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Taking Taiwan Intact: China's 'Kinder' Conquest

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Solo Flight

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TAKING TAIWAN INTACT: CHINA'S 'KINDER' CONQUEST

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TAKING TAIWAN INTACT: CHINA'S 'KINDER' CONQUEST

...some morning people will awake to discover with surprise that quite a few gentle and kind things have begun to have offensive and lethal characteristics...

- Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unconventional Warfare*¹

INTRODUCTION

Ever since it was established as the independently governed Republic of China (ROC) by Chiang Kai-Shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) in 1949,² Taiwan's status has been precarious. With its position clearly stated in its One China Policy,³ the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) intends for the People's Republic of China (PRC) to include Taiwan and will utilize any means, including force, to make this a reality.⁴ Despite this threat, by applying a strategy of unrestricted warfare (UW)⁵ the CCP has found a way to achieve its aims without resorting to overt military force that would surely trigger an unwelcome response from the United States (US) and its western allies.⁶ It is this paper's thesis that the current situation between China and Taiwan reveals to the world the means and methods behind China's UW concept and serves as a valuable case study for developing effective deterrence and defence strategies. By utilizing the library research method, this paper will analyze China's UW activities and propose initiatives that will enable Canada and its allies to implement a viable counterstrategy without escalation into the kinetic realm.

¹ Liang, Qiao and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999), 26.

² Cucchisi, Jennifer Lynn, "The Causes and Effects of the Chinese Civil War, 1927-1949," (Dissertations and Theses (ETDs), Seton Hall University, 2002), 54. <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2361>.

³ People's Republic of China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "White Paper--The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue," last updated 17 May 2004, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceno/eng/ztxw/twwt/t110655.htm>.

⁴ Medeiros, Evan S., "China's Foreign Policy Objectives," in *China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunism, and Diversification*, (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 59. Accessed March 17, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg850af.12>.

⁵ Liang, Qiao and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*..., 222.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

The argument supporting this thesis begins with a brief discussion of Beijing's motives for unification with Taiwan and, after describing China's UW approach, address why it has become Beijing's primary strategy to subdue Taiwan. Subsequently, the paper will identify how the CCP's UW strategy is leveraging the Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME)⁷ instruments of its national power to coerce Taiwan to concede on terms favourable to Beijing. Finally, after outlining China's key vulnerabilities this paper will present opportunities for exploitation by Western nations and their allies. And, based on this analysis it paper will suggest how Canada can best support its allies in not only seizing the competitive advantage and countering Beijing's UW strategy, but also in deterring the PRC from taking Taiwan by force.

CHINA'S UW STRATEGY

Generally, in war, the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this.

- Sun Tzu, *The Art of Modern Warfare*⁸

When Hong Kong reverted to Chinese control in 1997, Taiwan became one of the few remaining regions over which China claims sovereignty but does not control.⁹ Since China's complete reunification is a fundamental national interest for Beijing, formally annexing Taiwan has become an inherent part of its "national rejuvenation"¹⁰ strategy. Remaining independent, Taiwan would be calamitous for the CCP and politically fatal for its leader, President Xi Jinping.¹¹ While in the past Beijing made significant progress toward unification with Taiwan's

⁷ Meiser, Jeffrey W., "Ends + Ways + Means = (Bad) Strategy," in *Parameters* 46, no. 4 (16, 2017), 1.

⁸ McNeilly, Mark, *Sun Tzu and the Art of modern Warfare*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

⁹ Centre for Strategic & International Studies, "What Is the U.S. "One China" Policy, and Why Does it Matter? By Michael J. Green," last updated 13 January 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-us-one-china-policy-and-why-does-it-matter>.

¹⁰ People's Republic of China, The State Council, "Full Text: China's National Defense in the New Era," last updated 24 July 2019, 7.

http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html.

¹¹ Centre for Strategic & International Studies, "What Is the U.S. "One China" Policy..., 7.

pro-China Kuomintang (KMT) party,¹² the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has proven far more resistant due to its platform of freedom and democracy. When its leader President Tsai Ing-wen won a landslide re-election in 2020, it was a public humiliation for the CCP.¹³ Consequently, the Taiwan question¹⁴ has become a grave threat and an unacceptable barrier to China's reunification policy¹⁵ that the CCP will remove by any means, including force.¹⁶ That said, the use of military force to subdue Taiwan would prove disastrous for President Xi. Primarily, for the option to be considered viable,¹⁷ Beijing must take Taiwan with its infrastructure intact and its population compliant. In the first case, Beijing's goal is reunification with the island nation, not its complete destruction.¹⁸ Furthermore, if it fails to subdue Taiwan's population, with over 23.5 million Taiwanese¹⁹ making preparations for urban and guerilla warfare, the PLA would be subjected to a protracted insurgency.²⁰ Certainly, Mao Tse-tung himself would caution against fighting a counter-insurgency war in unfamiliar territory,

¹² Council on Foreign Relations, "Unpacking the China-Taiwan Relationship by Eleanor Albert," last updated 22 January 2020, 7. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations>. The KMT, under President Ma Ying-jeou, were in power from 2008-2016 but were voted out due to popular dissatisfaction with Ma's growing rapprochement with Beijing.

