateral elite engagement with the CCP to encourage it to exercise its influence in ways "that enhance stability, reinforce international law and respect the interests of smaller states and their right to pursue these interests peacefully."[147]

Analysts criticized both the U.S. and Australian approaches for a range of reasons. Among these were their focus on military capacity as a deterrent, which sought to 'win before fighting' rather than 'win without fighting'; an approach that failed to address or counter the CCP's specific intent to remain below the threshold of conflict.[148] Meanwhile, the CCP portrayed any increase in military capacity and presence, particularly FONOPS, as evidence of continued U.S. unilateralism. FONOPS have not only failed to contest the controversial aspects the CCP's South China Sea claims and are therefore token at best, but they fuel CCP justification of its militarization of the region as it pursues bilateral discussions with other claimants, undermining the authority of the ICA and its 2016 ruling.[149]

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146 Green, 'Australia-Japan-ASEAN Strengthening the Core of the Indo-Pacific', 10–12; See also Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 46.

147 Green, 'Australia-Japan-ASEAN Strengthening the Core of the Indo-Pacific', 12.

148 Brown, 'Demystifying the Indo-Pacific Theater', 5. Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, 67. Colby and Ochmanek, 'How the United States Could Lose a Great-Power War'. See also Gregory B. Poling, 'For Lack of a Strategy: The Free and Open Indo-Pacific', *War on the Rocks* (blog), 13 November 2019. Robert M. Gates, 'The Overmilitarization of American Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (7 August 2020): 121–32.

149 Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 164. Ku, 'It's Time for South China Sea Economic Sanctions'. See also *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 43; Idrees Ali, 'U.S. Warships Sail in Disputed South China Sea, Angering China', *Reuters*, 22 November 2019; Campbell and Ratner, 'The China Reckoning'; Odom, 'Understanding China's Legal Gamesmanship in the Rules-Based Global Order', 206; Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 57; Granados, 'The China Coast Guard: Shifting from Civilian to Military Control in the Era of Regional Uncertainty', 50; Nathan Swire, 'Water Wars: Under the Sea', *Lawfare* (blog), 24 September 2018. Vuving highlights that, "When the US conducted freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, it sent a message about its commitment to freedom of navigation in that region. But the absence of more aggressive actions by the US also sent a message about Washington's intentions and, inadvertently, its commitment and resolve." Ku notes that, "Even when the U.S. deliberately avoids using innocent passage because it does not recognize China's right to assert a claim to particular territorial waters, as was the case when the U.S. conducted a FONOP near China's artificial island on Mischief Reef, the FONOP has limited impact. It simply demonstrates the U.S. has a right to sail within 12 nautical miles without following

U.S. reliability was also a concern. Its transactional approach to alliances demonstrably places its goals ahead of collective benefits, a perception exacerbated by policy wording that describes partnerships in terms of U.S. interests. Coupled with its withdrawal from the TPP in order to pursue tweaked bilateral rather than multilateral trade deals (while the CCP progressed its Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), and its abandonment of the Joint Collective Program of Action (JCPOA) with Iran (and the European partners it had drawn into that agreement), recent U.S. behavior "compelled even longstanding allies to question the reliability of America's role in world affairs."[150] As Australia sought to empower ASEAN, clashes over levels of US representation at the East Asia Summit, and of ASEAN leaders at the U.S.-ASEAN Summit suggested that the U.S. viewed neither the group nor partnership with it as a priority. This allowed the CCP to portray Western commitment as declining and itself as global leader on issues that resonate with many of the region's nations.[151]

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innocent-passage rules. The FONOP does not, by itself, challenge China's right to build the artificial island there or to station military assets there." Also FONOPS are "so inconsequential that the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs could not even be bothered to come up with new phrases in what is now a ritualized denunciation. Its May 27 statement is nearly word-for-word identical to a 2017 Foreign Ministry statement denouncing a similar FONOP."

150 Bonnie S. Glaser Ali Wyne, 'A New Phase in Middle-Power Adjustment to U.S.-China Competition?', *The National Interest*, 5 November 2019. *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 15–16, 21–25, 41. Amy Searight, Brian Harding, and Kim Mai Tran, *Strengthening the U.S.-Pacific Islands Partnership* (Center for Strategic and International Studies accessed 21 May 2020), 16. Michael Green, 'Conservative Players: Rising Republicans' View of Asia Grand Strategy with Eric Sayers and Zack Cooper', *The Asia Chessboard Podcast* (Center for Strategic and International Studies accessed 22 May 2020. See also Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 18; Gill, 'China and South Asia', 81; Lee and Lee, 'Chinese Bank on a Charm Offensive'; Poling, 'For Lack of a Strategy'; James Dobbins Ali Wyne, 'How Not to Confront China', *The National Interest*, 22 September 2019; Lee, 'The Endangered Asian Century', 55; Cho, 'Dueling Hegemony China's Belt and Road Initiative and America's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy', 29. Cooper comments on the TTP and impact of tariffs on other players. Page 28 of the Indo-Pacific Strategy Report details then-Secretary James Mattis's return of the Bells of Balangiga (seized during the U.S.-Philippine War in 1901) to the Philippines where they are reportedly venerated as religious artefacts. The report claims that, "In returning the Bells of Balangiga to the people of the Philippines, the United States cements the tight bond between our two countries and peoples, which is based on respect and shared sacrifice." It then immediately discusses the implementation of the EDCA to give U.S. forces access to Filipino key facilities, suggesting that the return of the Bells was neither altruistic nor respectful, but merely a means to an end. Perceptions such as these are reinforced by references in the section on partnership to goals that "Advance American influence by competing and leading in multilateral organizations so that American interests and principles are protected," "Promote American prosperity through fair and reciprocal economic relationships to address trade imbalances"; and "rely on allies and partners to shoulder a fair share of the burden of responsibility to protect against common threats". Meanwhile, the title of the Strategy's Implementation section is, "Sustaining U.S. Influence to Achieve Regional Objectives". Searight describes the damage to U.S. reliability among Pacific Island nations after the withdrawal from Paris climate agreements.

151 Poling, 'For Lack of a Strategy'. Simon Benson, 'Beijing: We Have No Feud with Aussies', *The Australian,* 3 November 2019. Ali Wyne, 'How Not to Confront China'. See also Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 18; Grossman and Chase, 'What Does Beijing Want from the Pacific Islands?'; Ali Wyne, 'A New Phase in Middle-Power Adjustment to U.S.-China Competition?'; Cho, 'Dueling Hegemony China's Belt and Road Initiative and America's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy', 19–23; Blackwill, 'America Needs an "Engage and Contain"

A more critical concern is U.S. and Australian insistence on liberal values and governance among potential partners. For the U.S. and Australia to insist upon "shared respect for sovereignty, fair and reciprocal trade, and the rule of law,"[152] in a region without a strong tradition of liberal democracy, while the CCP promotes partnerships without such constraints, seems remarkably naïve.[153] Nye previously conceded that soft power could be viewed as a form of Western cultural imperialism, a perception that would be exacerbated if Western nations did not consistently demonstrate the values they espouse. Unsurprisingly, the CCP swiftly draws attention to any possible instance of such hypocrisy. Some are long-standing gripes, like the norms and standards of the current global system that the West established and that benefit it, or the U.S.'s Cold War (and allegedly ongoing) interference in other nations. More recent examples include the U.S.'s control over the SWIFT financial system to unilaterally impose economic sanctions to support its foreign policy such as its desertion of the JCPOA, or efforts to block a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution for an inquiry into U.S. racism and police brutality. Then there were the revelations that a global supplier of communications encryption systems to various national governments was funded by and provided backdoor access to the CIA, all while the U.S. and Australia argued that other nations should exclude Huawei from building their 5G networks for 'security reasons'.[154]

Strategy for China'; Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 10, 33.

152   *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, v, 29. For an example of this conditionality in one of the nations most susceptible to CCP influence, "[a]s Thailand continues to take steps toward democracy, DoD looks forward to strengthening our longstanding defense ties."

153   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 79. Davidson, 'Introduction to Indo-Pacific Security Challenges', 7. *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report 2019*, 13. Green, 'Conservative Players'. See also Philip Zelikow et al., 'The Rise of Strategic Corruption', *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (7 August 2020): 113–15; Gill, 'China and South Asia', 81, 83; Mazarr, 'US/China Competition', 136; Kathleen Hicks et al., 'By Other Means Part I: Campaigning in the Gray Zone', *CSIS International Security Program* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 8 July 2018), 19–22; Baker, 'New Zealand's Strategic Challenge: Responding to China's New Interventionist Foreign Policies', 29; Ben Packham, 'Sogavare Urged to Sack Nephew', *The Australian,* 5 December 2019; Rowan Callick, 'Mine Shafted Bougainville's Hopes', *The Australian,* 8 December 2019; Rowan Callick, 'Real Cost of Independence', *The Australian,* 8 December 2019; Graham Lloyd, 'The Solomons Strategy', *The Australian,* 23 February 2020; Ben Packham, 'Solomons' Mystery $151bn China Offer', *The Australian,* 23 February 2020. Many of the articles cited outline the type of governance and transparency issues the U.S. and Australia perceive make the Indo-Pacific more vulnerable to CCP influence. Meanwhile, during the podcast discussion on values in Great Power Competition, Cooper points out that, "the freedom agenda is still poisonous in some ways.".

154   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 87. Greg Miller, 'The CIA Secretly Bought a Company That Sold Encryption Devices across the World. Then Its Spies Sat Back and Listened.', *Washington Post*, 11 February 2020. Kathleen Hicks, 'Great Power Competition', *Defense 2020*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15 January 2020). Ben Packham, '"US Proxy" Working against UN Racism Vote', *The Australian*, 18 June 2020. See also Chen and Yang, 'US Protests Expose a "failed State" as Officials Resort to Blame Game'; Cooley and Nexon, 'How Hegemony Ends', 150. Mastro makes comment on U.S. coercive behaviors, and Preble and Schake note U.S. hypocrisy in their interview with Hicks.

But the most serious of the critiques was that the U.S. and Australia do not appreciate how to engage in the region, and only sought to use its nations as pawns in their Indo-Pacific 'Great Game'.[155] Rather than quality of partnership engagement, each were argued to be focused on the quantity of aid and investment they offered, overstating shared values to disguise these efforts to procure support. Australia's Step-Up was particularly singled out as a unilateral initiative rather than a shared agenda; despite ministerial assertions that, "The Australian Government is here to listen",[156] it was accused of indulging in counterproductive, patronizing and culturally insensitive parochialism, with some efforts openly disparaged.[157]

Many in the region view U.S. and Australian development aid cynically and their increased interest as disingenuous and fleeting. This belief is reinforced by knee-jerk responses to CCP initiatives, such as its expressions of interest in building or leasing military bases, and dubious commitment shown by the near-termination of an Australian aid program in Papua New Guinea to fund Australia's domestic COVID-19 economic recovery. Rather than being treated as Indo-Pacific Melians forced to suffer what they must, the region's actors expect to be engaged with respect and on their own terms.[158] As Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong, observed at

155 Ben Packham, 'Their Enemies Are Not Our Enemies: Pacific Nations Won't Join Stand against China', *The Australian*, 15 August 2019. Rosie Lewis, 'Fiji Seeking Pacific Regiment in Army', *The Australian*,13 October 2019. See also Callick, 'The China Challenge', 16; Searight, Harding, and Tran, 'Strengthening the U.S.-Pacific Islands Partnership', 14–15. The 'pawn' concept is something the CCP has sought to exploit, particularly through state media such as 'Advisable for India Not to Engage in US-China Confrontation', *Global Times*, 31 May 2020.

156 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Stepping-up Australia's Engagement with Our Pacific Family'.

157 Leanne Smith, 'Despite Its Pacific "Step-up", Australia Is Still Not Listening to the Region, New Research Shows', *The Mandarin* (blog), 10 February 2020. Graham Dobell, 'South Pacific Thought Bubbles: Travel and TV', *The Strategist* (blog), 1 June 2020. Kate Lyons, '"Neighbours Is Irrelevant to Most Islanders": Pacific Experts Criticise Australian TV Initiative', *The Guardian*, 26 May 2020. Graham Dobell, 'Six Inquiries on Australia's South Pacific Step-Up', *The Strategist* (blog), 15 March 2020. See also Tess Newton Cain, 'The State of the Step-Up: Australia's Engagement with the Pacific', in Caitlin Byrne and Lucy West (eds), *State of the Neighbourhood 2019* (Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University 2019).

