



## **Responding to China's Strategic Use of Combined Effects**

**By Thomas A. Drohan**

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## Executive Summary

China is wielding superior strategies that envelop opponents with expedient instruments of national power. Drawing from a rich tradition of comprehensive and indirect stratagems, Chinese leaders use a variety of methods notably absent in US strategy.

The core of Chinese strategy consists of combining preventative and causative effects, such as defend and coerce, deter and compel, dissuade and persuade, secure and induce. By combining these different effects, China forces others into disadvantageous outcomes. This paper reveals Chinese strategy as complex forms of confrontation and cooperation, and recommends a countervailing US strategy of combined effects.

Chinese strategy is based on simple distinctions that produce complex warfare. The operating logic is this: psychological and physical tools target an actor's will and capability to create complex effects difficult to counter. In psychological confrontation, China intimidates will and neutralizes capability to Deter – Compel. In psychological cooperation, China assures will and enhances capability to *Dissuade - Persuade*. In physical confrontation, China punishes will and denies capability to Defend - Coerce. In physical cooperation, China demonstrates will and exercises capability to *Secure - Induce*. These differences create inexhaustible permutations.

Using this language, we examine variants of combined effects that the People's Republic of China (PRC) has constructed to secure its territorial integrity. The cases involve 16 border disputes since the PRC's founding in 1949. Overall, China's pattern is to lead with inducement and follow up with other effects to isolate, divide and force accommodation by its intended targets.

In order to compete with China's multiple effects, the U.S. needs offsets that integrate advanced technologies into synergistic strategies. Superior weapons technology is not enough. To prevail against China's comprehensive strategy, American military power needs to contribute to the sustainment of combined effects. This is no simple feat for any government, but it has been a chronic challenge for pluralistic democracies to pull off. US national security strategy needs to organize its fragmented national capabilities into flexible lines of effect.

Unfortunately, the National Security Strategy (NSS) is written at the level of values, interests, and overarching goals and is supposed to inform the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), the National Military Strategy (NMS), and several other national strategies such as the National Strategy for Homeland Security and the National Strategy for Counterterrorism. These subordinate documents could advance the values, interests, and goals expressed in the NSS if they provided policy guidance for orchestrating combined effects, which they do not.

US strategy has neither deterred nor defeated China's territorial aggression, unless we define that narrowly as armed attack. We need an operating strategy that counters the priority threats mentioned in the NSS: a major energy or market disruption that could trigger a global economic crisis as a result of armed conflict in the South China Sea; attacks on the US homeland, US or allied citizens and critical infrastructure in East Asia; proliferation or use of WMD by China or other opportunistic or security-seeking states in the region.

We recommend a strategy that confronts Chinese aggression with regional cooperation, leveraged by a collective commitment to applying dilemma-inducing effects to ensure access to international space and to preserve legitimate sovereignty claims of all states. The US should adopt a five-pronged strategy of: diplomatic Compellence; informational Persuasion; military Security, Defense and Inducement; economic Inducement; and social Dissuasion. This combined effect shapes Chinese decision making toward trusted, shared leadership in the region.

Combined arms superiority by itself is not an effective response to the kind of warfare China is waging. Technological offsets must be coupled with upgraded strategy. A combined effects approach can help integrate effects from the joint force and other instruments of power. Failure to adjust our thinking permits actors possessing the capacity for combined effects unimpeded capability to impose powerful dilemmas upon us. Combined effects power is unleashing forms of confrontation and cooperation will alter the meaning of security as they shape the rules of a future international order.

# Responding to China's Strategic Use of Combined Effects

By Thomas A. Drohan

There are no more than five cardinal notes, yet in combination, they produce more sounds than could possibly be heard; there are no more than five cardinal colors, yet in combination, they produce more shades and hues than could possibly be seen; there are no more than five cardinal tastes, yet in combination, they produce more flavors than could possibly be tasted. For gaining strategic advantage in battle, there are no more than ‘surprise’ and ‘straightforward operations,’ yet in combination, they produce inexhaustible possibilities.<sup>1</sup>

~Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

China is wielding superior strategies of confrontation and cooperation that envelop opponents with expedient instruments of national power. Since its founding in 1949, leaders of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have managed to create hybrid, asymmetric combinations of effects to reclaim what it regards as lost territory. Most recently, China’s reclamation operations in the South China Sea effectively have seized territory by constructing illegal islands.