¹³ The Guardian.com, "Taiwan election: Tsai Ing-Wen wins landslide in rebuke to China by Lily Kuo," last updated 11 January 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/11/taiwan-re-elects-tsai-ing-wen-as-president-in-clear-message-to-china>. Of note, the CCP's erosion of the "One China Two Systems" policy in Hong Kong and subsequent mass protests were seen as foreshadowing of what will happen under Beijing's control.

¹⁴ People's Republic of China, The State Council, "Full Text: China's National Defense in the New Era...", 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7; United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020: Annual Report to Congress*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2020), 112. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>. The CCP has clearly indicated that they will resort to using force if, among other issues, Taiwan declares or moves towards independence, instances of internal unrest on the island, unification dialogue is delayed indefinitely, or there is foreign intervention in Taiwan's Internal Affairs.

¹⁷ Youtube.com, "A Deadly Game: Taiwan Strait Crisis 2025 (#CNAS2019)," Center for a New American Security (CNAS), last updated 18 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjYqC5fJquA>.

¹⁸ Zwick, J.B., "China's Military Solution to Achieve Taiwanese Reunification: Maritime Blockade," Master's of Defence Studies Research Project, Canadian Forces College (2002), 50.

¹⁹ Youtube.com, "The Taiwan Crisis: What You Need to Know" Bloomberg Quicktake," last updated 26 January 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dliWGj_cs8k&list=PLNVjMkkCPYKctJU7_fmYJEUsfkGjL7WfG&index=11.

²⁰ Reuters.com, "China launches 'gray-zone' warfare to subdue Taiwan, by Yimou Lee, David Lague and Ben Blanchard," last updated 10 December 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/hongkong-taiwan-military/>.

and dependent upon vulnerable lines of communication.²¹ Finally, while armed retaliation by the US and its allies is not assured, the strategic ambiguity²² of the US's complex relationship with Taiwan²³ makes a CCP military option both unpredictable and dangerous. Despite these limitations, driven by Xi's "China Dream" of great rejuvenation,²⁴ through UW the CCP has another approach to unity.

With echoes of Sun Tzu,²⁵ China's UW concept²⁶ was proposed in 1999 by two People's Liberation Army (PLA) Colonels who re-defined the term "unrestricted warfare" from, "using armed force to compel the enemy to submit to one's will"²⁷ to, "using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one's interests."²⁸ Subsequently, the 24 warfares²⁹ and "kinder" weapons³⁰ the Colonels suggested formed the basis for the "Three Warfares" adopted by the PLA in 2003.³¹ While similar to Russia's Hybrid warfare, but with distinct Chinese characteristics,³² Beijing's

²¹ Shy, John, and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in *The Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. by Peter Paret, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 839.

²² Reuters.com, "China launches 'gray-zone' warfare..."

²³ Congressional Research Service, "Taiwan: Political and Security Issues," last updated 04 January 2021, 2. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10275.pdf>. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 and Reagan's Six Assurances of 1982 set the framework for US policy to ensure that Taiwan's sovereignty status is worked out peacefully, without coercion or use of force, between the two parties.

²⁴ Gershaneck, Kerry K., "To Win without Fighting: Defining China's Political Warfare," in *Expeditions with MCUP (Digital Journal)*, (2020), 12. Last visited 17 March 2021. <https://www.usmcm.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/Expeditions-with-MCUP-digital-journal/To-Win-without-Fighting/>.

²⁵ Ota, Fumio, "Sun Tzu in Contemporary Chinese Strategy," in *Joint Force Quarterly* 73, (2nd Quarter, 2014): 79.

²⁶ Ibid. "Unrestricted Warfare" was a book published by two PLA Air Force Colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiansui, in 1999.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Liang, Qiao and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare...*, 146.

³⁰ Ibid., 27.

³¹ Gershaneck, Kerry K., "To Win without Fighting: Defining...", 6.

³² Warontherocks.com, "Contrasting China's and Russia's Influence Operations, by Peter Mattis," last updated 16 January 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/contrasting-chinas-russias-influence-operations/>; Gershaneck, Kerry K., "To Win without Fighting: Defining...", 14. While similar to Russia's more effects-based Hybrid Warfare, China's UW is a more human or relationship-based approach.

UW methods combine influence operations and political warfare³³ to achieve its goals within the grey zone that exists between peace and war.³⁴ In this manner, China leverages psychological warfare, public opinion, and legal warfare, or “lawfare,”³⁵ to sap an adversary’s determination, disintegrate their organization, and restrict their activity through law.³⁶ By these means, China intends to exhaust, subdue and then absorb Taiwan without triggering an armed response³⁷ from the US and its allies.

