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NOTHING SOFT ABOUT CHINA'S SHARP POWER

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JCSP 43 DL

Exercise Solo Flight

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NOTHING SOFT ABOUT CHINA'S SHARP POWER

Power is a central concept in the field of international relations. It is used by academics and policy practitioners as an analytic tool to understand and anticipate the behaviour and relationships of state and non-state actors and assess their ability to produce desired outcomes on the world stage.¹ Understanding power can contribute to better foreign policy decisions.

While power – the ability of an actor “to get others to do what they otherwise would not” – has been conceptualized in different ways, a theoretical model that includes forms of hard, soft and smart power emerged as a popular model during the post-Cold War period.² Joseph Nye is widely credited with coining the terms that provides a hybrid framework that strives to accounts for resources, behaviour and context.³ Nye defines hard power in traditional terms of military (use of force or coercion) and economic (payments or sanctions) resources. Soft power is defined as the ability to obtain preferred outcomes through attraction or subtle persuasion.⁴ Smart power meanwhile “successfully combines hard and soft power in differing contexts.”⁵ A common element in each of these concepts of power is that audiences knowingly respond to perceived triggers.

Rapid globalization and technological advances over the last decade have influenced the way foreign policy, defence and security experts view power. Some argue that technology and

¹ Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall. “Power in International Politics.” *International Organization*, 59 (2005), 39-4; Joseph S. Nye. “Power and foreign policy,” *Journal of Political Power*, 4:1, (2011), 39.

² *Ibid.*, 40.

³ Joseph S. Nye. “Power and foreign policy,” *Journal of Political Power*, 4:1, (2011), 13.

⁴ Joseph S Nye. “Get Smart.” *Foreign Affairs* 88:4, (2009), para 2.

⁵ Joseph S. Nye. “Power and foreign policy,” *Journal of Political Power*, 4:1, (2011), 20; Joseph S. Nye “Smart Power.” *In The Future of Power*. (New York: Public Affairs/Perseus Books Group, 2011) 207-209.

the spread of social media provides authoritarian regimes with covert, cost-effective ways to extend their power while leveraging and undermining the openness of democratic societies.⁶ Referred to as sharp power, this “new” theory of power enables authoritarians to quietly subvert, manipulate, deceive and control target audiences.

Authoritarian regimes like Russia and China have become adept at employing sharp power to advance their objectives. Techniques including posturing, deception, soft annexation and information warfare are used to shape public opinion and compliance at home and abroad. While considerable attention has been paid to Russian activities in Central and Eastern Europe and to Moscow’s interference in the 2016 United States election, China with its 14-trillion-dollar economy, its ambition to shape global institutions, and its skillful use of “distraction, manipulation...and suppression of political pluralism and freedom of expression” may pose a greater threat to international stability.⁷

This paper examines the challenges associated with authoritarian China’s use of sharp power. It begins with a brief overview of the changing nature of China’s engagement in the world. It then discusses the unique and evolving nature of sharp power and highlights the various ways Beijing has leveraged it to further its global ambitions. While academics have traditionally analysed China through a soft or smart power framework, this paper argues Beijing’s assertive international agenda is underpinned by a sharp power doctrine aimed at covertly suppressing international political rivals and critics and limiting freedom of expression.

⁶ Josh Rogin, “China’s Foreign Influence Operations are Causing Alarm in Washington.” *The Washington Post*, 10 Dec, 2017, para 17.

⁷ Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, “From Soft Power to Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World.” In *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence, Full Report* (Washington: National Endowment for Democracy, 2017), 6.