158 Campbell and Sullivan, 'Competition Without Catastrophe'. Manasseh Sogavare, 'Statement by the Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare On Switch to China', *SolomonTimes.com*, 20 September 2019. Graeme Dunk, 'The Great Game in the South Pacific', *The Strategist* (blog), 20 November 2019. Ben Packham, 'Key PNG Aid Program Wins Stay of Execution', *The Australian*, 13 June 2020. See also Zhang, 'Perceiving China's Influence in the Pacific'; Callick, 'The China Challenge', 28; Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 30–31; Grossman and Chase, 'What Does Beijing Want from the Pacific Islands?'; AFP, 'Solomons' Government Vetoes Chinese Attempt to Lease an Island', *The Guardian*, 25 October 2019; Jennings, 'New Cold War Traps Australia between Our Traditional Rock and Global Hard Case'; Natalie Whiting, 'Joint US-Australian Naval Base on Manus Island a "significant Pushback" against China's Pacific Ambitions', *ABC News*, 17 November 2018; Geoff Chambers, 'Push to Quicken South Pacific Deal', *The Australian*,14 February 2020; Searight, Harding, and Tran, 'Strengthening the U.S.-Pacific Islands Partnership', 19–20.

the 2019 Shangri-La Dialogue, these middle and smaller powers are "not entirely without agency"[159] in managing strategic competition, and many, such as Japan, South Korea, and India, continue bilateral and multilateral engagement efforts in pursuit of their own specific foreign policy goals.[160]

The same analysts who criticized U.S. and Australian efforts for their inability to produce a relative advantage also recommended improvements to them. These cover the full spectrum of potential corrections, from a strengthened Quad, revived and enlarged TPP and improved BUILD to better counter BRI, to a more aggressive posture and presence in the South China Sea, new Offices of Competition within government(s), and a return of the Active Measures Working Group created during the Cold War to counter Soviet covert efforts.[161] Almost all of these specify a central role for the respective DoDs of the two nations. But such approaches remain reactive to CCP efforts and perpetuate a tactical/operational focus and bias for action that continues to cede the initiative, resulting only in "a set of aspirations for which there is still no discernible overarching strategy."[162] Without first acknowledging the nature of strategic competition and

159   Lee Hsien Loong, 'PM Lee Hsien Loong at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue 2019' (Prime Minister's Office Singapore 7 June 2019). Huong Le Thu, 'An Ideal Indo-Pacific, Re-Interpreting History, and a Distinct Lack of Trust', *ASPI.org*, 6 June 2019. Thu noted that neither the U.S. nor Australia presented a clear strategy for the Indo-Pacific at the Shangri-La Dialogue, but that China did—one that was assertive and concerning to its neighbors. He noted that Shanahan in particular focused more on U.S. wants than anything else. "Despite attempts at ensuring his audience that the US had a strong vision and plan, Shanahan fell short in convincing them that it knew how to reach those goals."

160   Lee, 'The Endangered Asian Century', 61–63. Cho, 'Dueling Hegemony China's Belt and Road Initiative and America's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy'. Chand, Garcia, and Modlin, 'Southeast Asian Hedging and Indo-Japanese Strategies for Regional Balance: Managing China's Rise', 44–46. See also Gill, 'China and South Asia', 76; Michael Raksa, 'Strategic Competition and Future Conflicts in the Indo-Pacific Region', *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 84–88; Radu Magdin, 'A Model for Dealing with Great-Power Competition', *Asia Times*, 15 October 2019. Cho argues that Japan's willingness to lead the TPP was intended to demonstrate its foreign policy autonomy from the US.

161   Dr Maorong Jiang, 'A Flexible Framework to Achieve Strategic Objectives in US-China Policy', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, 139. Pacatte, 'Competing to Win'. Scott D. McDonald and Michael C. Burgoyne, 'Synthesis', in *China's Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations*, 254. Brown, 'Demystifying the Indo-Pacific Theater', 4. Stefan Halper, China: The Three Warfares (University of Cambridge 2013), 20. See also Gill, 'China and South Asia', 81–82; Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 70–71; Economy, 'China's New Revolution', 70–72; Nye, *The Future of Power*, 212; Gates, 'The Overmilitarization of American Foreign Policy', 129–32. Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 42–44; Deeks et al, 'Addressing Russian Influence'; Jennings, 'National Security Strategy Can Help Us Build Key Alliances to Counter China'; Dennis Shanahan, 'Abbott: Too Many Eggs in China Basket', *The Australian,* 18 November 2019. Arzan Tarapore, 'How India's Rise Can Complement U.S. Strategy', *Lawfare* (blog), 7 October 2018; Searight, Harding, and Tran, 'Strengthening the U.S.-Pacific Islands Partnership'. Pacatte specifically recommends, "The U.S. government needs to take the lead to develop and implement a formal integrated multilateral infrastructure development mechanism that can effectively compete with BRI to counter China's geopolitical gains... the Infrastructure Development Coalition (IDC)."

162   Poling, 'For Lack of a Strategy'.

recognizing its key terrain, these tweaks are no more able to produce a coherent strategy that seeks to win than those they criticize, only 'more of the same' actions that attempt to avoid losing. This leaves the U.S. and Australia with a piecemeal approach in which they are "confrontational without being competitive while Beijing is increasingly competitive without being confrontational."[163]

The U.S. and Australia must *Decide* to compete more effectively. They need to identify and exploit asymmetric opportunities in their strategic competition with the CCP, while seeking to dull the edge of its sharp power. Australia's recent success in gaining support for an independent, multi-national investigation into COVID-19 in the face of CCP resistance tarnished the global reputation of the Beijing Consensus. This was particularly helped by the CCP's coercive response, peevish concession and subsequent belligerent assertions that it had been supportive from the outset, all while threatening Australian exports and warning Chinese students to avoid Australia due to the high risk of racist attacks.[164] How the U.S. and Australia *Act* to deliberately and consistently achieve similar effects against the CCP through a compelling narrative, rather than unfounded accusations that undermine their own credibility, now becomes the key issue.[165]

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163   Cho, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific Region and US Interests', 57. See also Michael Green, 'The Chessboard Down Under: Talking the U.S.-Australia Alliance with Patrick Buchan', *The Asia Chessboard Podcast*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies 20 December 2019). This podcast contains the following exchange—Pat Buchan: "I don't think the United States has a China strategy. I think it's a very piecemeal approach." Michael Green: "You were in the Pentagon when the, wasn't that a China strategy?" Pat Buchan: "I think it was a China defense strategy." Michael Green: "But not a national strategy. With all instruments of power." Pat Buchan: "There is no national instruments of power China strategy. It is very piecemeal."

164   'Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on May 18, 2020'. 'GT Investigation: What's at Stake for Australia to Be US' Attack Dog?', *Global Times*, 15 May 2020. Packham, 'World Coalition Backs Australia'. Chambers, 'China's Latest Threat "Deeply Concerning"'. Greg Sheridan, 'China Relationship Headed for the Rocks', *The Australian,* 24 April 2020. See also Mistreanu, 'Beijing's Diplomacy Faces Blowback'; Oriel, 'The Truth Threatens China, so It's the Big Lie'.

165   'February 16, 2020: Senator Cotton Joins Sunday Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo', *Sunday Morning Futures* (Fox, 16 February), sec. 4:07 to 7:32. Donald Trump and Michael Pence, *Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force*, 17 April 2020. Donald Trump, *Remarks by President Trump on Protecting America's Seniors, Press Conference*, 30 April 2020. 'China's Coronavirus Response Was a "Classic Communist Disinformation Effort": Pompeo', *This Week* (ABC News, 4 May 2020), 4:05 to 5:20. See also Jack Brewster, 'A Timeline Of The COVID-19 Wuhan Lab Origin Theory', *Forbes*, 24 May 2020; Simon Benson, 'Astute PM Turns Light on a Shadowy Player', *The Australian*, 19 June 2020; Geoff Chambers, Simon Benson, and Joe Kelly, 'Beijing behind Full Cyber Attack on Australia', *The Australian*, 19 June 2020. There is a significant contrast in US allegations regarding COVID and Australia's response to a spate of recent state-based cyber-attacks. Brewster's Forbes article provides a timeline of the COVID theory's propagation. While raised by Senator Tom Cotton on, it only gained 'legitimacy' in terms of the U.S. as a nation when President Trump gave it credence during two press conferences, followed by Secretary Pompeo's assertion on 04 May that there was "enormous evidence" that COVID originated in a lab. The 17 April POTUS comment was as follows, "'Q: the investigation into whether the virus escaped from this lab in Wuhan, how active is that? And

when do expect to hear (inaudible)?' 'THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're looking at that. A lot of people are looking at it. It seems to make sense. They talk about a certain kind of bat, but that bat wasn't in that area. If you can believe this, that's what they're down to now, is bats. But that bat is not in that area. That bat wasn't sold at that wet zone. It wasn't sold there. That bat is 40 miles away. So a lot of strange things are happening, but there is a lot of investigation going on and we're going to find out.'" On 30 April, the following exchanges occurred (emphasis added):

"Q   Thank you, sir. On China: A moment ago, you said that China, it's possible they could have chosen not to stop the spread of the virus. Are you insinuating they intentionally let it spread to their (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they could have done it. And I'm just saying — well, one of two things happened: They either didn't do it and, you know, they couldn't do it from a competence standpoint, *or they let it spread. And I — you know, I would say probably it was — got — it got out of control*."

"Q   You said a moment ago you will soon have information on where this virus originated. The Director of National Intelligence today put out a statement saying that they believe it was naturally occurring, and it was not manmade, but —

THE PRESIDENT: Who was that? What was that that said that?

Q   The Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. But who — who, in particular? Who was the man that made that statement?

Q   It was a statement that the ODNI —

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, he would know that, huh? National Intelligence. Okay. So, we'll see.

Q   That would be your Director of National Intelligence, Rick Grenell, in —

THE PRESIDENT: No, I — No, I think — I think it's — I mean, you'd have to tell me who specifically, who made the statement.

Q   The statement was just put out under the office of the ODNI.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. We'll see. I mean, I have to see the statement and I just haven't seen it.

Q   But the question I had was, have you seen anything at this point —

THE PRESIDENT: Because we're looking at that, John, separately from — we're looking at exactly where it came from, who it came from, how it happened, separately and also scientifically. So we're going to be able to find out.

Q   And my question is, *have you seen anything at this point that gives you a high degree of confidence that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was the origin of this virus*?

THE PRESIDENT: *Yes, I have. Yes, I have.* And I think that the World Health Organization should be ashamed of themselves, because they're like the public relations agency for China. And this country pays them almost $500 million a year, and China pays them $38 million a year. And whether it's a lot or more, it doesn't matter. It's still — they shouldn't be making excuses when people make horrible mistakes, especially mistakes that are causing hundreds of thousands of people around the world to die. I think the World Health Organization should be ashamed of themselves."

"Q   I missed the — in the interruption, did you — are you suggesting that maybe you have some evidence that this was not a naturally occurring virus?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to see what it is. You're talking about the virus and where it came from?

Q   Correct. Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: No, we're going to see where it is. We're going to see where it comes from. And you know — look, you know every theory, whether you had the theory from the lab, you had the theory from many different — the bats, and the type of bat, and the bat is 40 miles away, so it couldn't have been here and it couldn't have been there. And we have a — there's a lot of theories. But, yeah, we have people looking at it very, very strongly.

Q   And what gives you —

THE PRESIDENT: You have scientific people, intelligence people, and others. And we're going to put it all together.

Q   And what gives you a —

THE PRESIDENT: And I think we're going to have a very good answer eventually.

Q   And what gives you a —

THE PRESIDENT: And China might — might even tell us. China may tell us.

Q   And *what gives you a high degree of confidence that this originated from the Wuhan Institute of Virology*?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you that. *I'm not allowed to tell you that*."

5. Act

> *Therefore, despite increasing complexity caused by the PRC's attempts to influence the global order, at the strategic-level, the task remains deceptively simple: 1. identify interests and build a strategy to achieve them, 2. find friends and partners who share those interests and are willing to cooperate, 3. find ways to accomplish those interests that are efficient, effective, and do not undermine one's values, and 4. be consistent and clear in advertising what you do and why you do it, while highlighting duplicitous words and deeds of those who threaten your interests.*[166]
>
> —Scott D. McDonald and Michael C. Burgoyne, 'Synthesis'

5.1 What is to be done?

Among the critiques of both U.S. and Australian approaches were several calls for "a synchronized and integrated whole-of-government [(WoG)] approach."[167] Yet only a few analysts considered these to be significant contributions through which the military could support seizure of OODA control by *On War's* 'political instruments' instead of a less sophisticated pursuit of deterrence through increased the regional presence and posture of their military capabilities and operations. U.S. Air Force strategist Christopher Forrest described the need for campaigns to identify current and emerging areas of competition, and to manage feedback and assessment efforts to track areas of advantage or disadvantage. Meanwhile, strategic analyst Alexander Vuving argued that the effects of messaging and action on key international audiences needed to be analyzed and coordinated in a process-oriented, rather than medium-oriented method.[168]

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166   McDonald and Burgoyne, 'Synthesis', 254.

167   Lt Col Christopher D Forrest, 'Refocusing US Capabilities to Compete in the Gray Zone', in *Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities*, 157.