CHINA’S UW METHODS

To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.

- Sun Tzu, *The Art of modern Warfare*³⁸

China’s authoritarian structure has an extreme advantage over its Western adversaries. Simply, the CCP can fuse the efforts of its government, academia, and commercial organs into a single, coordinated whole-of-nation (WoN) approach.³⁹ Furthermore, with such a level of control and further emboldened by their growing global power and influence,⁴⁰ UW has become the CCP’s normal way of doing business.⁴¹ As discussed below, Taiwan’s adversary has become

³³ Ibid., 5.

³⁴ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, “Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone: Response Options for Coercive Aggression Below the Threshold of Major War,” (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, 2019), 8.

³⁵ Gershaneck, Kerry K., “To Win without Fighting: Defining...,” 7.

³⁶ Ibid., 8.

³⁷ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, “Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone...,” 8.

³⁸ McNeilly, Mark, *Sun Tzu and the Art of modern Warfare...*, 18

³⁹ Mad Scientist Laboratory Blog, “Disrupting the “Chinese Dream” – Eight Insights on how to win the Competition with China,” last visited 27 February 2021, <https://madsciblog.tradoc.army.mil/307-disrupting-the-chinese-dream-eight-insights-on-how-to-win-the-competition-with-china/>. This “civil-military fusion” would be difficult to establish within a democracy.

⁴⁰ Asia Society Policy Institute, “China’s Strategic Vision, Strengths, and Vulnerabilities, Kevin Rudd's Address at the West Point Senior Conference,” last updated 9 April 2019, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/chinas-strategic-vision-strengths-and-vulnerabilities>; Allison, Graham, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap?* (New York: Mariner Books - Broughton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2017), 9.

Predicted to eclipse the US as the most powerful economy by GDP in 2024, Xi has departed from Deng Xioping’s policy of maintaining a low profile in all areas.

⁴¹ Warontherocks.com, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ in Perspective, by Peter Mattis,” last visited 17 March 2021. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/chinas-three-warfares-perspective/>.

well-practiced in the patient application of all legitimate, and illegitimate DIME instruments of its national power⁴² to achieve its strategic aims.

In examining China's diplomatic actions, following Tsai's first election 2016⁴³ and her subsequent rejection of the 1992 Consensus,⁴⁴ Beijing immediately expressed its displeasure by increasing its diplomatic efforts to isolate Taiwan. Since then, the PRC not only suspended official contact with President Tsai's government,⁴⁵ but subsequently Beijing established diplomatic relations with eight countries that previously recognized Taiwan.⁴⁶ For these countries, the only condition for this lucrative arrangement was to disavow Taiwan.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the CCP has legally insisted that international organizations, such as, the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and INTERPOL,⁴⁸ abide by the One China principle and manage all Taiwanese communications through Beijing.⁴⁹ Ultimately, by increasingly asserting its sovereignty and its administrative

⁴² Liang, Qiao and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare...*, 12.

⁴³ Congressional Research Service, "Taiwan: Political and Security...", 2; After re-election in 2020, Tsai further angered Beijing by stating that there is no need to declare independence as Taiwan is already a country called the Republic of China.

⁴⁴ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020...*, 96. The 1992 Consensus is an agreement between the PRC and Taiwan to acknowledge "One China" but are free to interpret what this means independently.

⁴⁵ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020...*, 96. The CCP continues to engage with the KMT and lower-level organizations.

⁴⁶ Congressional Research Service, "Taiwan: Political and Security...", 2. The Gambia, then São Tomé and Príncipe, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, the Solomon Islands, and Kiribati have all disavowed the ROC.

⁴⁷ Anshan, Li, "China's New Policy toward Africa." in *China Into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 25.

⁴⁸ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 96. Previously Taiwan had observer status in each, for the ICAO it was denied in 2016 by its director, a Chinese citizen.

⁴⁹ People's Republic of China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "White Paper--The One-China Principle... China's internationally recognized position as the "sole legal government of China" which legally obliges all entities to "handle their relationship with Taiwan within the one-China framework".

control over Taiwan,⁵⁰ the CCP is directly challenging the authority of Taiwan's elected authorities who dare to call Taiwan a country.⁵¹

China's informational activities against Taiwan are extensive. With the efficiency gained by establishing the Strategic Support Force (SSF),⁵² which incorporated China's strategic electronic, cyber, space, and psychological warfare assets into one entity, they have not only improved the PLA's Information Operations (IO) capability but given it global reach. Thus, the PLA has amplified the effects of its relentless disinformation campaign. For example, beginning in 2018, the number of PLA cyberattacks intended to undercut government and industry effectiveness have been increasing exponentially.⁵³ Additionally, by covertly exploiting social media⁵⁴ and overtly flooding traditional media with its "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy"⁵⁵ vitriol, the CCP is targeting the morale of Taiwan's populace.⁵⁶ If it can erode their trust in their elected officials' ability to protect them, China will succeed in delegitimizing Tsai and her DPP leadership.