In contrast, US strategy is fixated on combat capability for armed conflict. In fact, our military doctrine defines asymmetric in terms of dissimilar capabilities and methods rather than with respect to effects, and does not even recognize hybrid warfare by unarmed actors. The inability of US strategy to conceptualize, much less execute, combined effects is apparent in our national strategies. US leaders consistently separate rather than combine confrontation from cooperation.

This paper will explain what combined effects strategy looks like, present Chinese examples and the absence of US examples, and recommend a countervailing US strategy. As a first step, we have to think differently.

## The language of combined effects

Viewed from a perspective of combined effects power rather than combined arms warfare, and China’s strategy of complex warfare becomes clear. Combined effects power asks: *what effects do we want to achieve using both hard and soft power?*<sup>2</sup> In answering this question, Chinese leaders cooperate with and confront internal and external actors through a variety of physical and psychological methods.

Broadly speaking, China pursues four basic options: two for confrontation and two for cooperation. The following statements present these options as a process of strategy described in the order of ends, means, and ways (Ends are Capitalized):

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of Warfare*, ed. and trans. Roger Ames (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 119-120.

<sup>2</sup> Ervin J. Rokke, Thomas A. Drohan, and Terry P. Pierce, “Combined Effects Power,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 73, (2d Quarter 2014), 26-31, 30.

Confrontation:

- (1) Compel or Deter an actor through psychological means of intimidating an actor's will or neutralizing a capability.
- (2) Coerce or Defend against an actor through physical means of punishing an actor's will or denying the execution of a capability.

Cooperation:

- (3) Persuade or Dissuade an actor through psychological means of assuring an actor's will or enhancing his capability
- (4) Induce or Secure an actor through physical means of demonstrating will or exercising a capability

This approach differs from US policies that assume confrontation and cooperation are mutually exclusive. Indeed, US diplomacy tends to separate issues into tracks to focus on areas of agreement. Cooperative relationships are regarded as intrinsically good. Chinese security policy, however, confronts and cooperates at the same time – and succeeds.<sup>3</sup> By deploying more combinations of effects, China imposes dilemmas that force actors into acquiescing to disadvantageous outcomes. Such strategies challenge binary assumptions about security being a condition of *either* peace or war, *either* cooperation or confrontation, and involving *either* friends or enemies. Unless we frame these compartmentalized concepts as blended wholes, we will fail to conceive of the strategic permutations that China routinely generates.

The language of combined effects speaks to the broad scope and hybrid methods of state and non-state actors. Global access to information and local networks enables all sorts of influence operations. To compete in this environment, we need to imagine how to achieve desired effects with a resource appropriate to the overarching context of the situation. The following logic restates the generic process of strategy – ends, means, and ways – in terms of effects, tools, and targets, respectively. Our purpose is to understand how Chinese strategy employs nuanced forms of confrontation and cooperation.

The operating logic is this: psychological and physical tools target an actor's will and capability to bring about different types of effects (*cooperative* effects are *italicized*):

Logic of Strategy: Tools on Targets for Effects (Confrontation / Cooperation)

Psychological:      intimidate will/neutralize capability to Deter - Compel (Dt – Cp)

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<sup>3</sup> Fravel's study of border disputes 1949-2006 concludes that China cooperated/compromised in 17 of 23 cases. His approach to cooperation includes bargaining with the "claim strength" of being able to occupy and militarily control the disputed territory. In contrast, my combined effects approach views such bargains as confrontational (intimidating or punishing will, and neutralizing or denying capability) and cooperative (assuring or demonstrating will, and enhancing or exercising capability). See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 27-28.

assure will/enhance capability to *Dissuade - Persuade* (*Ds - P*)

Physical:           punish will/deny capability to *Defend - Coerce* (*Df - Cr*)  
                         demonstrate will/exercise capability to *Secure - Induce* (*S - I*)

Note that psychological and physical tools are characterized in terms of what they can do to the will/capability: intimidate/neutralize and assure/enhance; punish/deny and demonstrate/exercise. The purpose here is to recast instruments of power beyond favorite toolkits to include any available and appropriate means--an idea, a weapon, an act. Such diversity of tools acting on will and/or capability creates confrontational and cooperative effects. (For a visual depiction of this logic, see *Appendix A*.)