168   Forrest, 158. Vuving, 'China's Strategic Messaging: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Respond to It', 164. See also Hicks et al., 'By Other Means Part I', vi; Mark Pomerleau, 'Congress Wants to up DoD's Game in the Information Environment', *C4ISRNET*, 10 December 2019; Lauren Elkins, 'The 6th Warfighting Domain', *OTH - Over the Horizon: Multi-Domain Operations and Strategy*, 5 November 2019.

These omissions from current strategies ironically not only represent the likely form of support to political instruments Clausewitz envisaged for the military in a contest of wills without violence, but also the most important and immediate contribution the U.S. and Australian militaries could make to multinational, multiagency strategies that seek to win without fighting. Better still, they also already exist.

5.1.1 Journeys need destinations

Author and motivational speaker Simon Sinek recommended that any major undertaking start with 'Why'; the clear articulation of the common goal toward which everyone will work.[169] Clausewitz argued that we needed to examine the political aims, strengths and situation, and character and abilities of our adversary and our allies, as well as, "the political sympathies of other states and the effect the war may have on them."[170] To achieve both of these, the U.S. and Australian militaries each employ their version of a joint planning process, such as that shown in Figure 17.
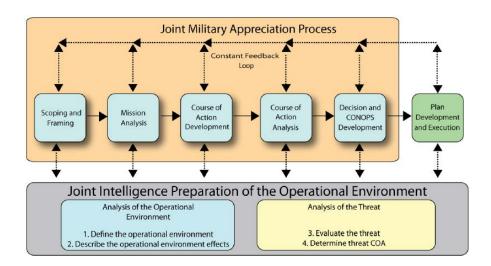
Figure 17: Example of a military planning process[171]

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169 Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* (New York: Portfolio, 2009).

170 Clausewitz, *On War*, 585–86.

171 Department of Defence, 3–15.

Intelligence staff generate assessments of the strategic environment and the relevant actors' strengths, weaknesses and intentions. From this, strategic development aims to produce a clear statement of a campaign's purpose, method and end-state in accordance with government policy.[172] The first step of this strategic development, its most 'supreme and far-reaching act of judgement' that then defines all actions that follow, is scoping and framing. This activity examines both the issue at hand and the environment in which it is occurring from a range of perspectives, from which staff derive the necessary depth of situational understanding required to face complex problems.[173] Only after this has occurred can they distil valid objectives and produce useful options for their achievement. Such options necessarily include clear, measurable milestones that indicate their progress or failure. These milestones often represent points within the plan where key decisions need to be made as it is executed, based on its progress or lack thereof. Articulation of an effective end-state is a product of framing; without it, success becomes more reliant on luck than planning. Although designed for military operations, the fundamentals of this process, particularly the crucial scoping and framing step, can be readily translated for use by any organization and purpose. This includes multinational, multiagency planning for strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific.

A key benefit of this process is that it tests key assumptions, first during framing of the problem and then while war-gaming options as they are developed and analyzed. This not only reveals flaws in the plans but also poor fidelity (or complete absence) of strategic guidance, highlighting the need for more concrete objectives, rather than abstract concepts, before a plan can be finalized, let alone executed. Notwithstanding policy-makers' tendency to prefer strategic ambiguity over such concrete detail, this lack of commitment is anathema to both workable strategies and winning in

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172 Department of Defence, *Joint Planning*, 3rd ed., Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 5.0 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018), 3–7.

173 Department of Defence, 2–5. Framing comprises two parts. "The environment frame contextualizes the operational environment by examining all the elements, conditions and circumstances that may influence the employment of capabilities and decisions of the commander... The problem frame aims to ensure that when facing an interactively complex, ill-structured problem, the right problem has been accurately identified. The problem frame is a refinement of the environment frame that defines the areas for action that will transform existing conditions toward a desired end state. Problem framing involves isolating and understanding the root causes of the entirety of a problem. The core of problem framing is an answer to the question, what is the problem we have been tasked to confront, and why has it arisen? The result is a definition of the problem, which generally takes the form of a declarative statement, and which effectively summarizes the breadth of analysis regarding the situation."

strategic competition. Adaptation and adoption of this process for multinational, multiagency planning for Indo-Pacific strategic competition would more effectively ensure policy-makers articulated goals that were specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound, rather than unquantifiable, unaccountable, visionary abstractions.

This planning process integrates neatly with the structural conception of strategic competition, providing several benefits. First, it helps avoid becoming trapped by the 'constant state' mentality that leads to approaches that former diplomat and Council on Foreign Relations Fellow Robert Blackwill saw as "ultimately doomed to fail."[174] It also enables cascading plans, from strategic to tactical, that align with the levels of competition, from strategic to discrete contests, causally linking them to policy end-states to create a congruent approach. Most importantly, it allows concurrent activities to be integrated in a mutually supporting manner. These include not only a wide range of competitive efforts, but also plans to cooperate with the CCP on global issues, or to concede to it on those it considers to be its core interests, in pursuit of larger, longer-term strategic outcomes. Multinational, multiagency adaptation and adoption of this robust, repeatable approach begins to satisfy Forrest and Vuving's process demands, as well as enabling concrete responses to Nye's essential requirements of what he called a 'smart strategy': What goals or outcomes are preferred? What resources are available and in which contexts? What are the positions and preferences of the targets of influence attempts? What is the intensity of their preferences and strategies, their likelihood of change, over what periods, and in which domains?[175]

5.1.2 Approaching the key terrain

Militaries around the world have lengthy histories of propaganda and psychological operations, but their degree of success in effective persuasion remains debated. Their range of doctrinal publications provide useful references for information operations practitioners, but leave two issues

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174   Blackwill, 'America Needs an "Engage and Contain" Strategy for China'.

175   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 208-209.

they cannot distil into process.[176] The first is soft power integration into government strategy within democracies. Nye noted that successful outcomes were heavily dependent on the target's choices and could take a long time, whereas politicians and their publics were "impatient to see a prompt return on their investments."[177] This places the U.S. and its four-yearly cycle, and Australia, with a federal election no more than three years apart, at a particular disadvantage when planning and executing long-term strategies compared to the open-ended tenures of the CCP and Xi Jinping. Vuving, however, identified a more fundamental concern. "The big losers in this battle are those people or institutions that are too big, too slow, or too hesitant to weave such stories. These are not the kinds of battles that a plodding, uninventive bureaucracy can win."[178] This pressure to produce and implement plans that deliver results within short election cycles, while facing risk-averse and inertia-prone Model II decision-making, explains the tendency for both the U.S. and Australia to default to 'more of the same' solutions that presume unchanged and unchanging needs and preferences among the region's actors, rather than committing to deliberate, informed and considered strategic development.

The business world provides relevant perspectives on this issue, given its need to maintain customer support to survive in aggressively competitive marketplaces. These not only reinforce the imperative for the U.S. and Australia to adapt their approach to Indo-Pacific strategic competition's key terrain, but offer guidance on how to do so. Foremost among these is the need to shift the nature of regional engagement from 'product-driven' to 'customer-cultivating'. The U.S. and Australia's primary goal should be to identify and satisfy each regional actors' needs, rather than offering them 'products' that they are perceived to need. This would require both the U.S. and Australia to accept that they may need to occasionally prioritize those actors' needs ahead of their own interests, treating such commitment as an investment in their customer base. This shift, from the transactional relationships that currently characterize not only U.S. and Australian

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176   U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment (JCOIE)*, 2018. U.S. Joint Staff, *Information Operations*, Change 1, Operations 3–13, 2014. Department of Defence, *Information Activities*, 3rd ed., Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.13 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

177   Nye, *The Future of Power*, 83.

178   Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 160–61.

strategies, but also those of the CCP, is the first step to establishing the enduring relationships on which 'customer lifetime value' is built and maintained.[179]

This approach requires policy-makers to think less like bureaucratic appa-ratchiks and more like strategic marketers, as successful strategies require narratives tailored to each actor with the aim of achieving 'resonating focus'. Pursuit of resonating focus is a rejection of the flawed assumption that 'more is better'. Instead the U.S. and Australia should seek to identify those few key issues that matter most to each regional actor, then offer options to satisfy those customer needs that are superior to, and thereby create distinct points of difference to and appeal from, the CCP alterna-tives.[180] Similar thinking on resonant focus had already crept into the information environment. International relations scholar and author Peter W. Singer noted in *LikeWar*, "[A] resonant narrative is one that fits neatly into our pre-existing story lines by allowing us to see ourselves clearly in solidarity with—or opposition to—its actors."[181]

Such a marketing approach aims to create niche brand positioning for the U.S. and Australia in the minds of Indo-Pacific actors, each of which was clearly differentiated from that of the CCP, and both more attractive than it. Gradual creation and curation of 'brand loyalty' over time would then provide the foundation for attaining voluntary OODA control through the third face of power. Managed well, brand loyalty creates its own basis for expansion—those actors pleased with their U.S. or Australian engage-ment would become advocates for the brand among their own networks, increasing the potential for the brand to indirectly build further loyalty.[182] Marketing psychology authors Dan and Chip Heath recommend that nar-ratives should reinforce how brands align to things that actors care about,

179   Roland T. Rust, Christine Moorman, and Gaurav Bhalla, 'Rethinking Marketing', *Harvard Business Review* 88, no. 1/2 (1 February 2010): 96. For more detail on industries unable to recognize shifts in their core customer base or adapt to their needs, see also Theodore Levitt, 'Marketing Myopia', in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Strategic Marketing*, HBR's 10 Must Reads Series (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013), 29–56; Clayton M. Christensen, Scott Cook, and Taddy Hall, 'Marketing Malpractice : The Cause and the Cure', in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Strategic Marketing*, 57–76.

180   James C. Anderson, James A. Narus, and Wouter van Rossum, 'Customer Value Propositions in Business Markets', *Harvard Business Review* 84, no. 3 (March 2006): 95–96. Kevin Lane Keller, 'The Brand Report Card', *Harvard Business Review* 78, no. 1 (1 February 2000): 150.

181   Singer and Brooking, *Likewar*, 159.

182   David C. Edelman, 'Branding in The Digital Age', *Harvard Business Review* 88, no. 12 (December 2010): 65.

appealing to identity rather than self-interest, "not only to the people they are right now, but to the people they would like to be."[183] Such narratives should ensure that regional actors' experience and perception of the U.S. or Australian brand was not only positive, but was reinforced through ongoing engagement to create a relationship no longer viewed as fleeting and transactional, but as an enduring commitment to the customer.[184]

5.1.3 Targeting the audience

RAND agreed with calls for a robust, repeatable process, demanding "an updated framework for organizing its thinking about the complex issues involved with manipulation of infospheres."[185] Such a framework would need to address two of RAND's key hypotheses; that strategic competition would be focused on non-military aspects, and that targeting other societies with such means might lead to poorly understood, escalatory risks.[186] The U.S. and Australian militaries already employed such a process—the joint targeting cycle (JTC) shown in Figure 18. This process, one already integrated into the aforementioned joint planning effort, was designed to: 1) identify those 'targets' that, appropriately affected, best deliver strategic, operational and tactical outcomes; 2) enable the planning, synchronization and execution of effects on those targets; then 3) assess the resultant effectiveness of those actions (Annex E contains an overview of each stage of the JTC). Although used mostly for kinetic operations over the last 20 years, the JTC was agency, method and target agnostic. It was designed to have equal utility against state and non-state actors, their leaders, militaries, facilities and populations, in both conflict and competition. And it had been successfully used for multinational, multiagency targeting in the past. To it, a target was just a target, including that of strategic competition's key terrain.[187]

183   Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2007), 203.

184   Edelman, 'Branding in The Digital Age', 68.

185   Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 225.

186   Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 35.

187   Department of Defence, *Targeting*, 3rd ed., Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.14 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018), 1–1, 1–8. "A target is an entity or object that can be subjected to an effect." Targeting doctrine does not limit these effects to negative outcomes for the target, nor does it constrain the term to only include adversaries. This doctrine also allows for competition's key terrain to be integrated, "Information activities aim to influence the decision-making
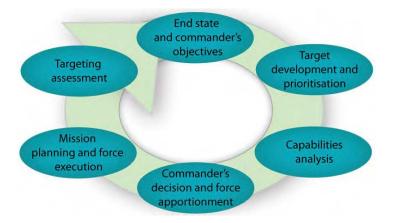
Figure 18: The joint targeting cycle[188]

Adoption of the JTC for multinational, multiagency sequencing, synchronization and deconfliction of effects does more than satisfy Forrest, Vuving and RAND's demands for a robust, repeatable process. Like the joint planning process, the JTC is intended to integrate and synchronize all deliberate efforts against a target, from competitive to cooperative, to ensure that these efforts are mutually supportive. Its use therefore enables both Lee's call for "a modus vivendi that will be competitive in some areas without allowing rivalry to poison cooperation in others,"[189] and the Asia Society US-China Task Force's recommendation to pursue 'smart competition'.[190] A second benefit of the JTC is its obligation to consider collateral effects—the unintended second and third order outcomes that RAND considered might become escalatory—before any action is approved for execution. Third, the JTC demands congruent traceability. Each targeting action must contribute to achievement of a measurable objective, which in turn must contribute to the strategic end-state. Finally, it requires assessment of every action to confirm its effectiveness. Did an action create the expected outcome? Did that outcome contribute to the end-state as expected? If it did not achieve the expected outcome, was this due to an execution error (in which case the effort could be reattempted to gain the desired outcome), or due to flawed causal logic between the action and

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and actions of a target audience and protect and enhance friendly decision-making and actions. Prioritization of information activities targets occurs as part of targeting, as does the coordination of tasking."