⁵⁰ United States, U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2020 Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, (Washington, DC: U.S Government Publishing Office, 2020), 462-463. https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Chapter_4--Taiwan.pdf.

⁵¹ Congressional Research Service, "Taiwan: Political and Security...", 2. After re-election in 2020, Tsai further angered Beijing by stating that there is no need to declare independence as Taiwan is already a country called the Republic of China.

⁵² Ibid., 115. .

⁵³ Reuters.com, "Taiwan says China behind cyberattacks on government agencies, emails, by Yimou Lee," last updated 18 August 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-cyber-china-idUSKCN25F0JK>. The attacks began in 2018 and, while difficult to attribute and unclaimed by Beijing, this accusation was made by Taiwan's Investigation Bureau Cyber Security Investigation Office who indicate that at least 10 government agencies, 6,000 officials, and at least four Taiwanese technology have been repeatedly targeted.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021: An Allied Strategy for China," (Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2020), 25. "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy" draws its name from the popular Chinese "Wolf Warrior" action movie franchise and involves aggressively denouncing any perceived attacks or meddling in China's policies, sovereignty, or internal affairs.

⁵⁶ United States, U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2020 Report...*, 462.

To date, China's overt military efforts have been restrained and limited to air and sea incursions.⁵⁷ However, 2020 saw a dramatic increase.⁵⁸ In response, Taiwanese air sorties rose by 129% against PLA Air Force (PLAAF) aircraft while maritime interceptions grew by 150%.⁵⁹ In the case of the latter, while there are some incursions by PLA Navy (PLAN) and China Coast Guard (CCG) vessels, the majority are conducted and coordinated by China's maritime militia.⁶⁰ Using unarmed civilian-pattern vessels interspersed amongst other Chinese fishermen and dredgers⁶¹ their non-uniformed militia masters ensure that illegal sand collection or fishing incursions are constant and relentless.⁶² To amplify and reinforce the cumulative psychological pressure of its military intimidation campaign, the PLA also conducts frequent large-scale joint amphibious assault exercises near Taiwan.⁶³ Not only does this demonstrate the PLA's amphibious assault capability,⁶⁴ but it showcases the many ships and assets it continues to add to its growing amphibious fleet.⁶⁵ While PLA efforts are physically and mentally exhausting for Taiwanese military personnel, the real cost is to its finances and materiel. While the former forced Taiwan to spend an additional \$903 million US Dollars (USD) on air sorties in 2020

⁵⁷ People's Republic of China, The State Council, "Full Text: China's National Defense...", 12. According to the CCP, these are intended as a "stern warning" to "Taiwan independence separatist forces."

⁵⁸ Reuters.com, "China launches 'gray-zone' warfare..."

⁵⁹ Ibid. In 2020, the Taiwanese Air Force flew 2,972 missions while its ships conducted 1,223 intercepts.

⁶⁰ Kennedy, Conor, "The Struggle for Blue Territory: Chinese Maritime Militia Grey-Zone Operations," in *RUSI Journal* 163, no. 5 (October/November 2018), 9. <https://rusi.org/publication/rusi-journal/struggle-blue-territory-chinese-maritime-militia-grey-zone-operations>. The maritime militia serve under the command of the PLA and occasionally under the China Coast Guard.

⁶¹ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone...", 35. The dredgers were identified as being operated by Tianjin Dredging Company, a subsidiary of the Chinese State Owned Enterprise (SOE) CCCC Dredging.

⁶² United States, U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2020 Report...*, 463; Reuters.com, "China's latest weapon against Taiwan: the sand dredger, by Yimou Lee," last updated 05 February 2021, <https://graphics.reuters.com/TAIWAN-CHINA/SECURITY/jbyvrnzerve/index.html>. In terms of Chinese dredgers, Taiwan Coast Guard intercepted two in 2017, 71 in 2018, 600 in 2019, and nearly 4,000 in 2020.

⁶³ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 114.

⁶⁴ United States, U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2020 Report...*, 463. In 2019, the PLAN completed construction of its first helicopter amphibious assault ship.

⁶⁵ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 114. As of 2020, the PLA is capable of various amphibious operations of small occupied islands but not a full-scale invasion of Taiwan.

alone,⁶⁶ the latter is more serious. With increased wear and mounting maintenance requirements, Taiwan's military assets are mechanically degrading faster than parts and replacements can be procured and delivered from the US.⁶⁷ Ultimately, assuming that the personnel in Taiwan's woefully ill-equipped and under-strength military⁶⁸ can sustain this operational tempo, constant erosion in materiel readiness will have a cumulative detrimental impact on morale and overall military capability. In short, China is artfully drawing Taiwan's teeth.