Red Storm Rising – Sharp Power & The Dawn of a New China

Beijing has become increasingly assertive and controlling in its efforts to outmanoeuvre rivals and critics since the 2008 financial crisis and Xi Jinping's ascent to power.⁸ China has spent billions of dollars to shape public opinion.⁹ Unconstrained by election cycles and principles of free speech and freedom of assembly at home, Beijing is nonetheless using these tools against democratic countries to enhance its reputation, extend its influence, isolate traditional allies and reshape the international order. According to reports in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. along with assessments by the Canadian Intelligence Security Agency (1997 & 2010) and Australian Security Intelligence Office (2017), China's influence on public policy discussions and outcomes in western democracies is pervasive.¹⁰

China's efforts challenge contemporary conceptions of power. The expanse of Beijing's global ambitions along with "its willingness to use diaspora groups and people who have an economic stake in China to work behind the scenes" to support the political objectives of China's Communist party go beyond traditional definitions of hard, soft and smart power.¹¹ Some experts, including Joseph Nye argue that although sharp power bears some resemblance to hard power, there are two main difference.¹² First, for power to be considered hard power, the target audience is aware it is being threatened or coerced. Second, hard power does not adequately account for the distinguishing characteristics of autocratic regimes that severely restrict the free

⁸ Raya Koreh "The Chinese Smart Power Strategy." *Harvard Political Review*. 31 Jan 2015. para. 3; Joseph S. Nye "Smart Power." *In The Future of Power*. (New York: Public Affairs/Perseus Books Group, 2011) 211-212.

⁹ Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, "The Meaning of Sharp Power, How Authoritarian States Project Influence." *Foreign Affairs*. 16 Nov 2017. para 4.

¹⁰ Nathan Vanderklippe and Jeff Gray., "Australian publisher drops book on Chinese influence; author warns Canada is also at risk." *The Globe and Mail*. 19 Nov 2017; Canadian Broadcast Corporation. "Some politicians under foreign sway: CSIS." *CBC News*. Updated 23 June 2010. para 12-13; Australia. *ASIO Annual Report 2016-2017*. (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). 9.

¹¹ Mike Blanchfield, "Beware effects of China's 'united front' in Canada: former envoy." *Canadian Press, CTV* 8 Dec, 2017, para. 12.

¹² Joseph. Nye "China's Soft and Sharp Power." *Project Syndicate*. 4 Jan 2018, para. 4-6.

flow of ideas, information and basic human rights. Others, including Ingrid D’Hooghe (2011) and David Shambaugh (2015), see China’s efforts as an extension of soft power – although Shambaugh concedes “there is a harder edge to these efforts.”¹³

China’s efforts to exploit the openness of democratic societies involve a degree of stealth, deception and omission that make them difficult to detect. They stop short of employing hard power in the form of military force or economic coercion (although Beijing has used hard power in the South China Sea), but are more aggressive, covert and malign than the soft power of attraction and persuasion.¹⁴ These efforts are “sharp” because they stealthily pierce, penetrate, or perforate the information environments in target countries. Individual tactics can appear benign, but when the full extent of Beijing’s influence efforts are assessed a different picture emerges.

Beijing is pursuing its objectives through a global, multifaceted, strategic communication approach that targets international perceptions about China, shapes and limits debate on sensitive issues, and strengthens the control of the Chinese-language public sphere amongst domestic and international audiences.¹⁵ It employs a diverse tool kit that includes thousands of people-to-people exchanges, wide-ranging business and cultural activities, education programs and the development of media enterprises and information initiatives with a global reach.¹⁶

¹³ D’Hooghe, Ingrid. “The Expansion of China’s Public Diplomacy System.” In *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy Through Communication*, edited by Jian Wang. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan), 2011; David Shambaugh. “China’s Soft-Power Push.” *Foreign Affairs* 94:4 (2015), para 18.

¹⁴ The Economist, “At the sharp end: How China’s “sharp power” is muting criticism abroad; and stealthily trying to shape public opinion in its favour.” *The Economist*, 14 Dec, 2017, para 5.

¹⁵ Anne-Marie Brady. “Magic Weapons: China’s political influence activities under Xi Jinping.” *Conference paper presented at the conference on “The corrosion of democracy under China’s global influence,”* (Arlington, Virginia: Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, 16-17 Sep, 2017), 9.

¹⁶ Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, “From Soft Power to Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World.” In *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence, Full Report* (Washington: National Endowment for Democracy, 2017), 6.

Distraction – Constructing a Revisionist Narrative

Beijing's top priority is the stability of its (authoritarian) regime. It presents itself as an alternative model of development, and demands nations respect its policy of non-interference in Chinese affairs as a precondition for enhanced bilateral relations and preferred access to its economy.¹⁷ Nation-to-nation discussions on sensitive issues including the Republic of China (Taiwan), Tibet, Xinjiang and human rights are increasingly avoided or based on Beijing's values rather than western ideals of transparency, self-determination and the rule of law.