188 Department of Defence, 3–2.

189 Lee, 'The Endangered Asian Century', 52.

190 Campbell and Sullivan, 'Competition Without Catastrophe'. See also Shirk and Schell, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy', 8–9.

desired outcome (in which case a different approach was required)? Or were we unable to tell whether it was effective or not, having realized we were measuring the wrong thing?

5.1.4 **Who, what, where, when, and how?**

Essence of Decision demonstrated the impossibility of understanding target actors' OODA loops, much less predicting or controlling them, without detailed intelligence. The intelligence so critical for Cold War signaling became even more so for strategic competition and successful employment of the JTC; as Nye points out, when targeting public opinion and cultural attitudes, the target's thinking matters most.[191] Such contextual intelligence is essential to power's projection, as accurate assessments of power relationships inform where power should be focused, what forms of power behavior are most likely to succeed, and their respective probabilities of success. These factors then shape how nations develop their respective power resources and power conversion strategies.[192]

The scale and complexity of the modern world increases this demand for intelligence to inform where, when and how to inject narratives into target audiences to make them count. Failure to do so increases the potential for embarrassing missteps, such as television broadcasts irrelevant to their target audiences.[193] Harari detailed the significant volume of information that needed to be collected, processed and exploited to track the network dynamics between even a few dozen individuals, and its centrality to a target audience believing a narrative.[194] Allison noted the same requirement for Model III decision-making in Bosnia, where predicting the

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191 Nye, *The Future of Power*, 84.

192 Nye, 99–100, 208-212.

193 Dobell, 'South Pacific Thought Bubbles: Travel and TV'. Marshall Ganz, 'Why Stories Matter', *Sojourners Magazine* 38, no. 3 (2009): 16–17,19-21. See also Lyons, '"Neighbours Is Irrelevant to Most Islanders"'; Mahnken, Babbage, and Yoshihara, '*Countering Comprehensive Coercion*', 61. Dobell argues compellingly that Australia's 'Neighbours-driven effort' [an Australian commercial soap opera] as a significant misstep in comparison to New Zealand's new Pasifika TV service which seeks to fill the hole left by Australia's departure from providing news and journalism content in the Asia–Pacific. Instead of remediation of this shortcoming, he believes the Australian Government has adopted a "facile and clumsy initiative that doesn't amount to strategy" and that represents, "lousy policy and appalling judgement, hugely damaging to Australian foreign policy."

194 Harari, *Sapiens*, 21, 35. Harari notes that in a group of fifty individuals there are 1225 individual relationships, as well as a multitude of complex group and sub-group arrangements.

outcome of a multi-person decision-making process needed to fully grasp who participated in it, and in what roles.[195] Meanwhile, anti-propaganda activist Peter Pomerantsev saw identification of those narratives that would resonate with the target audience as essential to effective persuasion.[196] The business world agreed, recognizing that marketing research staff require time, effort, persistence and creativity to craft customer value propositions with resonating focus. This was particularly true of target audiences in which cultural aspects, such as race or gender, determined who wields real influence.[197]

U.S. and Australian approaches to target intelligence treat targets as either state or non-state targets. State targets are grouped into military categories such as air defense forces, power, lines of communication and the like, which are then analyzed as 'systems' to determine against which of their component parts action should be taken to achieve the desired disruptive or destructive effect. Analysis of non-state targets considers broader factors that recognize the resilient and complex nature of human-to-human relationships, shown in Figure 19. Reports from the Australian Signals Directorate show the importance of this type of understanding of target audiences, enabling its operators not only to infiltrate Islamic State but also to deceive its adherents.[198]

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195   Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 275.

196   Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda*, 43.

197   Michael J. Silverstein and Kate Sayre, 'The Female Economy', *Harvard Business Review* 87, no. 9 (September 2009): 53. Anderson, Narus, and van Rossum, 'Customer Value Propositions in Business Markets', 95–96.

198   Mike Burgess, 'Director-General ASD Speech to the Lowy Institute' (Lowy Institute, Sydney, 27 March 2019).

Leadership	Safe Havens	Finance	Communication	Movement	Intelligence	Weapons	Personnel	Ideology
Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel	Key Personnel
Structure/Organization/Role	Virtual Location	Criminal Activity	Function/Intent	Facilitation	Collect	R&D/Weaponization	Training	Indoctrination
Sources of Authority	Demographics/Cultural Conditions	Charitable Activity	Procedures/Tradecraft	Routes	Process/Analyze	Production	Use/Assignment	Legitimacy
Span/level Of Control	Political/Governance	Legal Enterprises	Medium/Tools	Purpose	Production/Dissemination	Distribution/Storage	Sustainment	Propaganda
Vision/Goals Objectives	Access to Resources	Financial Systems	Audience	Mode/Method	Security/Counter-Intelligence	Employment	Members/Supporters	Unifying Vision
Decision-Making Process	Terrain	Sponsorship			Plan/Direct	Weapons	Recruitment/Selection	
Personal Qualities	Physical Location					Procurement		

Figure 19: Non-state target analysis[199]

While this non-state approach clearly offers a useful basis for target audience analysis in strategic competition, it still requires adaptation to address two critical limitations. First, it still treats targets as *adversaries*, not as potential partners or customers. This lens through which analysis occurs constrains it utility to analyze target audiences for the purpose of attraction and persuasion, rather than destruction, deception or disruption. Second, it is premised on use in conflict rather that competition, in which the Law of Armed Conflict's (LOAC) principle of *distinction* generally precludes targeting civilians except in specific circumstances, such as when directly participating in hostilities. As a consequence, current intelligence capabilities and efforts are simply not configured to collect and process target audience data on the scale necessary to understand anything more than the key leadership dynamics that would be of concern in conflict. This creates a significant knowledge gap that must be addressed in order to inform any effective strategic development for Indo-Pacific strategic competition. RAND identified a similarly urgent need for further research into social manipulation's multitude of dynamics, noting that too many basic relationships are poorly understood.[200] Nye concurred, specifying the need for more research on the relationship between culture and power behavior, given culture's fluid and constantly evolving nature.[201]

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199 U.S. Joint Staff, *Target Development Standards*, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instructions (CJCSI), 3370.01B (Federation of American Scientists, 2016), C-A-3. This image sourced from open source edition at Federation of American Scientists.

200 Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation*, 228.

201 Nye, *The Future of Power*, 84.

Non-state target analysis has the potential to satisfy strategic competition's intelligence needs. But it requires appropriate adaptation and application to those actors with whom the U.S. and Australia seek to partner and persuade, rather than remain constrained only to those seen as adversaries to be disrupted or destroyed. Such adaptation should also consider the lessons of the business world, such as issues encountered with large-scale data management and AI usage to track customer preferences. Despite increasing faith in AI as an analytical panacea, it is no more likely to correct for fundamental policy errors in strategic competition than it could in the business world, which concluded that "no amount of technology can really improve the situation as long as companies are set up to market products rather than cultivate customers."[202]

5.2 But the simplest thing…

Despite this chapter's epigraph, *On War*'s observation that "everything is very simple… but the simplest thing is difficult,"[203] is more true of strategic competition than conflict. Employing military processes in strategic competition faces several interrelated challenges whose resolution is beyond the scope of this paper; each of which is likely to encounter inertia as a result of the first, overarching challenge. While the current shortcomings in the U.S. and Australian approaches to strategic competition appear to be significantly addressed by adaptation and adoption of a multinational, multiagency Model II process, both of these nations and their constituent agencies are Model III systems. So, despite increasing demand for a robust, repeatable process-oriented approach, the shape, form and function of those processes will still be, to borrow Allison's apt phrase, 'formed and deformed' by national and agency leaders and their staff. Each will inevitably inject their own agendas and biases into these processes, from the development of overarching strategic policy to the individual stages of the JTC itself, creating layers of friction that will slow, if not indefinitely stall or outright reject, implementation of such an approach.[204]

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202 Rust, Moorman, and Bhalla, 'Rethinking Marketing', 96.

203 Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

204 Hicks et al., 'By Other Means Part I', 30–31. This report notes the challenges within the U.S. system in particular. See also Melissa Dalton et al., 'By Other Means Part II: Campaigning in the Gray Zone',

The second challenge offers an example of this friction—prevailing attitudes towards the terms 'target' and 'targeting' outside conflict. Twenty years of kinetic operations against terrorist cells have entrenched the term's meaning in many policy and planning circles. Many now view the term as only applicable to actors and assets slated for destruction or disruption, reinforcing a misperception that the targeting process only has utility against adversaries, and only during conflict. This clashes with the term's long-standing use in power theory, particularly regarding the third face of power's aim to shape ideas and beliefs, and soft power's persuasion through attraction; both of which are central to success in strategic competition. It also conflicts with basic marketing principles that treat customers as target audiences whose attention must be captured, and their loyalty to the brand built and maintained. But of greatest significance, such attitudes demonstrate Vuving's concern that 'plodding, uninventive bureaucracies' may prove incapable of winning a battle of narratives due to their lack of inventiveness, imagination and adaptability. Policy-makers, planners and the intelligence communities in the U.S. and Australia must adapt the cultures and mindsets of their Model II bureaucracies to not only enable, but encourage, the essential creativity among their staff that allows them to identify opportunities to win in strategic competition, then build and deploy the necessary narratives to achieve it. Until this occurs, progress towards success in either nation will continue to be retarded.

The intelligence community faces a further, more confronting challenge. Beyond the need for quality intelligence emphasized by analysts and academics, targeting doctrine acknowledges that the characteristics of cognitive and functional targets "are often difficult to discern, because often they cannot be directly observed… Reaching plausible conclusions entails careful assessment of known facts and the use of deductive and inductive reasoning".[205] Developing valid target audience analyses to enable seizure and control of the human cognitive terrain is complex; doing it well is resource intensive in terms of time and personnel. Meanwhile, the

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CSIS International Security Program (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 13 August 2019).

205 Department of Defence, *Targeting Procedures*, 2nd ed., Australian Defence Force Procedures 3.14.2 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018), 1–2. "Cognitive characteristics describe how targets think, exercise decision–making and control functions, or otherwise process information. These characteristics can be critical to targeting a system, since nearly every system possesses some central controlling function, and neutralizing this may be crucial to bringing about desired changes in behavior. As with functional characteristics, these can be difficult to discern or deduce."

intended and collateral effects among target audiences are far less certain than those of the kinetic world with its precise aim points and detailed collateral damage data and estimation techniques for various weapon types. Capture of the key terrain among the multiple Indo-Pacific actors will therefore require significant resource commitment to intelligence, one that will force both the U.S. and Australia to confront difficult choices. It is far more difficult to articulate a compelling argument for the resourcing required to 'win without fighting' in the less tangible and unpredictable human cognitive terrain of strategic competition, than for resourcing the tangible capabilities of high-end stealth platforms, aircraft carriers and submarines, space capabilities and missiles. This situation is exacerbated by two additional factors. The first is that appropriately resourcing intelligence for strategic competition will come at an opportunity cost to resourcing those latter capabilities on whose lethality both the U.S. and Australia will rely to 'win before fighting' if strategic competition escalates into conflict. The second is that those latter capabilities also represent the traditional 'crown jewels' of the military services, ones whose funding they each historically fight to preserve.

Another challenge relates to the JTC as a process. Despite its robust mechanics, its effectiveness relies on the validity of two core assumptions. The first is the articulation of concrete end-states and objectives by policy-makers. The process exemplifies garbage in, garbage out; until policy ceases to treat constant competition as the norm and seeks to win it, the JTC can never be optimized to enable winning. The second assumption stems from the first—having identified the intent to win, policy-makers and their strategic planners need to identify those metrics against which their nation's definition of relative advantage, and therefore targeting's effectiveness, will be evaluated. If these are flawed, or in the case of constant competition, meaningless, immeasurable or irrelevant, the targeting process is likely to deliver the wrong outcomes in pursuit of the wrong metrics. This is more likely when sunk costs are high, encouraging deeper commitment to a failing course of action, as with body counts during the Vietnam War. Identifying the correct metrics relies on understanding the target audience's needs from the outset when seeking to attract and persuade. Those in the business world who successfully shifted from marketing products to cultivating customers were also most often those who

adopted metrics focused on establishing customer lifetime value rather than short-term gains.[206]

But the most daunting challenge facing the U.S. and Australia in strategic competition was their own values. Centuries of war led liberal democracies to arrive at a moral compromise that sanctioned the taking of human life and destruction of property in conflict but constrained by LOAC—*jus in bello*. To assure adherence to this, states professionalized their militaries and built ethical frameworks that both validated the military's actions in conflict and established a fiduciary relationship between the state and soldier that defined their obligations to each other. These were all fundamentally premised on liberal values. But there is no Law of Strategic Competition, nor is there an equivalent ethical framework that clearly details what is or is not acceptable in pursuit of victory short of armed conflict. Which of their values might the U.S. or Australia each be willing to compromise to ensure that they win against the CCP in strategic competition?