Accompanying the erosion of Taiwan's military is a concerted effort to pressure the island nation economically. While the effects of illegal fishing on a mass scale have a large impact on Taiwan's legitimate economy, it is compounded by the damage caused by dredging to both fish stocks and underwater cables, especially around Taiwan's isolated Matsu island group.⁶⁹ Additional efforts include, attempting to influence the outcome by restricting tourism to Taiwan in the lead up to Tsai's re-election,⁷⁰ or detaining Singaporean military equipment for several months to discourage foreign militaries from exercising with Taiwan.⁷¹ Other activities involve applying sanctions and financial penalties upon multinational companies and airlines who describe Taiwan as a country, rather than a province of China.⁷² In these ways, Beijing can

⁶⁶ Reuters.com, "China launches 'gray-zone' warfare... Air sorties in 2020 alone cost an additional \$903 million (USD).

⁶⁷ Ibid. Tsai has committed to spending an additional \$16 billion (USD) to bolster her defence capabilities.

⁶⁸ Reuters.com, "China launches 'gray-zone' warfare... This is particularly critical for Taiwan's reserves which are far short of the 188,000 believed to be needed to defend the island.

⁶⁹ Reuters.com, "China's latest weapon against Taiwan: the sand dredger... While there were no occurrences in 2019, in 2020 Chinese dredgers damaged five undersea communications cables totaling \$2 million (USD) in damages.

⁷⁰ Council on Foreign Relations, "Unpacking the China-Taiwan Relationship by Eleanor Albert," last updated 22 January 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations>.

⁷¹ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone...", 120. Following a 2016 exercise with Taiwan, Singaporean military equipment was detained in Hong Kong for two months as a signal for Singapore to ease this annual exercise.

⁷² United States, U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2020 Report...*, 463.

subtly exercise its economic dominance⁷³ even as the island tries desperately to diversify its economy away from mainland dependence.⁷⁴

In analyzing China's UW methods, there is a clear use of aggressive diplomacy, military and paramilitary intimidation, agitating with its State-Owned Enterprises (SOE), sovereignty incursions, IO, and economic coercion within the grey zone.⁷⁵ Subsequently, the psychological, public opinion, and 'lawfare' effects of its Three Warfares strategy are apparent. Therefore, by slowly eroding President Tsai's legitimacy as a protector and provider while sapping her people's will to resist, Beijing is channeling Sun Tzu and subduing Taiwan without fighting. With no measurable repercussions for this activity, the CCP has no reason to stop.

DISRUPTING CHINA'S STRATEGY

By moral influence I mean that which causes people to be in harmony with their leaders, so that they will accompany them in life and unto death without fear of mortal peril.

- Sun Tzu, *The Art of Modern Warfare*⁷⁶

Should the West be concerned with the status of China's renegade province?⁷⁷ First, as a democratic state that respects the rule of law and human rights,⁷⁸ it is considered "like-minded" by Western countries.⁷⁹ Additionally, as the US's ninth largest trading partner,⁸⁰ Taiwan is a

⁷³ Tanner, Murray Scot, "Economic Factors: Evaluating Taiwan's Vulnerability," in *Chinese Economic Coercion Against Taiwan: A Tricky Weapon to Use*, (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, 2007. Accessed March 19, 2021), 75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg507osd.12.75>. While China could apply significant economic pain on Taiwan, the effects would likely be short term and unlikely to force the DPP to concede on sovereignty issues.

⁷⁴ Foreign Policy.com, "Taiwan Shows How to Carefully Snip Chinese Economic Ties, by Hilton Yip," last updated 24 July 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/24/taiwan-china-economic-ties-decoupling/>.

⁷⁵ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone....", 27. Typically there are seven categories of China's Grey Zone activities, "military intimidation, paramilitary activities, co-opting of state-affiliated businesses, manipulation of borders, information operations, lawfare and diplomacy, and economic coercion.

⁷⁶ Ota, Fumio, "Sun Tzu in Contemporary Chinese Strategy....", 80; McNeilly, Mark, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern Warfare*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 180.

⁷⁷ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021....", 29.

⁷⁸ Centre for Strategic & International Studies, "What Is the U.S. "One China" Policy....", 6.

⁷⁹ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021....", 55.

⁸⁰ Centre for Strategic & International Studies, "What Is the U.S. "One China" Policy....", 6. As of 2015.

model of stability and prosperity in the region. Moreover, beyond its strong democratic institutions,⁸¹ as shown in Figure 1, Taiwan's position at the centre of the "First Island Chain,"⁸² is of significant strategic political and military value. Should Taiwan fall, not only would it crush US prestige in the region,⁸³ but the PLAN could dominate the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) in North Asia, have access to the Western Pacific, and be free to threaten Japan and South Korea. In short, Taiwan is the key to a commanding military position in Asia.⁸⁴



Figure 1 – Geographic Boundaries of the First and Second Island Chains

Source: United States. Department of Defense. *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2006: Annual Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006.

<https://fas.org/nuke/guide/china/dod-2006.pdf>.