In 2008, New Zealand became the first western country to enact a free trade deal with China. To maintain smooth relations with Beijing, New Zealand adopted a “no-surprises” policy, which has resulted in government officials avoiding activities and statements that might offend the People's Republic of China (PRC).¹⁸ This policy has, among other things, contributed to Auckland's muted criticism of Beijing's recent regional military build-up and annexation of the South China Sea.

When running for leader of the Liberal Party of Canada in 2013, Prime Minister Trudeau, expressed a deep admiration for China because “...their basic dictatorship is allowing them to actually turn their economy around on a dime...”¹⁹ Approving China's coercive and undemocratic institutions twinned with self-censorship serves to legitimize and enhance Beijing's repressive, expansionary, anti-democratic practices and unwittingly sets a dangerous precedent. Moreover, it underscores the effectiveness of Beijing's sharp power strategy to influence the influencers.

¹⁷ Martin Jacques. “Welcome to China's Millennium.” *The Guardian*. 23 June 2009. para. 12-13.

¹⁸ Anne-Marie Brady. “Magic Weapons: China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping.” *Conference paper presented at the conference on “The corrosion of democracy under China's global influence,”* (Arlington, Virginia: Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, 16-17 Sep, 2017), 14.

¹⁹ Justin Trudeau, quoted in David Akin. “Asked what country he admires most, Trudeau no longer answers China.” *Global News*, 6 Dec 2017. para 5.

Co-opt them with Kindness & Coerce them into Submission

The United Front Work Department is a key component of the Communist party's strategy of information control at home and overseas. Leveraging national pride and common ancestry, its goal is to enlist the support and cooperation of 60 million ethnic Chinese living abroad.²⁰ The United Front provides "guidance" and "direction" to a global network of operatives and stakeholders in an effort to manage China's official narrative and coordinate the activities of a range of groups it deems responsible for "outreach" to non-China Communist Party (CCP) elites within the PRC; international political, academic, and business influencers; and the Chinese diaspora. It is organized into nine bureaus, each tasked with managing a specific area the regime perceives a potential threat to its power.²¹

Directed by an elite cadre, including Xi Jinping, the United Front uses "Chinese power to charm, co-opt or attack well-defined groups and individuals abroad."²² In military parlance, "co-opt" and "attack" are mission verbs with a hard edge and coercive quality but stop short of "attack by fires." Beijing's traditional "peaceful rise" narrative has given way to sharp edges.

The United Front extends Beijing's tentacles through a myriad of overseas community groups, friendship associations and interest groups. These groups often offer hospitality to their target audiences through invitations to Chinese cultural events and/or by facilitating professional development opportunities, scholarships and goodwill visits to China, many of which are funded by Beijing. But this generosity comes with strings.

²⁰ Anne-Marie Brady, "Magic Weapons: China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping." (Arlington, Virginia: Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, 16-17 Sep, 2017), 4.

²¹ For example, Bureau Two manages minorities and religious issues; Bureau Three is responsible for managing issues related to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan; Bureau Seven is responsible for Tibet; and Bureau Nine is responsible for Xinjiang, a volatile region in north-western China.

²² Joshua Kurlantzick, "Australia, New Zealand Face China's Influence," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 13 Dec, 2017, para 9; James Kynge, Lucy Hornby and Jamil Anderlini, "Inside China's secret 'magic weapon' for Worldwide Influence," *Financial Times*, 26 Oct 2017, para 4.