The CCP's use of sharp power to pursue a relative advantage, its manipulation of other actors without regard for their volunteerism, affords it a wider range of options to act than is available to either the U.S. or Australia. Adopting sharp power might allow them to better guarantee the current rules-based order's survival against perceived CCP efforts to achieve Indo-Pacific or global hegemony, but it also entails significant risks. The most obvious is that which the CCP has recently realized—sharp power's counterproductive potential when recognized for what it is. Nye long ago highlighted credibility's importance to soft power projection, stating that those governments who became perceived as manipulative or propagandist would have their credibility destroyed.[207] But more important than this perceived credibility is the trust and moral authority of perceived *integrity*. If either the U.S. or Australia became viewed to have compromised those values they insist others (particularly the CCP) observe, or if their efforts to gain influence became seen as foreign interference, the resultant evaporation of trust would prove almost impossible to regain. The great power status of the U.S. might afford it resilience to such consequences. But

206 Rust, Moorman, and Bhalla, 'Rethinking Marketing', 100–101.

207 Nye, *The Future of Power*, 83.

a middle power like Australia, one that aspires to be seen as a fair broker in its region, would suffer significantly, as shown by the ongoing tension between Australia and Timor Leste over Australian espionage efforts during oil and gas revenue negotiations.[208]

There is also the question of sharp power's legal threshold. With no Law of Strategic Competition and LOAC inapplicable, states' behavior is constrained by peacetime International Law, aspects of which remain 'unsettled' regarding strategic competition. Armed attack and unlawful interference in the sovereign affairs of one state by another are forbidden. But interpretations of the thresholds for these can be less precise than the clear constraints regarding military necessity, proportionality and distinction found in LOAC. In some respects, states can therefore choose whether to apply equivalent norms, or their own domestic laws, in competition. But they do so as a matter of policy, not through any obligation to comply with International Law. This can lead to a more permissive targeting environment when a state is satisfied that their efforts to seize and control the OODA loops of others is neither equivalent to an armed attack nor interferes with their sovereignty. Yet sharp power removes its target's volunteerism by definition, so the degree to which it actually allows sovereignty to be exercised free from interference remains questionable. This point was made by Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin during a 2018 conference on non-kinetic targeting when he noted that actions that were 'not illegal' should not be considered by default to be ethical.[209] Russia's 2016 efforts in the U.S. reveal some of the potential complexities and consequences. Its troll farm's alleged engineered clash of protestors at Charlottesville's Unite the Right' rally ultimately led to one death, multiple injuries, and property destruction.[210] While the actual intended effects may not have been equivalent to an armed attack and therefore could be argued not to have been illegal per se, their collateral outcomes should have been reasonably foreseeable and therefore the act itself considered unethical.

208 Jamie Smyth, '"Australia's Watergate" Set for Trial over East Timor Spying Claims', *Financial Times*, 31 October 2018.

209 Sir Richard Williams Foundation, 'The Imperative for an Independent Deterrent: A Joint Strike Seminar', 23 August 2018.

210 Michael Martelle, 'Exploring the Russian Social Media Campaign in Charlottesville', *National Security Archive*, 14 February 2019.

Such ethical questions can be particularly problematic. Thaler and Sunstein argue that framing choices in a way that nudges decision-makers to act 'in their best interests' is acceptable and ethical, but that transparency is critical in the way a choice architect shapes options to create that nudge.[211] They do not, however, specify 1) how transparent that nudge need be, 2) explain how a target's freedom to choose is retained when the options available to them are limited so that they make the 'right' decision rather than learning 'the hard way', or 3) explain what qualifies the nudger to determine what is 'in their best interests'.[212] Australia's Ethics Centre proposes six questions to help frame such ethical problems. However, their contextual and subjective nature renders them similarly unhelpful in a true ethical dilemma, such as choosing between the risk to national integrity and the global order, or potential CCP hegemony.

1. Would I be happy for this decision to be headlining the news tomorrow?

2. Is there a universal rule here?

3. Will the proposed course of action bring about a good result?

4. What would happen if everybody did this?

5. What will this proposed action do to my character or the character of my organization?

6. Is the proposed course of action consistent with my values and principles?[213]

These issues are not purely philosophical concerns, but have real implications for the professionals the U.S. and Australia would task to plan and execute sharp power's use. The ethical frameworks for conflict in both nations detail the government's obligations as a client to their professional militaries. The most fundamental of these was to "provide sufficient

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211 Thaler and Sunstein, *Nudge*, 3–11, 26, 54-58. They note that: "A choice architect has the responsibility for organizing the context in which people make decisions." Also, "A nudge, as we will use the term, is any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behavior in a predictable way without forbidding options or significantly changing their economic incentives."

212 Thaler and Sunstein, 240, 255.

213 Jo Brick, 'The Military Profession: Law, Ethics and the Profession of Arms', in *Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics*, ed. Nathan K. Finney and Tyrell O. Mayfield (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018), 29.

political guidance to direct and constrain the disciplined application of violence for a political end."[214] Notwithstanding the lack of an equivalent framework for strategic competition, there remains an implied fiduciary relationship between those governments as clients and the professionals from that agencies they task to employ sharp power on their behalf, one that implies similar obligations. In addition to the political guidance to direct and constrain the forms of power used in strategic competition, the client would need to provide "clear and consistent articulation of the core values it expected the profession to maintain."[215] This is the basis for the trust needed in a robust fiduciary relationship, but, as with conflict, this obligation also entails appropriate training and preparation of these professionals with regard to ethical and legal constraints and the provision of legal protections for those activities directed by the client where collateral effects such as Charlottesville are realized. This ensures 1) the buck stops with the policy-makers who sanction sharp power's use, not the individual operators that execute it and who would, as in conflict, still face the question, "Can I live with myself if I do this?"[216] and 2) that society's trust in those professionals and their institutions is not compromised by their execution of government direction, given the direct correlation between social perceptions of integrity, trust and professional effectiveness.[217]

The U.S. and Australian perceptions of the CCP's intent to establish a regional, and potentially global, hegemony conflicts with their respective visions of a free and open, rules-based Indo-Pacific. If they intend to prevent this, they will need to *Act* to gain and maintain a relative advantage over the CCP in strategic competition. Processes that are robust, repeatable and more importantly, resourced, can enable integrated, synchronized, and mutually supporting efforts against target audiences, to deliver the right effects that achieve the right outcomes to contribute to this end-state. However, this is only possible if policy-makers clearly articulate such

214   Rebecca Johnson, 'Ethical Requirements of the Profession: Obligations of the Profession, the Professional and the Client', in *Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics*, 95.

215   Johnson, 97.

216   Brick, 'The Military Profession: Law, Ethics and the Profession of Arms', 29.

217   Pauline Shanks-Kaurin, 'Questioning Military Professionalism', in *Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics*, 15. See also Martin E. Dempsey, 'Foreword', in *Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics*, ix. Nathan K. Finney and Tyrell O. Mayfield, 'Introduction', in *Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics*, 2. Simon Longstaff, 'Ethical Infrastructure and the Inversion of Soft Power', *The Strategist* (blog), 30 July 2019.

end-states and, more importantly, what they are willing to do in order to win. This presents hard choices for the U.S. and Australia in terms of cultural inertia, resource commitment and each nation's core values. If forced to choose between the reputational, legal and ethical risks of using sharp power, or the perceived risk of the CCP's inevitable achievement of regional, and possibly global hegemony, what compromises might they make? As the late Prussian would wryly note, this is why, "it takes more strength of will to make an important decision in strategy than in tactics."[218]

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218 Clausewitz, *On War*, 178.

6. Conclusion

Strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific is complex. Attempts to simplify it created and embedded among many a misperception that it is a constant situation for which there is no defined end-state, rather than helping illuminate how to achieve victory within it. This paper builds on RAND's definition through its structural representation of strategic competition and explanation of what winning means. While this recalibration of the concept enables a deeper understanding of strategic competition, this is only the first step to success.

The same can be said for this paper's identification of actors' OODA loops as the key terrain for contests, competitions and strategic competition. This conclusion only enables policy-makers and planners to begin to think about optimal approaches to strategic competition. They must then identify the full range of actors who might influence the outcome of Indo-Pacific strategic competition and articulate how the U.S. and Australia each prefer them to *Act*, whether in support of their respective interests or to deny the CCP their own. They must recognize for each of those actors who *Decides* how they act given the cultural, social and political factors that *Orient* their preferences and prioritization of issues that matter to them, and how they formulate their options to act. And they must accurately determine on what information this is based and how it is *Observed* and communicated to the decision-maker. Only once this has occurred can policy-makers and planners produce coherent strategies in which actions and objectives at the tactical level contribute to a strategic end-state, rather than executing piecemeal actions that appear little more than reactive efforts to 'do something'.

The U.S. and Australia also each face significant choices, choices that cannot be deferred and whose course may not be easily altered once begun. First is to recognize strategic competition for what it is, rather than seek to make it something it is not. To do otherwise will see policies and plans continue to be developed and implemented that are incongruous with success. A second choice is to alter their current approaches to the many actors involved. They need to shift away from a product-based approach that promotes what they assume to be beneficial to other actors' interests

as the basis for partnership. Instead, they should each acknowledge those actors' agency, then focus on their preferences and agendas as the foundation for resonant narratives that build loyalty to the U.S. or Australian brands. This leads to the third choice—whether to adapt and adopt extant military targeting and target intelligence processes to synchronize and integrate multinational, multiagency approaches to support this effort. To do so offers the best opportunity for success, but entails significant investment choices given the resources required for intelligence efforts to enable this to succeed. This choice is likely to come at the opportunity cost of the major military capabilities required if strategic competition escalates, and therefore requires careful, objective consideration rather than sentimental attachment to 'crown jewels'. The final choice pertains to the legal and ethical implications of ensuring victory in strategic competition, one regarding the use of power in a way that may remove other actors' volunteerism, manipulate them to support our preferences and cross the line from soft to sharp. Not only will this have potential consequences to the social and professional relationships within the liberal democracies of the U.S. and Australia themselves, but if discovered could irrecoverably undermine the reputations and integrity of each nation. On the other hand, choosing not to use sharp power may cede to the CCP a degree of hegemony in which both U.S. and Australian integrity would have little relevance and less value. Which risk poses the greater concern is an essential, and potentially existential, question.

In considering these choices, the U.S. and Australia need to consider the organizations leading each of their competitive efforts. Are their cultures creative and adaptive enough to achieve success? Or are they Vuving's clumsy, lumbering bureaucracies, steaming towards an iceberg as their staffers shuffle the deckchairs of FONOPS, foreign base access and conditional investment rather than choosing a new course? If, as Mazarr asserts, Indo-Pacific strategic competition is ultimately about norms, narratives, and legitimacy, are these organizations embracing that reality, or still trying to make it fit their existing methods and models? [219]

On 9 January, 49 B.C., Julius Caesar stood on the Rubicon's banks. The choice he made and his actions the following day altered the course of

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219   Mazarr, 'US/China Competition', 131.

history. His victory was not assured, but he could be certain that his decision would prompt civil war. If the U.S. and Australia are each genuinely convinced the CCP seeks regional, and possibly global, hegemony, and are equally committed to prevent this outcome by winning strategic competition, then they must also confront choices that will prove equally significant, albeit with potential consequences that are far less clear.

Annexes

Annex A. Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere[220]

A Notice from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's General Office

Provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Party committee, Central ministries and state organs, Party ministries, People's Liberation Army headquarters, major Party committees, and Party leadership groups of civilian organizations: This notice "A Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere" has been approved by the central leadership, and is herewith distributed to you. Please thoroughly implement its suggestions.

April 22, 2013
(This document has been sent to local divisional levels)

Introduction

Since the Party's Eighteenth National Congress, under General Secretary Xi Jinping's strong central leadership, the nation triumphantly convened the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Party's and nation's various undertakings have made a good start, and the general mood of the Party and Government has been constantly improving. Cohesion among our nation's people has become stronger and our confidence in our path, our theory, and our system has become more resolute. Mainstream ideology is becoming healthier and more vigorous. The spirit of the Party's Eighteenth National Congress and General Secretary Xi Jinping's series of important speeches have unified the thought of the entire Party, the entire country, and the entire people

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220 'Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation', ChinaFile, 8 November 2013.

enormously. The ideological foundation of our united struggle is unceasingly solidifying.