Each of these effects is paired with its opposite confrontational or cooperative effect. The four pairings mark the end points of four spectral blends of opposites. This use of dialectical and holistic thinking reveals combinations of confrontational and cooperative interactions. For readers with a knowledge of Chinese characters, the use of abbreviations to represent these effects is similar--simple characters may be combined to create a compound character with a new meaning.

Using this language, we examine variants of combined effects that the People's Republic of China (PRC) constructs to secure its vision of territorial integrity. For China, geographic boundaries are an acute national security issue. Since its founding in 1949, the PRC has disputed borders with every single one of its surrounding neighbors. For a number of historical and political reasons, China's leaders continue to perceive and assign meaning to core threats in terms of moral order, central authority, and territorial integrity.<sup>4</sup>

Like the dynastic rulers of imperial China, the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) and its People's Liberation Army (PLA) have shaped and seized opportunities to acquire territory deemed integral to a Chinese identity. In doing so, Chinese security strategy blends diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and social (DIMES) tools to achieve desired effects.<sup>5</sup> What do these combinations look like?

The next section presents combined effects that have restored much, but not all, of China's claimed land and maritime borders and to a lesser extent its airspace. These are comprehensive campaigns that feature patience, deception, disruption, and flexibility.

### **China's combinations of effects**

Military Coercion and Diplomatic Compellence; Economic Inducement and Social Coercion   China's invasion of Tibet in 1950 coercively occupied the country and

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<sup>4</sup> These three tendencies are taken to be distinctive, not unique, features of a dominant security culture in China. See Chapter 2, "Chinese Security Culture" in Thomas A. Drohan, *A New Strategy for Complex Warfare: Combined Effects in East Asia* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2016), 25-41.

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Jim Smith of the USAF Institute for National Security Studies for pointing out the added value of "S" (social) for what otherwise is recognized as a "DIME" framework that ignores cultural factors.

compelled the Seventeen Point Agreement, which promised autonomy. After suppressing revolts against national policies and control in 1954 and 1959, Beijing established the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1965. Economic inducements brought Chinese workers and business owners, and increased ethnic tensions. Now social programs and security forces coerce compliance with Chinese laws and culture.<sup>6</sup> Against this four-part effect, an India-based government in exile advocates for Tibetan independence.<sup>7</sup>

#### Diplomatic Compellence and Military Coercion

In 1954, China's artillery bombardment of offshore islands, Taiwan-occupied Kinmen and Matsu, overtly meant to coerce the inhabitants to surrender. As Taiwan increased its garrisons, Beijing's diplomatic posturing and propaganda compelled Taiwan and US attention away from a surprise assault on Yijiangshan Island in 1955. That invasion coerced an evacuation operation conducted by Taiwan and US naval forces, followed by China's unopposed takeover of the rest of the Tachen Islands. Bombardments of Kinmen and Matsu continued in the form of propaganda leaflets.<sup>8</sup>

#### Military Coercion and Diplomatic Persuasion

After clashes along the China-Burma border in 1955, China and Burma negotiated the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Non-Aggression of 1960.<sup>9</sup> The Union of Burma's priority in consolidating control over communists and separatist groups complemented China's interests in denying territory to Chinese Nationalist Party guerrillas. The need to demarcate the border provided the pretext for the PLA to attack and eliminate Chinese nationalist forces in Burma. The military-diplomatic effect strengthened bilateral ties while signaling to India that China might cooperate on border issues.

#### Diplomatic Inducement and Military Coercion

In 1954, China and India signed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Agreement to permit trade and religious visits in disputed Tibet. The terms induced India to recognize China's occupation of Tibet.<sup>10</sup> With this advantage, China exploited Indian support of Tibetan rights when the next major uprising occurred (1959). As a result, anti-Chinese sentiment in Tibet induced anti-Indian sentiment in China. China completed the

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<sup>6</sup> For a balanced view on ethnic tensions and population policies and trends, see Andrew Martin Fischer, "Population Invasion versus Urban Exclusion in the Tibetan Areas of Western China," *Population and Development Review* 34-4 (December 2008), 631-662. [www.case.edu/affil/tibert/documents/fischer.pdf](http://www.case.edu/affil/tibert/documents/fischer.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> The Central Tibetan Administration headquartered in India claims foreign missions in 11 countries. See <http://tibet.net>.