In 2010, Richard Fadden, then director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Agency, warned of Chinese influence in Canada, “China is the most aggressive, funding university clubs that are managed by people operating out of [its] embassy or consulates...Chinese authorities also organize demonstrations against the Canadian government in respect to some of Canada’s policies concerning China.”²³ This assessment is supported by David Mulroney, a former Canadian ambassador to China and Taiwan and a prominent national security advisor, “During past visits by Chinese leaders to Ottawa, the Chinese embassy has bussed in students from Kingston and Montreal to counter the inevitable demonstrations against the Chinese government.”²⁴ The same type of activities have been noted in Australia. During a recent visit by Premier Li Keqiang, Beijing’s embassy in Canberra mobilized hundreds of students associated with the Chinese Student and Scholar Association to drown out anti-China protesters.²⁵

Controversy surrounding Beijing’s interference in Australia’s domestic political sphere boiled over in 2017 when a Chinese billionaire with links to the Communist party reportedly threatened to withdraw an AU\$400,000 donation to the Australian Labour Party after an official criticized China’s annexation of the South China Sea. Labour Senator Sam Dastyari contradicted his party’s position, telling Chinese media that Australia shouldn’t interfere with China’s regional ambitions.²⁶ Dastyari was forced to resign over his connections with Beijing. As the scandal played out, it emerged the same Chinese billionaire had donated millions of dollars to

²³ “Some politicians under foreign sway: CSIS.” *CBC News*. Updated 23 June 2010. para 12-13.

²⁴ David Mulroney in Mike Blanchfield, “Beware of China’s ‘united front’ in Canada: former envoy.” *Canadian Press*, 8 Dec, 2017, para. 8.

²⁵ James Kynge, Lucy Hornby and Jamil Anderlini, “Inside China’s secret ‘magic weapon’ for Worldwide Influence,” *Financial Times*, 26 Oct 2017, para 28.

²⁶ Castaldo, Joe. “The Hidden Risks of Opening Up Trade with China.” *Maclean’s*. 18 Sept 2017, para. 20.

both of Australia's main political parties and since 2000, approximately 80 percent of foreign political donations in Australia have come from China.²⁷

In January 2018, Australian Prime Minister, Malcom Turnbull, acknowledged Beijing's interference. According to Turnbull, "Media reports have suggested...the [CCP] has been working to covertly interfere with our media, our universities and even the decisions of elected representatives..."²⁸ In response, his government recently moved legislation to curb foreign donations to political parties and charities. While Australia is taking steps to mitigate risk, these incidents demonstrate that Beijing has used sharp power to covertly penetrate the political sphere of another country, co-opting political leaders through largess and manipulating issues and policy discussions.

Manipulation – Cultural Awareness vs. Intellectual Freedom

Confucius Institutes and Confucius classrooms are teaching and research centres located in schools, community centres, colleges, and universities in more than 140 countries. There are approximately 500 institutes world-wide – 12 institutes and 35 classrooms operate in Canada. They are a controversial element of Beijing's bid to spread influence abroad and are a contested tool in China's sharp power arsenal. They have prompted fears over academic freedom in Europe, the U.S. and Canada.

²⁷ Luke H. Gomes "Nearly 80 percent of foreign political donations comes from China, data shows. *The New Daily*. 10 Dec 2017, para 1.

²⁸ Christopher Knaus and Tom Phillips. Turnbull says Australia will stand up to China as Foreign Influence Row Heats Up. *The Guardian*. 09 December 2018.

Proponents argue the program offers valuable language and cultural training and fosters mutual understanding.²⁹ Critics say the program presents a white-washed view of China and discourages discussions on sensitive topics including Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang.³⁰ When a Canadian school board official and Confucius program supporter was asked about China's human rights in connection with her support for the program, she dismissed the question as "xenophobic" and said the benefit of the program outweighed concerns of the regime's track record on human rights.³¹

In 2013, McMaster University chose not to renew its relationship with the program upon completion of its initial five-year term after one of its Confucius Institute teachers launched a human rights complaint based on discriminatory hiring practices of the Chinese government. The teacher also confirmed she was ordered to avoid sensitive topics.³²

Accounts of questionable hiring practices are echoed in a report by the National Association of Scholars (2017). It recommended closing all Confucius programs in the United States because the program is shrouded in secrecy. The report is critical of the program in four main areas: **Transparency** – hiding the terms of agreement; **Intellectual Freedom** – Chinese teachers are hired, paid and accountable to the Chinese government and face pressures to avoid sensitive topics; **Entanglement** – universities with financial incentives find it difficult to criticize Chinese policy and withdrawing from agreements can jeopardize other financial commitments;

²⁹ Rachele Peterson. *Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*. (New York: National Association of Scholars, April 2017). 16-17.