The new session of the central leadership group has: put forth a series of new principles for conduct in political administration, furnished an interpretation of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, improved our work-style, maintained close ties with the masses, rigorously enforced diligence and thrift, opposed extravagance and waste, increased vigor in the fight against corruption, and won the widespread endorsement of cadres and the masses. We persist in upholding scientific development as the main theme, accelerating economic transformation as the main thread, and increasing the quality and efficiency of the economy as the core. The outlook for our nation's economic development continues to be favorable, and the people's faith in China's economic prospects has risen. In an effort to improve the people's livelihood, we are putting forth new measures to benefit the people so they may look forward to a better future: disseminating thought on the cultural front as the most important political task; studying, implementing, and advancing the spirit of the Eighteenth Party Congress; rapidly arousing mass fervor, proclaiming that socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Chinese dream are the main theme of our age; expanding and strengthening positive propaganda; strengthening guidance on deep-seated problems; strengthening the management of ideological fronts; promoting unification of thought; concentrating our strength and implementing the development of a positive atmosphere and providing spiritual strength to the party and nation.

Noteworthy Problems Related to the Current State of the Ideological Sphere

While fully approving of the ideological mainstream, we must also clearly see the ideological situation as a complicated, intense struggle. Currently, the following false ideological trends, positions, and activities all deserve note:

1. Promoting Western Constitutional Democracy: An attempt to undermine the current leadership and the socialism with Chinese characteristics system of governance.

Western Constitutional Democracy has distinct political properties and aims. Among these are the separation of powers, the multi-party system, general elections, independent judiciaries, nationalized armies, and other characteristics. These are the capitalist class' concepts of a nation, political model, and system design. The concept of constitutional democracy originated a long time ago, and recently the idea has been hyped ever more frequently.

This is mainly expressed the following ways: In commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the enactment of the [Chinese] Constitution, [some people] hold up the banners of "defending the constitution" and "rule of law." They attack the Party's leaders for placing themselves above the constitution, saying China "has a constitution but no constitutional government." Some people still use the phrase "constitutional dream" to distort the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, saying things like "constitutional democracy is the only way out" and "China should catch up with the rest of the world's trend toward constitutional governance." The point of publicly proclaiming Western constitutional democracy's key points is to oppose the party's leadership and implementation of its constitution and laws. Their goal is to use Western constitutional democracy to undermine the Party's leadership, abolish the People's Democracy, negate our country's constitution as well as our established system and principles, and bring about a change of allegiance by bringing Western political systems to China.

2. Promoting "universal values" in an attempt to weaken the theoretical foundations of the Party's leadership.

The goal of espousing "universal values" is to claim that the West's value system defies time and space, transcends nation and class, and applies to all humanity.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways: [The people who espouse universal values] believe Western freedom, democracy, and human rights are universal and eternal. This is evident in their distortion of the Party's own promotion of democracy, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, and other such values; their claim that the CCP's acceptance of universal values is a victory for universal values," that "the West's values are the prevailing norm for all human civilization," that "only when China accepts Western values will it have a future," and that "Reform and Opening is just a process of gradually accepting universal rights."

Given Western nations' long-term dominance in the realms of economics, military affairs, science, and technology, these arguments can be confusing and deceptive. The goal [of such slogans] is to obscure the essential differences between the West's value system and the value system we advocate, ultimately using the West's value systems to supplant the core values of Socialism.

3. Promoting civil society in an attempt to dismantle the ruling party's social foundation.

Civil society is a socio-political theory that originated in the West. It holds that in the social sphere, individual rights are paramount and ought to be immune to obstruction by the state. For the past few years, the idea of civil society has been adopted by Western anti-China forces and used as a political tool. Additionally, some people with ulterior motives within China have begun to promote these ideas.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Promoting civil society and Western-style theories of governance, they claim that building a civil society in China is a precondition for the protection of individual rights and forms the basis for the realization of constitutional democracy. Viewing civil society as a magic bullet for advancing social management at the local level, they have launched all kinds of so-called citizen's movements.

Advocates of civil society want to squeeze the Party out of leadership of the masses at the local level, even setting the Party against the masses, to the point that their advocacy is becoming a serious form of political opposition.

4. Promoting Neoliberalism, attempting to change China's Basic Economic System.

Neoliberalism advocates unrestrained economic liberalization, complete privatization, and total marketization and it opposes any kind of interference or regulation by the state. Western countries, led by the United States, carry out their Neoliberal agendas under the guise of "globalization," visiting catastrophic consequences upon Latin America, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe, and have also dragged themselves into the international financial crisis from they have yet to recover.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

[Neoliberalism's advocates] actively promote the "market omnipotence theory." They claim our country's macroeconomic control is strangling the market's efficiency and vitality and they oppose public ownership, arguing that China's state-owned enterprises are "national monopolies," inefficient, and disruptive of the market economy, and should undergo "comprehensive privatization." These arguments aim to change our country's basic economic infrastructure and weaken the government's control of the national economy.

5. Promoting the West's idea of journalism, challenging China's principle that the media and publishing system should be subject to Party discipline.

Some people, under the pretext of espousing "freedom of the press," promote the West's idea of journalism and undermine our country's principle that the media should be infused with the spirit of the Party.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Defining the media as "society's public instrument" and as the "Fourth Estate;" attacking the Marxist view of news and promote the "free flow of information on the Internet;" slandering our country's efforts to improve Internet management by calling them a crackdown on the Internet; claiming that the media is not governed by the rule of law but by the arbitrary will of the leadership; and calling for China to promulgate a Media Law based on Western principles. [Some people] also claim that China restricts freedom of the press and bang on about abolishing propaganda departments. The ultimate goal of advocating the West's view of the media is to hawk the principle of abstract and absolute freedom of press, oppose the Party's leadership in the media, and gouge an opening through which to infiltrate our ideology.

6.   Promoting historical nihilism, trying to undermine the history of the CCP and of New China.

The goal of historical nihilism, in the guise of "reassessing history," is to distort Party history and the history of New China.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Rejecting the revolution; claiming that the revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party resulted only in destruction; denying the historical inevitability in China's choice of the Socialist road, calling it the wrong path, and the Party's and new China's history a "continuous series of mistakes"; rejecting the accepted conclusions on historical events and figures, disparaging our Revolutionary precursors, and vilifying the Party's leaders. Recently, some people took advantage of Comrade Mao Zedong's 120th birthday in order to deny the scientific and guiding value of Mao Zedong thought. Some people try to cleave apart the period that preceded Reform and Opening from the period that followed, or even to set these two periods in opposition to one another. By rejecting CCP history and the history of New China, historical nihilism seeks to fundamentally undermine the

CCP's historical purpose, which is tantamount to denying the legitimacy of the CCP's long-term political dominance.

7.   Questioning Reform and Opening and the socialist nature of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

For the past several years, the discussion of reform has been unceasing, with all kinds of voices joining one after another. Some views clearly deviate from socialism with Chinese characteristics.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Some blame the contradictions and problems of development on Reform and Opening. They say "Reform and opening up has gone too far" and that "we have deviated from our Socialist orientation." They question whether or not what China is doing now still truly is Socialism, or they just call it "Capitalist Socialism," "State Capitalism," or "New Bureaucratic Capitalism." Others say "reform is still distant and hasn't be realized" or that "reform of the political system lags behind and obstructs reform of the economy." They bang on about how we should use Western standards to achieve so-called "thorough reform." Essentially, they oppose the general and specific policies emanating from the road taken at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Congress and they oppose socialism with Chinese characteristics.

These mistaken views and ideas exist in great numbers in overseas media and reactionary publications. They penetrate China through the Internet and underground channels and they are disseminated on domestic Internet forums, blogs, and microblogs. They also appear in public lectures, seminars, university classrooms, class discussion forums, civilian study groups, and individual publications. If we allow any of these ideas to spread, they will disturb people's existing consensus on important issues like which flag to raise, which road to take, which goals to pursue, etc., and this will disrupt our nation's stable progress on reform and development.

Western anti-China forces and internal "dissidents" are still actively trying to infiltrate China's ideological sphere and challenge our mainstream ideology. Some of their latest major efforts include: Some people have disseminated open letters and declarations and have organized petition-signings to vocalize requests for political reforms, improvement of human rights, release of "political prisoners," "reversing the verdict on '6/4'[the Tiananmen Massacre]," and other such political demands; they have made a fuss over asset disclosure by officials, fighting corruption with the Internet, media supervision of government, and other sensitive hot-button issues, all of which stoke dissatisfaction with the Party and government. Western embassies, consulates, media operations, and NGOs operating inside China under various covers are spreading Western ideas and values and are cultivating so-called "anti-government forces." Cooking up anti-government publications overseas. Within China's borders, some private organizations are creating reactionary underground publications, and still others are filming documentaries on sensitive subject matter, disseminating political rumors, and defaming the party and the national leadership. Those manipulating and hyping the Tibetan self-immolations, manufacturing the violent terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, and using the ethnic and religious issues to divide and break up [the nation]. Accelerating infiltration of the Internet and illegal gatherings within our borders. "Dissidents" and people identified with "rights protection" are active. Some of them are working together with Western anti-China forces, echoing each other and relying on each other's support. This clearly indicates that the contest between infiltration and anti-infiltration efforts in the ideological sphere is as severe as ever, and so long as we persist in CCP leadership and socialism with Chinese characteristics, the position of Western anti-China forces to pressure for urgent reform won't change, and they'll continue to point the spearhead of Westernizing, splitting, and "Color Revolutions" at China. In the face of these threats, we must not let down our guard or decrease our vigilance.

Pay Close Attention to Work in the Ideological Sphere

Historical experience has proven that failures in the economic sphere can result in major disorder, and failure in the ideological sphere can result in major disorders as well. Confronting the very real threat of Western anti-China forces and their attempt at carrying out Westernization, splitting, and "Color Revolutions," and facing the severe challenge of today's ideological sphere, all levels of Party and Government, especially key leaders, must pay close attention to their work in the ideological sphere and firmly seize their leadership authority and dominance.

1.   Strengthen leadership in the ideological sphere.

Party members and governments of all levels must become fully aware that struggles in the ideological sphere are perpetual, complex, and excruciating; you must strengthen awareness of the current political situation, big picture, responsibility, and risks. Leaders at all levels of government, you must strengthen your sense of responsibility—make work in the ideological sphere a high priority in your daily agenda, routinely analyze and study new developments in the ideological sphere, react swiftly and effectively, and preemptively resolve all problems in the ideological sphere.

2.   Guide our party member and leaders to distinguish between true and false theories.

Forcefully resist influential and harmful false tides of thoughts, help people distinguish between truth and falsehood, and solidify their understanding. Party members, especially high-level leaders, must become adept at tackling problems from political, big-picture, strategic, and theoretical perspective. They must clearly recognize the essence of false ideas and viewpoints, both their theoretical falsehood and the practical political harm they can cause. We must have a firm approach and clear-cut stance toward major political principles, issues of right and wrong, what to support and what to oppose. We must uphold strict and clear discipline,

maintaining a high-level unity with the Party Central Committee under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping in thought, political stance, and action. We must not permit the dissemination of opinions that oppose the Party's theory or political line, the publication of views contrary to decisions that represent the central leadership's views, or the spread of political rumors that defame the image of the Party or the nation.

3. Unwavering adherence to the principle of the Party's control of media.

The [principle of the Party's control of media] stems from our political system and the nature of our media. We must maintain the correct political direction. We must firmly hold fast to the principle of the media's Party spirit and social responsibility, and that in political matters it must be of one heart and mind with the Party. We must persist in correct guidance of public opinion, insisting that the correct political orientation suffuse every domain and process in political engagement, form, substance, and technology. We must give high priority to building both the leadership and rank and file in the sphere of media work. We need to strengthen education on the Marxist perspective of media to ensure that the media leadership is always firmly controlled by someone who maintains an identical ideology with the Party's Central Committee, under General Secretary Xi Jinping's leadership.

4. Conscientiously strengthen management of the ideological battlefield.

When facing sensitive events and complex puzzles in the ideological sphere, we should implement the principle that the people in charge assume responsibility and use territorial management.

We must reinforce our management of all types and levels of propaganda on the cultural front, perfect and carry out related administrative systems, and allow absolutely no opportunity or outlets for incorrect thinking or viewpoints to spread. Conscientiously implement the "Decision of the

Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Strengthening Information Protection on Networks," strengthen guidance of public opinion on the Internet, purify the environment of public opinion on the Internet. Improve and innovate our management strategies and methods to achieve our goals in a legal, scientific, and effective way.