⁸¹ Centre for Strategic & International Studies, "What Is the U.S. "One China" Policy...", 6.

⁸² Reuters.com, "China launches 'gray-zone' warfare... The "First Island Chain," are the islands running from the Japanese archipelago to the North and South to the Philippines and Borneo.

⁸³ Mad Scientist Laboratory Blog, "Disrupting the "Chinese Dream... This would reinforce fears of US isolationism, threaten other regional alliances, and alienates other states.

⁸⁴ Mad Scientist Laboratory Blog, "Disrupting the "Chinese Dream..."

While the PRC's actions certainly highlight its might relative to Taiwan, it does not do so from a position of invincibility. Despite all the advantages of its authoritarian system, the CCP and President Xi in particular, are driven by the need to not only increase China's global and regional influence, but also shore up their domestic legitimacy. Both of these are dependent upon China's continued economic prosperity.⁸⁵ In the case of the former, China's global diplomatic influence is a result of its economic ties and massive infrastructure investments⁸⁶ that include its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).⁸⁷ However, even with its profitable "Going Out" strategy,⁸⁸ Beijing continues to increase its debt-financed capital⁸⁹ while also looking for foreign partners to share in its clearly unaffordable⁹⁰ BRI projects. Also, China is still struggling to escape its "Middle Income Trap"⁹¹ whereby its rising labour force wages price it out of labour-intensive commodities yet it is unable to compete in higher-value activities at scale.⁹² In terms of global economic support and or other partnerships, with the CCP's official policy of shunning official alliances,⁹³ China has little international support apart from a fragile strategic alignment with Russia and Iran.⁹⁴ Furthermore, despite its "Win-Win" shibboleth,⁹⁵ China's failure to reach a consensus on a Joint Code of Conduct with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

⁸⁵ Asia Society Policy Institute, "China's Strategic Vision, Strengths, and Vulnerabilities, Kevin Rudd's Address at the West Point Senior Conference," last updated 9 April 2019, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/chinas-strategic-vision-strengths-and-vulnerabilities>.

⁸⁶ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021...", 34.

⁸⁷ Asia Society Policy Institute, "China's Strategic Vision, Strengths..."

⁸⁸ Macaes, Bruno, *Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order*, (London: C. Hurst US & Co. (Publisher) Ltd., 2018), 89.

⁸⁹ Dibb, Paul and John Lee, "Why China Will Not Become the Dominant Power in Asia," in *Security Challenges*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2014), 4, https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1437/sc10_3_dibb_lee.pdf.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Dibb, Paul and John Lee, "Why China Will Not Become...", 4.

⁹² Macaes, Bruno, *Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order...*, 76.

⁹³ People's Republic of China, The State Council, "Full Text: China's National Defense...", 7-8.

⁹⁴ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021...", 34.

⁹⁵ Youtube.com, "China: Power and Prosperity," PBS NewsHour, last updated 22 November 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JovtmKFxi3c&list=PLNVjMkkCPYKctJU7_fmYJEUsfkGjL7WfG&index=3.

(ASEAN)⁹⁶ demonstrates how Xi's increasingly common might-is-right approach in the IP region⁹⁷ has disaffected his close neighbours. In short, China has few true friends.⁹⁸ Certainly, China has singular economic and military power, but it is not yet strong enough to subdue a prospective cooperative alliance comprised of the increasingly numerous offended, or anxious global states Beijing has alienated.⁹⁹

Domestically, having established that prosperity is the critical ingredient for sustained social stability, the continued political survival of Xi and his CCP is tied to maintaining an annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 6%.¹⁰⁰ However, in addition to being the world's largest consumer of energy China accounts for 20% of global population with only 11% of the Earth's arable land. With China's dependency upon imported energy and food,¹⁰¹ much of which flows through strategic chokepoints such as the Strait of Malacca,¹⁰² sustaining this growth is fragile. Therefore, the CCP obsesses about the security of its supply routes to the extent that even a slight restriction in the flow goods would immediately resonate with Beijing.¹⁰³

When considering options to seize the competitive advantage over Beijing and compel a change in behaviour towards Taiwan, the answer points to a military and economic cooperative

⁹⁶ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 110. Despite negotiating since 2019, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have failed to reach a consensus on a joint Code of Conduct.

⁹⁷ Japan Times.co, "What the Quad is and isn't by Stephen Nagy," last updated 19 April 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2021/03/19/commentary/japan-commentary/the-quad-australia-india-the-united-states/>.

⁹⁸ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021...", 34.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 36. If other democratic nations join with the US and its formal allies, it would account for approximately 75% of global GDP.

¹⁰⁰ Asia Society Policy Institute, "China's Strategic Vision, Strengths, and Vulnerabilities... CCP leadership have repeatedly demonstrated that they will intervene fiscally, monetarily, or administratively to ensure 6% economic growth regardless of the impact to long-term economic reform plans.

¹⁰¹ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021...", 34.