³⁰ Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, "The Meaning of Sharp Power, How Authoritarian States Project Influence..." para 6; Rachele Peterson. *Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*...20.

³¹ Nathan Vanderklippe. "Education exchange, As Canadian public schools look to Asia for cash, Chinese authority plans school in B.C." *The Globe and Mail*. 20 Dec 2017. para. 60.

³² James Bradshaw and Colin Freeze. "McMaster closing Confucius Institute over hiring issues." *The Globe and Mail*. 7 Feb 2013. Updated 26 March 2017. para 8-14

and **Soft Power** – the curriculum presents China in an overly positive light, contributing to a generation of students with selective knowledge of an emerging global power.³³

The report also anecdotally notes that several sources believe the program is a front for Chinese espionage. A number of “off-the-record stories... were consistent in their portrayal of the Confucius Institutes as centres of threats and intimidation directed at Chinese nationals and Chinese Americans, and as cover for covert activities on the part of the Chinese government.”³⁴ The institute’s governing council is chaired by Liu Yandong, a former head of the United Front Work Department.³⁵ Given the links between the institute and the United Front and anecdotal claims of coercion, distraction and manipulation, the organization’s efforts cannot be categorized as soft power and are appropriately reassessed as sharp.

Suppression – The Art of Self-Censorship

A number of institutions with ties to the Confucius program insist intellectual freedoms remain intact, but as Beijing exerts pressure and exploits its economic prowess, examples of self-censorship emerge. An example of attempts to limit intellectual freedom and freedom of speech came to light in August 2017 when Cambridge University Press (CUP) briefly complied with Beijing’s request (made through the university’s state-owned publisher in China) to block from appearing in China more than 300 online articles related to Tibet, Tiananmen Square, the

³³ Rachele Peterson. *Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*...9-10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁵ Jane Pong and Emily Feng. “Confucius Institutes: cultural asset of campus threat?” *Financial Times*. 26 Oct 2017. para 5.

Cultural Revolution and President Xi Jinping that appeared in *China Quarterly*, the university's respected academic journal.³⁶

Andrew Nathan, a political scientist specializing in Chinese politics, foreign policy, human rights and political culture says CUP's illiberal decision highlights a dilemma for institutions that value freedom of expression. "Of course, there may also be a financial motive, similar to Bloomberg, Facebook, and others who have censored their product to maintain access to the Chinese market...but if the West doesn't stand up for its values, then Chinese authorities will impose their values on us."³⁷ Cambridge eventually re-instated the links. Yet, when the world's oldest publisher and one of the world's most prestigious universities engages in self-censorship – no matter how briefly – the effects of Beijing's sharp power are evident.

Control – Constructive Journalism & Cyber Sovereignty

Beijing has also invested heavily in efforts to shape international news and promote favourable media coverage. It is doing this by influencing the structure and values of media in countries where it has particular interest; creating and distributing content for domestic and foreign audiences; and pressuring, influencing and limiting the work of foreign media.³⁸

In Africa, Latin America and other developing regions, Beijing plays an active role supporting the media industry by providing resources and training. But China is not promoting the values associated with a free press: freedom of expression, editorial independence, neutrality,

³⁶ Maev Kennedy and Tom Phillips. "Cambridge University Press backs down over China censorship" *The Guardian*. 21 Aug 2017; Benjamin Haas. "Cambridge University Press headed for showdown with China over censorship." *The Guardian*. 9 Sep 2017

³⁷ Tom Phillips. "Cambridge University Press accused of 'selling its soul' over Chinese censorship." *The Guardian*, 19 Aug 2017, para 13.