Annex B. South China Sea 'Facts on the Ground'

Overview
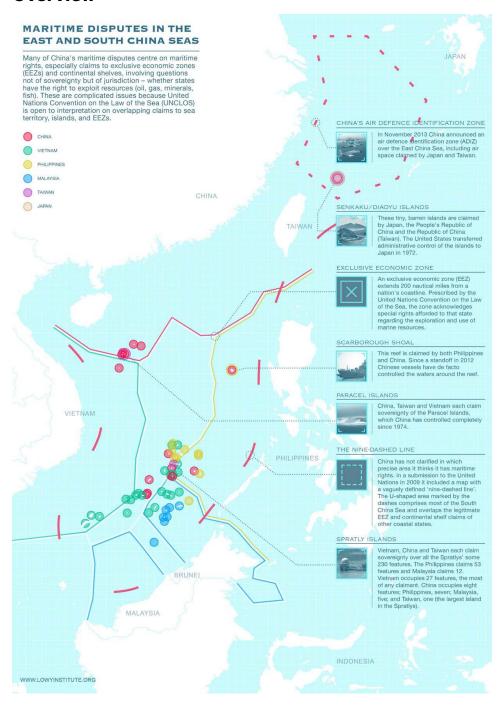
Figure B-1—Maritime disputes in the SCS and ECS[221]

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221 'South China Sea | Lowy Institute', accessed 2 April 2020.

Spratly Islands

Cuarteron Reef[222]

Legal status: Rock. Claimed by China (Huayang Jiao, 华阳礁), Philippines (Calderon Reef), Taiwan (Huayang Reef, 華陽礁), Malaysia (Terumbu Calderon) and Vietnam (Bãi Châu Viên)
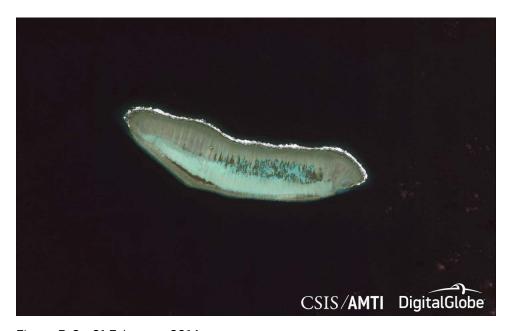
Figure B-2—21 February, 2014

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222 'Cuarteron Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (Center for Strategic and International Studies accessed 2 April 2020).

Figure B-3—29 July, 2016

Figure B-4—12 October, 2017

Fiery Cross Reef[223]

Legal status: Rock. Claimed by China (Yongshu Jiao, 永暑礁), Philippines (Kagitingan Reef), Taiwan (Yongshu Reef, 永暑礁) and Vietnam (Đá Chữ Thập).

In early 2019 the PLA-N opened a maritime rescue center on Fiery Cross Reef. Not only did this reinforce the CCP's territorial claim, but this move apparently was endorsed by President Duterte of the Philippines, while the Philippines Government protested it, widening the divide between the executive and legislative in the Philippines.[224]

Figure B-5—14 August, 2014

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223 'Fiery Cross Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

224 Nathan Swire, 'Water Wars: Search and Rescue', Lawfare (blog), 2 April 2019.

Figure B-6—02 March, 2016

Figure B-7—01 January, 2018

Gaven Reefs[225]

Legal status: Rock. Claimed by China (Nanxun Jiao, 南薰礁), Philippines (Burgos Reefs), Taiwan (Nanxun Reef, 南薰礁) and Vietnam: (Đá Ga Ven)

Figure B-8—01 September, 2007

Figure B-9—24 July, 2016

225 'Gaven Reefs', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020

Figure B-10—27 September, 2017

Hughes Reef[226]

Legal status: Low-tide elevation. Claimed by China (Dongmen Jiao, 东门礁), Philippines (McKennan Reef), Taiwan (Dongmen Reef, 東門礁) and Vietnam (Đá Tư Nghĩa)

Figure B-11—12 March, 2008

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226 'Hughes Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

Figure B-12—21 July, 2016

Figure B-13—01 January, 2018

Johnson Reef[227]

Legal status: Rock. Claimed by China (Chiguo Jiao, 赤瓜礁), Taiwan
(Chiguo Reef, 赤瓜礁), Malaysia (Mabini Reef) and Vietnam (Đá Gạc Ma)

Figure B-14—18 January, 2012

Figure B-15—03 July, 2016

227 'Johnson Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

Figure B-15—05 July, 2017

Mischief Reef[228]

Legal status: Low-tide elevation. Claimed by China (Meiji Jiao, 美济礁), Philippines (Panganiban Reef), Taiwan (Meiji Reef, 美濟礁) and Vietnam (Đá Vành Khăn)

Figure B-16—24 January, 2012

Figure B-17—22 July, 2016

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228 'Mischief Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

Figure B-18—31 October, 2017

Subi Reef[229]

Legal status: Low-tide elevation. Claimed by China (Zhubi Jiao, 渚碧礁),
Philippines (Zamora Reef), Taiwan (Zhubi Reef, 渚碧礁) and Vietnam (Đá Su Bi)

Figure B-19—08 January, 2014

Figure B-20—01 May, 2016

229 'Subi Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

Figure B-21—19 June, 2018

Paracel Islands

Antelope Reef[230]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Lingyang Jiao, 羚羊礁), Taiwan (Lingyang Reef, 羚羊礁) and Vietnam (Đá Hải Sâm)

Figure B-22—27 December, 2013

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230 'Antelope Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

Figure B-23—04 May, 2016

Figure B-24– 10 December, 2017

Bombay Reef[231]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Langhua Jiao, 浪花礁), Taiwan (Pengbo Reef, 蓬勃礁) and Vietnam (Đá Bông Bay)

Figure B-25—02 March, 2015

Figure B-26—11 September, 2017

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231 'Bombay Reef', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Drummond Island[232]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Jinqing Dao, 晋卿岛), Taiwan (Jinqing Island, 晉卿島) and Vietnam (Đảo Duy Mộng)

Figure B-27– 25 February, 2014

Figure B-28—07 August, 2016

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232 'Drummond Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 2 April 2020.

Figure B-29—26 December, 2017

Duncan & Palm Island[233]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Chenhang Dao, 琛航岛),
Taiwan (Chenhang Island, 琛航島) and Vietnam (Đảo Quang Hòa)

Figure B-30—27 November, 2013

233 'Duncan Islands', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-31—07 Aug, 2016

Figure B-32—22 October, 2017

Lincoln Island[234]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Dong Dao, 东岛), Taiwan (Hewu Island, 和五島) and Vietnam (Đảo Linh Côn)

Figure B-33– 14 December, 2012

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234 'Lincoln Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-34—08 May, 2016

Figure B-35—23 November, 2016

North Island[235]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Bei Dao, 北岛), Taiwan (Bei Island, 北島) and Vietnam (Đảo Bắc)

235 'North Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-36—14 December, 2012

Figure B-37—15 Jun, 2016

Figure B-38—26 December, 2017

Observation Bank[236]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Yin Yu, 银屿), Taiwan (Senping Tan, 森屏滩) and Vietnam (Bãi Xà Cừ)

Figure B-39—01 February, 2014

Figure B-40—04 May, 2016

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236 'Observation Bank', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-41—27 April, 2017

Pattle Island[237]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Shanhu Dao, 珊瑚岛),
Taiwan (Shanhu Island, 珊瑚島) and Vietnam (Đảo Hoàng Sa)

Figure B-42—01 February, 2014

237 'Pattle Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-43—10 December, 2017

Quanfu Island[238]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Quanfu Dao, 全富岛),
Taiwan (Quanfu Island, 全富島) and Vietnam (Đảo Ốc Hoa)

Figure B-44—01 February, 2014

238 'Quanfu Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-45—27 April, 2017
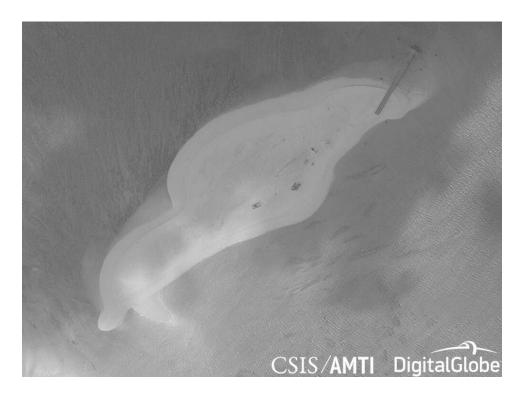
Figure B-46—29 October, 2017

Tree Island[239]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Zhaoshu Dao, 赵述岛),
Taiwan (Zhaoshu Island, 趙述島) and Vietnam (Đảo Cây)

Figure B-47—14 December, 2012

Figure B-48—28 June, 2016

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239 'Tree Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-49—26 December, 2017

Triton Island[240]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Zhongjian Dao, 中建岛), Taiwan (Zhongjian Island, 中建島) and Vietnam (Đảo Tri Tôn)

Figure B-50—21 January, 2015

240 'Triton Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-51—18 November, 2016

Figure B-52—27 October, 2017

West Sand[241]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Xi Shazhou, 西沙洲), Taiwan (Xi Sand Bar, 西沙洲) and Vietnam (Cồn Cát Tây)

Figure B-53—14 December, 2012

Figure B-54—26 December, 2017

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241   'West Sand', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Woody Island[242]

Legal status: Rock/Island. Claimed by China (Yongxing Dao, 永兴岛),
Taiwan (Yongxing Island, 永興島) and Vietnam (Đảo Phú Lâm)

Figure B-55—14 December, 2012

Figure B-56—15 June, 2016

242 'Woody Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.

Figure B-57—25 January, 2018

Yagong Island[243]

Legal status: Rick/Island. Claimed by China (Yagong Dao, 鸭公岛), Taiwan (Yagong Island, 鸭公島) and Vietnam (Đảo Ba Ba)

Figure B-58—01 February, 2012

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243 'Yagong Island', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, accessed 4 April 2020.
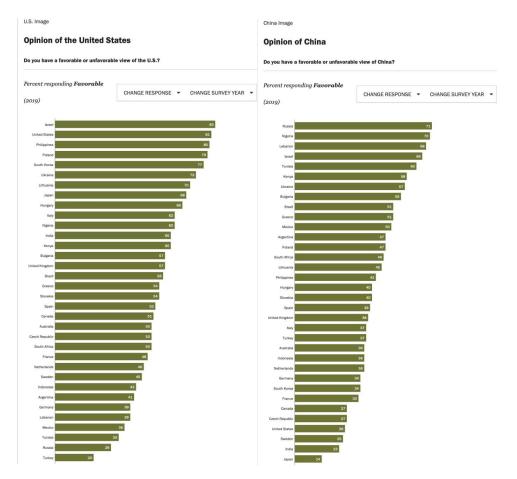
Figure B-59—11 June 2016

Figure B-60—27 April, 2017

Annex C. Pew Opinion Data
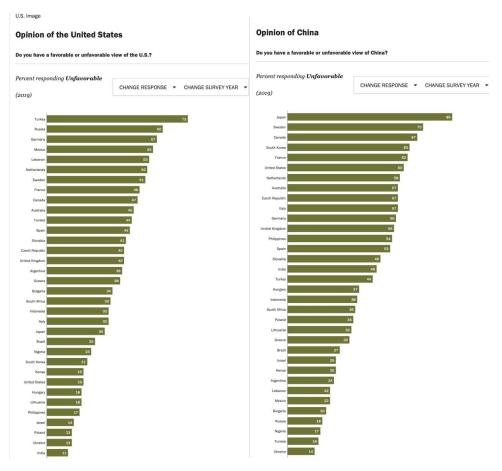
he following graphics show Pew survey data on opinions of the U.S.[244] and China[245] among various countries as percentages based on a response of 'favorable' or 'unfavorable'. Pew conducts this research annually, the graphics shown are for 2013, 2016 and 2019, covering the period of Obama's final term and Trump's first in office, and the period from Xi's ascendency to office. The graphics are present side by side to allow ease of comparison.

U.S. Image

Opinion of the United States

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

Percent responding Favorable

(2019)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▼   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▼

Israel	83
United States	81
Philippines	80
Poland	79
South Korea	77
Ukraine	73
Lithuania	70
Japan	68
Hungary	66
Italy	62
Nigeria	62
India	60
Kenya	60
Bulgaria	57
United Kingdom	57
Brazil	56
Greece	54
Slovakia	54
Spain	52
Canada	51
Australia	50
Czech Republic	50
South Africa	50
France	48
Netherlands	46
Sweden	45
Indonesia	42
Argentina	41
Germany	39
Lebanon	39
Mexico	36
Tunisia	33
Russia	29
Turkey	20

China Image

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

Percent responding Favorable

(2019)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▼   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▼

Russia	71
Nigeria	70
Lebanon	68
Israel	66
Tunisia	63
Kenya	58
Ukraine	57
Bulgaria	55
Brazil	51
Greece	51
Mexico	50
Argentina	47
Poland	47
South Africa	46
Lithuania	45
Philippines	42
Hungary	40
Slovakia	40
Spain	39
United Kingdom	38
Italy	37
Turkey	37
Australia	36
Indonesia	36
Netherlands	36
Germany	34
South Korea	34
France	33
Canada	27
Czech Republic	27
United States	26
Sweden	25
India	23
Japan	14

2019—Favorable

244 'Global Indicators Database - U.S.', *Global Attitudes Project*, (Pew Research Center accessed 4 April 2020).