¹⁰² United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 133. Approximately 80% of China's energy needs flows through the Strait of Malacca.

¹⁰³ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021...", 34.

alliance of Western and like-minded IP region nations. By working together an alliance could present developing countries with economic alternatives to Beijing and the allure of its BRI projects and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AAIB).¹⁰⁴ The effect of this cooperative effort would certainly draw down China's diplomatic influence in multilateral forums such as the United Nations (UN).¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, by strengthening ties through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP),¹⁰⁶ an expanded version of the "Quad,"¹⁰⁷ or the new Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision (FOIP),¹⁰⁸ an alliance would also lure essential foreign investors¹⁰⁹ away from China and slow the economic juggernaut that is the PRC. Subsequently, faced with the budgetary challenges of competing priorities between defence spending and establishing the social infrastructure required for its aging population,¹¹⁰ the CCP would need to delay some larger defence project milestones¹¹¹ to maintain social stability.¹¹² If managed carefully, so that China is pressured but not driven into recession,¹¹³ this allied economic pressure approach would encourage Beijing to moderate its UW global activities and conform to the rules-based order (RBO).¹¹⁴ But it will take time. Finally, to

¹⁰⁴ Asia Society Policy Institute, "China's Strategic Vision, Strengths, and Vulnerabilities..."

¹⁰⁵ Sun, Yun, "Africa in China's Foreign Policy," (John L. Thornton China Center and Africa Growth Initiative, Brookings Institution, 2014), 1. Largely tied to its economic influence, China partner nations provide support for its One China policy and its other foreign policy agendas.

¹⁰⁶ Warontherocks.com, "The Next National Defense Strategy, by Benjamin Jensen And Nathan Packard," last updated 30 November, 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/11/the-next-national-defense-strategy/>.

¹⁰⁷ Japan Times.co. "What the Quad is and isn't by Stephen Nagy... While currently limited to Australia, India, Japan and the US, the Quad is not a formal alliance for military support, but a cooperative collective that espouses values such as the Rules-Based Order (RBO).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., the FOIP is another example of IP states, including the US and Japan, working together to inculcate regional peace, stability, and RBO.

¹⁰⁹ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 17.

¹¹⁰ Dibb, Paul and John Lee, "Why China Will Not Become...", 7-9. China lacks the social infrastructure to care for an aging population that by 2035 will resemble the demographics of Norway or Denmark.

¹¹¹ Mad Scientist Laboratory Blog, "Disrupting the "Chinese Dream... Xi Jinping has set 2049 as the long-term to fully deliver on his new PLA that will "Fight and Win."

¹¹² Asia Society Policy Institute, "China's Strategic Vision, Strengths, and Vulnerabilities..."

¹¹³ United States, Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments...*, 7. Recession would delegitimize the CCP and lead to dangerous instability.

¹¹⁴ Gershaneck, Kerry K., "To Win without Fighting: Defining...", 13. Beijing's aggressive political warfare and influence activities are often referred to as Sharp Power.

reinforce this stick-and-carrot approach, an alliance would also need to abandon strategic ambiguity¹¹⁵ and demonstrate a robust military blockade capability to strangle China's energy imports. As a result, with the US leading under a strong unambiguous policy,¹¹⁶ a unified alliance could insist that both Taiwan and the CCP work together towards a peaceful resolution on equal terms.¹¹⁷

Regarding Canada's role in this process, much like other members, it would need to coordinate and actively engage its DIME instruments to implement its own WoN strategy. This approach must both counter the PRC's Canada-focused UW efforts¹¹⁸ and support the proposed alliance. In this latter task, by demonstrating consistency and commitment in a comprehensive regional approach,¹¹⁹ Canada's strengths in developing long-term relationships¹²⁰ would help grow an effective alliance of like-minded nations.¹²¹ Another critical element is that Canada's democratic system precludes the totalitarian control of its government, academia, and commercial organs. However, similar to the Active Measures Working Group established in the

¹¹⁵ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone...", 12.

¹¹⁶ Morris, Lyle J., Michael J. Mazarr, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Stephanie Pezard, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Keep, "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone...", 14.

¹¹⁷ Cimmino, Jeffrey and Matthew Kroenig, "Global Strategy 2021...", 65. While the PRC has exploited strategic ambiguity to their advantage, it is also a recipe for tactical miscalculation that could lead to strategic disaster.

¹¹⁸ Manthorpe, Jonathan, *Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influence and Intimidation in Canada*. (Toronto: Cormorant Books Inc., 2019), 263. According to the 2018 CSIS Academic Outreach conference report, Canada is a target of the full spectrum of the CCP's influence efforts.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. This is essential to counter the more common perspective that Canada is a fair-weather friend of its partners in the IP region.

¹²⁰ Goldfarb, Danielle, "Why Canada's Global Commerce Policy Needs to Lean In," in *The World Won't Wait - Why Canada Needs to Rethink its International Policies*, ed. by Roland Paris and Taylor Owen, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 30.