³⁸ Shanthi Kalathil. *Beyond the Great Firewall: How China Became a Global Information Power*. (Washington: Center for International Media Assistance, National Endowment for Democracy, March 2017), 1-3.

and the responsibility of journalists to hold powerful actors accountable.³⁹ China's model seeks to present a positive view of China and authority – what Beijing calls “constructive journalism.”⁴⁰

Through the China-Africa Press Exchange Centre, Beijing provides training to approximately 1,000 African journalists each year. From Ethiopia to Zambia, researchers note the most interesting aspect of Beijing's state-owned media engagement in Africa is the enduring effect of “constructive-journalism,” which has resulted in a degree of self-censorship by framing the activities of China and national governments in a positive light.⁴¹

The CCP has also stepped up efforts to reinforce its narrative through the global expansion and re-branding of China Central Television (CCTV) to Global China Television (GCTV). China Radio International (CRI) and the Xinhua News Service also aggressively pursue mergers and partnership agreements with international media outlets making the Communist Party narrative more readily available.

In the U.S., GCTV is readily available through cable and CRI broadcasts from approximately 30 outlets nation-wide. In some cases, CRI acquired stations through American front companies to avoid Federal Communications Commission rules limiting foreign government ownership.⁴² *China Daily*, a Communist Party newspaper is often published as an “advertising” insert called *China Watch* in the prestigious *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. There are similar publishing agreements in place with smaller papers and in a number of other countries around the world.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴² John Pomfret. “China's thought police are extending their reach.” *The Washington Post*. 19 Jan 2018.

Western journalists in Beijing have observed a tightening of control over their work. According to multiple reporters, foreign journalists are only permitted into Tibet on government orchestrated visits and are always accompanied and monitored by Chinese officials. International journalists attempting to cover Tibet independently are forced to try to gain entrance clandestinely. Similar restrictions exist in Xinjiang. Access to the region is tightly controlled and journalists are barred from the region during periods of unrest. Uighur journalist Gheyret Niyaz was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison for endangering national security. His “crime” was reporting on ethnic tensions and protests in July 2009.⁴³

China is also seeking a more active role in internet governance, leveraging its membership in the International Telecommunication Union to alter the nature of internet governance by championing cyber sovereignty and promoting a more active global presence for Chinese Internet companies. Aligned with its goal of maintaining control of information and people, Beijing is leading global efforts to develop advanced facial recognition technologies and create a digital network of things that will enable the real-time surveillance of devices and individuals. While Beijing may play these innovations off as modern convenience, those who value intellectual freedom, individual human rights and privacy should be concerned.

Conclusion – A not so Clear but Present Danger

A shift is underway in the way China engages in the world and it is important for academics and policymakers to assess and anticipate its effect on the global balance of power. Some experts argue China’s sharp power is nothing more than an element of hard power. Others

⁴³ Sarah Hoffman and Larry Siems, *Creativity and Constraint in Today’s China*. (London: PEN International, 2013), 20-21.

continue to identify it as a form of soft power. While sharp power shares some characteristics with both hard and soft power, it is uniquely different because its target often does not have the ability to consciously participate in the decision-making process. Additionally, because many continue to misidentify a number of Beijing's activities as elements of soft power, their intent and effect are often underestimated. Taken in isolation, each of Beijing's influence efforts might be mistaken for benign efforts to enhance its global reputation but when examined as a collective a more ominous picture emerges. What was once perceived as soft, even smart, is no longer adequate to describe the present reality: Beijing is skillfully wielding sharp power to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, to discreetly discredit rivals and to advance its influence at home and abroad.

Rather than enthusiastically embracing Beijing, global leaders need to realize China is a One-Party state that pays lip service to but does not value intellectual freedom and human rights – these do not exist in China. Beijing is leveraging technology and the information environment to promote an illiberal narrative. Democracies must use a comprehensive approach to identify, address and mitigate Beijing's authoritarian influence on public policy discussions and freedoms.

The international community must also adapt and find ways to responsibly engage with China as a global power by respecting its sovereignty and status as a rising power while continuing to press it on issues of democratization, self-determination and the rule of law. Countries like Canada should look to the recent experiences of Australia and New Zealand for pitfalls and the evolution of their respective bilateral relationships with Beijing.

As Canada pursues exploratory talks on free trade and deeper engagement, it must ensure it strengthens its position on the values that underpin our democratic traditions rather than allowing our leaders to be seduced by potential access to China's markets. Canada must seek

principled ways to constructively engage with China based on our values of freedom, openness and democracy.

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