245 'Global Indicators Database - China on China'.

Opinion of the United States

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

*Percent responding **Unfavorable***

(2019)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▼   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▼

Country	
Turkey	73
Russia	60
Germany	57
Mexico	55
Lebanon	53
Netherlands	52
Sweden	51
France	48
Canada	47
Australia	45
Tunisia	44
Spain	43
Slovakia	41
Czech Republic	40
United Kingdom	40
Argentina	39
Greece	38
Bulgaria	34
South Africa	33
Indonesia	32
Italy	32
Japan	30
Brazil	25
Nigeria	23
South Korea	21
Kenya	19
United States	19
Hungary	18
Lithuania	18
Philippines	17
Israel	14
Poland	13
Ukraine	13
India	11

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

*Percent responding **Unfavorable***

(2019)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▼   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▼

Country	
Japan	85
Sweden	70
Canada	67
South Korea	63
France	62
United States	60
Netherlands	58
Australia	57
Czech Republic	57
Italy	57
Germany	56
United Kingdom	55
Philippines	54
Spain	53
Slovakia	48
India	46
Turkey	44
Hungary	37
Indonesia	36
South Africa	35
Poland	34
Lithuania	33
Greece	32
Brazil	27
Israel	25
Kenya	25
Argentina	24
Lebanon	22
Mexico	22
Bulgaria	20
Russia	18
Nigeria	17
Tunisia	16
Ukraine	14

2019—Unfavorable

U.S. Image

Opinion of the United States

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

Percent responding Favorable

(2016)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	Favorable
United States	83
Poland	74
Italy	72
Japan	72
Sweden	69
Nigeria	66
Canada	65
Netherlands	65
France	63
Kenya	63
Hungary	62
United Kingdom	61
Australia	60
South Africa	60
Spain	59
Germany	57
India	56
China	50
Greece	38

China Image

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

Percent responding Favorable

(2016)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	Favorable
China	95
Nigeria	63
Greece	57
Kenya	57
Australia	52
Netherlands	47
Canada	45
Hungary	45
South Africa	41
Poland	37
Sweden	37
United Kingdom	37
United States	37
France	33
Italy	32
India	31
Germany	28
Spain	28
Japan	11

2016—Favorable

U.S. Image

Opinion of the United States

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

Percent responding Unfavorable

(2016)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	Unfavorable
Greece	58
China	44
Germany	38
Australia	34
Hungary	32
France	31
Canada	30
Netherlands	29
Sweden	28
Spain	26
United Kingdom	26
South Africa	25
Italy	23
Japan	23
Kenya	19
Nigeria	18
Poland	16
United States	15
India	13

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

Percent responding Unfavorable

(2016)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	Unfavorable
Japan	86
France	61
Italy	61
Germany	60
Sweden	59
Spain	56
United States	55
Hungary	44
United Kingdom	44
Netherlands	43
South Africa	43
Poland	42
Canada	40
Australia	39
Greece	37
India	36
Kenya	23
Nigeria	18
China	4

2016—Unfavorable

Opinion of the United States

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

*Percent responding **Favorable***

(2013)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	
Philippines	85
Ghana	83
Israel	83
Kenya	81
Senegal	81
United States	81
El Salvador	79
South Korea	78
Italy	76
Brazil	73
Uganda	73
South Africa	72
Japan	69
Nigeria	69
Chile	68
Poland	67
Australia	66
Mexico	66
Canada	64
France	64
Spain	62
Indonesia	61
Czech Republic	58
United Kingdom	58
India	56
Bolivia	55
Malaysia	55
Germany	53
Venezuela	53
Russia	51
Lebanon	47
Tunisia	42
Argentina	41
China	40
Greece	39
Turkey	21
Egypt	16
Palestinian ter.	16
Jordan	14
Pakistan	11

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

*Percent responding **Favorable***

(2013)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	
China	95
Malaysia	81
Pakistan	81
Kenya	78
Senegal	77
Nigeria	76
Venezuela	71
Indonesia	70
Ghana	67
Brazil	65
Tunisia	63
Chile	62
Russia	62
Greece	59
Uganda	59
Australia	58
Bolivia	58
Lebanon	56
Argentina	54
El Salvador	52
Philippines	48
South Africa	48
Spain	48
United Kingdom	48
Palestinian ter.	47
South Korea	46
Egypt	45
Mexico	45
Canada	43
Poland	43
France	42
Jordan	40
Israel	38
United States	37
India	36
Czech Republic	34
Germany	28
Italy	28
Turkey	27
Japan	5

2013—Favorable

U.S. Image

Opinion of the United States

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

Percent responding **Unfavorable**

(2013)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	Unfavorable
Jordan	85
Egypt	81
Palestinian ter.	79
Pakistan	72
Turkey	70
Greece	57
China	53
Lebanon	53
Argentina	41
Tunisia	41
Germany	40
Russia	40
Venezuela	37
France	36
Czech Republic	33
Malaysia	33
Indonesia	31
Australia	30
Canada	30
Mexico	30
United Kingdom	30
Bolivia	29
Japan	29
Spain	29
Chile	24
Poland	24
Brazil	23
Nigeria	20
South Africa	20
South Korea	20
El Salvador	17
Israel	16
Italy	16
India	15
United States	15
Kenya	14
Philippines	13
Ghana	9
Uganda	9
Senegal	5

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

Percent responding **Unfavorable**

(2013)

CHANGE RESPONSE ▾   CHANGE SURVEY YEAR ▾

Country	Unfavorable
Japan	93
Germany	64
Italy	62
Israel	60
France	58
Jordan	56
Czech Republic	55
Turkey	55
Egypt	52
United States	52
South Korea	50
Philippines	48
Spain	47
Canada	45
Palestinian ter.	43
Poland	43
South Africa	43
Lebanon	42
India	41
Greece	37
Australia	35
Mexico	33
United Kingdom	31
Russia	29
Brazil	28
Chile	27
Indonesia	24
Argentina	22
El Salvador	22
Ghana	22
Bolivia	19
Venezuela	19
Tunisia	17
Uganda	17
Kenya	13
Nigeria	11
Malaysia	8
Senegal	8
China	3
Pakistan	2

2013—Unfavorable

27 April, 2017

Annex D. Lowy Power Index Data

The following graphics show the power ranking and scores as assessed by the Lowy institute in 2019, comparing the U.S. to China and Australia to China.[246] This index measures power as the capacity of a state or territory to direct or influence the behavior of other states, non-state actors, and the course of international events.

Resource measures provide four assessments of a country's capabilities and resources, which are prerequisite factors in the exercise of power. Economic Resources include core economic strength and the attributes of an economy with the most geopolitical relevance; measured in terms of GDP at purchasing power parity, international leverage, technological sophistication and global connectivity. Military Capability includes conventional military strength; measured in terms of defense spending, armed forces and organization, weapons and platforms, signature capabilities and Asian military posture. Resilience is the capacity to deter real or potential external threats to state stability; measured in terms of internal institutional stability, resource security, geo-economic security, geopolitical security and nuclear deterrence. Future resources represent the projected distribution of future resources and capabilities, which play into perceptions of power today; measured in terms of estimated economic, defense and broad resources in 2030, as well as working-age population forecasts for 2045.

Influence measures assess what countries do with what they have, their active levels of influence, principally in Asia, lending the Index its geographical focus. Diplomatic Influence is the extent and standing of a state's foreign relations measured in terms of diplomatic networks, involvement in multilateral institutions and clubs, and overall foreign policy and strategic ambition. Economic Relationships are the capacity to exercise influence and leverage through economic interdependencies; measured in terms of trade relations, investment ties and economic diplomacy. Defense Networks include the partnerships that act as force multipliers of autonomous military capability; measured through assessments of alliances, non-allied partnerships and arms transfers. Cultural Influence is the ability

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246   'Compare Countries', *Asia Power Index*, (Lowy Institute accessed 4 April 2020).

to shape international public opinion through appeal and interaction; measured in terms of cultural projection, information flows and people exchanges.
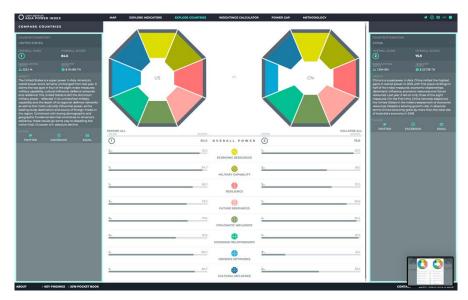

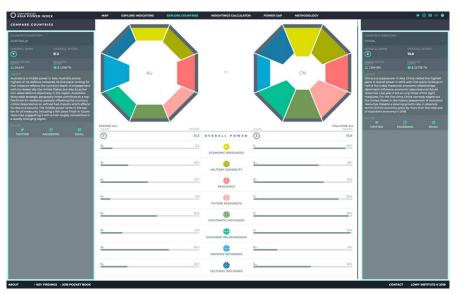**Figure D-1:** U.S./PRC Power comparison

Figure D-2: Australia/PRC Power comparison

Annex E. Joint Targeting Cycle overview

This annex provides a summary of each of the six stages of the JTC.[247] While U.S. and Australian doctrine differ slightly, the key concepts are aligned and the processes integrated regularly during operations.
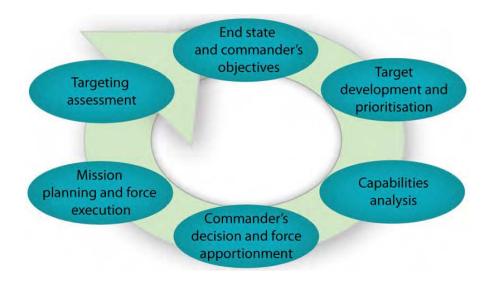

Figure E-1: The joint targeting cycle[248]

1. End state and commander's objectives

The JTC gains its initial direction from the understanding of the military end state and the commander's intent, objectives, lines of operation, desired effects and tasks developed during design and planning. Objectives provide the overall perspective to subordinate commanders charged with task execution. Most importantly, desired effects support the commander's mission, objectives and decisive points. End state and commander's objectives at the strategic level include both national strategic guidance provided by Government and the national military principles that provide the intellectual and moral framework for targeting, as technical, scientific, ethical and legal developments may tend to emphasize some principles while obscuring others.

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247   Department of Defence, *Targeting Procedures*, 3-2-3–12.

248   Department of Defence, *Targeting*, 3–2.

2. Target development and prioritization

Target development comprises the analysis, assessment, and documentation processes to identify and characterize potential targets that, when successfully engaged, support the achievement of the commander's objectives. Target development examines potential targets to determine the necessary type and duration of action that must be carried out against each target to create the desired effect(s). It includes s an all-source analytical process that analyses systems, networks, components and their elements to identify the best targeting strategy to move a system from its current to desired future state, aids and simplifies target selection, enables effective assessment and identifies intelligence gaps. This includes target audience analysis, which aims to construct a clear profile of a given audience and how messaging may achieve influence with that audience. Target vetting independently assesses the accuracy of this intelligence to verify the target's functional characterization and the expected outcomes from targeting. Target validation confirms that the proposed, vetted targets meet the objectives and criteria outlined in the commander's guidance and comply with the relevant legal and ethical constraints.

3. Capabilities analysis

Capabilities analysis optimizes resource efficiency by evaluating available capabilities against desired effects to determine the best options available for each target. It considers other agencies and partners' activities in order to integrate and synchronize these into the overall targeting plan to achieve mutual benefits, and mitigates any risks and collateral concerns identified.

4. Commander's decision and force apportionment

This phase begins with the Commander's approval of a prioritized list of targets, against which resources are assigned accordingly. Importantly, this step documents the links between objectives and guidance to trace the analytical reasoning that supported the selection of nominated targets and the details of the capability effectiveness estimates.

5. Mission planning and force execution

Following the Commander's approval of the targets and the resources to affect them, detailed planning is undertaken for the execution of targeting.

6. Targeting assessment

Targeting assessment is used to measure the effectiveness of targeting and feeds back into the next evolution of the JTC. It asks the following questions, from which it adapts targeting and assessment methods to optimize their effectiveness: 1) Were actions against targets conducted as planned? 2) Were the effects of these actions as anticipated? 3) If actions were not conducted as planned, or the effects of these actions were not as anticipated, what can be done to address deficiencies? 4) Was the collateral damage estimate correct and accurate? 5) What collateral damage or unintended effects achieved may require consequence management? Of note, measurement methodologies for achieving information effects must be appropriate to the means of achieving them. These are often subtle, have different temporal parameters and are likely to present more assessment challenges, as they may not be readily observable.

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