¹²¹ Youtube.com, "Canada's Strategic Move: Stepping up in the Indo-Pacific, Jonathan Berkshire Miller," The Macdonald-Laurier Institute, last updated 23 March 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrxfqrdi6u0&list=PLNVjMkkCPYKctJU7_fmYJEUstkGjL7WfG&index=4. The basis for this exists already with the CPTPP, the Qaud, and FOIP and thus it would draw on the strengths of each.

US during the Cold War,¹²² it could form an empowered and effective interagency and interdepartmental working group (IIWG). Therefore, it is not only possible for Canada coordinate its DIME instruments to support this WoN grand strategy,¹²³ but essential.¹²⁴

As a DIME instrument, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has a significant role. Specifically, this begins with more consistent and enduring engagement within the IP region. By forming partnerships with IIWG designated states,¹²⁵ the CAF would support Canada's overarching WoN approach and its role within the alliance. Additionally, as a physical manifestation of Canada's shift in focus to the IP, the CAF should consider redistributing its capital assets to match its growing commitment to this region.¹²⁶ Finally, with Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) representing the CAF in the IIWG, CJOC would take the lead in aligning the CAF's capacity building activities¹²⁷ with the international partners and goals outlined in Canada's WoN approach. Finally, in considering how to support a potential alliance blockade mission, the CAF should prepare to generate and contribute essential niche capabilities, such as submarines, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) teams and trainers, and heavy-lift aviation.¹²⁸ Therefore, by actively integrating in Canada's WoN approach, the CAF could

¹²² Schoen, Fletcher and Christopher J. Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference," in *Institute for National Strategic Studies Strategic Perspectives, No. 11*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2012), 115.

¹²³ Canada. Global Affairs Canada, *Departmental Plan 2020-2021*, (Ottawa: Global Affairs Canada, 2020), 8. This would replace the piecemeal GAC-centric approach currently in place.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹²⁵ Canada, Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2017), 50.

¹²⁶ Canada.com. Canadian Armed Forces. "Canadian Armed Force bases and support units." Last visited 23 May 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/bases-support-units.html>. Less submarines, current RCN and RCAF disposition still greatly favours the Atlantic and Europe.

¹²⁷ Canada, Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged...*, 86.

¹²⁸ Dibb, Paul and John Lee, "Why China Will Not Become...", 20.

contribute to allied efforts in resisting or countering Chinese military adventurism¹²⁹ and support the political, economic and security developments in this increasingly important region.¹³⁰

CONCLUSION

Form alliances with neighboring states at strategically vital intersections.

- Sun Tzu, *The Art of Warfare*¹³¹

With long standing animosity, Taiwan and mainland China have a precarious relationship. With China's dream of national unity and US's strategic ambiguity, this has evolved into a potential flashpoint. This paper investigated both Beijing's UW approach and the motives that have made it a preferred strategy. By applying UW alone, China believes that it can achieve unity on its terms while avoiding an armed US response.

In terms of China's means and methods, it was argued that Beijing's grey zone activities stem from applying its legitimate and illegitimate DIME instruments. With aggressive diplomacy, military and paramilitary intimidation, agitating with its state-owned enterprises, sovereignty incursions, IO, and economic coercion, Beijing is progressing its Three Warfares strategy to exhaust and ultimately subjugate a subdued Taiwan. With no concerted response or repercussions from the US and its allies, China will likely be successful.

While the West could remain ambivalent, Taiwan is of significant strategic value to the US and its allies. Certainly, China possesses enough strength and advantage over Taiwan to achieve its ends. However, with the CCP's dependence on China's continued economic prosperity to remain in power, there is a vulnerability that can be exploited. With an alliance of likeminded countries, it is possible to apply economic pressure to encourage China to respect the

¹²⁹ Dibb, Paul and John Lee, "Why China Will Not Become...", 20.

¹³⁰ Canada, Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged...*, 90.

¹³¹ Sun-Tzu, *The Art of Warfare: The First English Translation Incorporating The Recently Discovered Yin-Ch'Ueh-Shan Texts*, translated by Roger T. Ames, ed. by Robert G. Henricks, (New York: Random House Inc, 1993), 208.

RBO. Furthermore, with Beijing's reliance on imported energy, the threat of a maritime blockade would serve as an effective motivator for both Taiwan and the CCP to cooperate on a peaceful resolution to the unity question.

With its interest in the IP region, Canada must play an active role in creating this projected alliance by building relationships and providing leadership. However, to be effective, Canada must coordinate its own DIME instruments to progress a WoN strategy. In this process, the CAF must also contribute by ensuring it aligns with the government's plans. Therefore, by redistributing effort to support the IP region while contributing niche capabilities, the CAF would play its critical part. Ultimately, if all likeminded countries work together, not only is it possible for them to counter Beijing's unacceptable UW activities, but they will ensure that China's 'kinder' conquest of Taiwan does not succeed.

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