<sup>8</sup> For an illustrated account of propaganda leaflets sent via artillery shells, balloons, and boats from both sides of the Taiwan Strait, see SGM Herbert A. Friedman (Ret.), "Nationalist and Communist Chinese Propaganda Leaflets," <http://www.psywarrior.com/NationalistChinesePropaganda.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Burma and China basically traded formerly British-controlled territories. See Luke T. Lee, "Treaty Relations of the People's Republic of China: A Study of Compliance," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* Vol. 166: 244 (1967), 244-314; 254-255.

[http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6121&context=penn\\_law\\_review](http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6121&context=penn_law_review).

<sup>10</sup> For instance, the agreement's terms specify locations in "the Tibet Region of China." *Agreement Between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse Between Tibet Region of China and India*, Commonwealth Legal Information Institute's Indian Treaty Series. [www.commonli.org/in/othertreaties/INTSer/1954/5.html](http://www.commonli.org/in/othertreaties/INTSer/1954/5.html).

combined effect by invading India-claimed Jammu and Kashmir in 1962, defeating unprepared and outnumbered Indian forces to seize the Aksai Chin region.<sup>11</sup>

#### Military Deterrence and Defense; Informational Persuasion

During a period of border conflict and broad Sino-Soviet tension (1960-1989), PLA deterrence of the Soviet Union's higher-tech conventional and numerically superior nuclear weapons relied on massive ground forces indoctrinated and mobilized for large offensives. Revolutionary doctrine portrayed this posture as defensive People's War. Subsequent modernization enabled the PLA to deter and defend against threats on more favorable terms. Current Party and military doctrine also infused ideological persuasion, sloganized this time as national development to safeguard sovereignty.<sup>12</sup> \

#### Diplomatic and Military Inducement

China's defeat of India (1962) helped induce Pakistan to strengthen relations with China, in order to isolate India.<sup>13</sup> China and Pakistan shared interests in resolving contested borders with India. China's seizure of Aksai Chin was consistent with a British proposal made to China in 1890, while India's claims were supported by a British survey in 1865.<sup>14</sup> That ambiguity and China's military victory against India induced Pakistan to cede Pakistan-occupied but India-claimed Kashmir to China. Since then PLA incursions in the Himalayas have increased, timed to exert diplomatic leverage.<sup>15</sup>

#### Social Inducement, Military Coercion, and Diplomatic Persuasion

China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), a social movement instigated by CCP Chairman Mao Zedong to purge Party rivals, induced the PLA to attack (1969) Soviet troops along the disputed Sino-Soviet border. In a series of diplomatic negotiations, China persuaded the partial retrocession (1995, 2003, and 2008) of territory imperial China had ceded to czarist Russia. Mao turned this triple effect inward when the Cultural Revolution got out of hand, using the PLA to coerce order on fanatic Red Guards who constituted the core of his ideological campaign in the first place.

#### Military Inducement and Coercion

In 1974, Chinese fishing vessels infiltrated South Vietnam-occupied Paracel islands, timed as US forces withdrew from South Vietnam. Chinese fisherman served as bait to

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<sup>11</sup> Hoffman's study of the 1962 war indicates that the Nehru government limited its policy response to immediate issues, to the detriment of long-term thinking. Steven A. Hoffman, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 67-68.

<sup>12</sup> See Zhang Xuliang, *The Science of Military Campaigns* (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2006), 89.

<sup>13</sup> China's ability to assess Pakistan's vulnerability was key to inducement. For a Pakistani perspective on the agreement to include advantages for Pakistan, see Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Significance of Pakistan-China Border Agreement of 1963," *Pakistan Horizon* 39.4(1986), 41-52. [www.jstor.org/stable/41394228](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41394228).

<sup>14</sup> The line proposed by British official W.H. Johnson charged with surveying India in 1865 placed Aksai Chin in India. The line proposed by British official George Macartney in 1899 to the Qing government placed most of Aksai Chin in China. See Hoffman, *India and the China Crisis*, "Chapter 2 "British Ambiguity and Indian Frontiers," 9-16.

<sup>15</sup> PLA forays into Indian-controlled Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh provoke responses to leverage favorable diplomatic positions and trade proposals (1984, 1997, 2003, 2005, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016).

induce South Vietnamese forces into the area. Chinese naval forces lying in wait coerced maneuvers and initial engagements. Naval reinforcements and airpower from Hainan Island then coerced a thorough defeat. China absorbed the winnings as part of Hainan Province established in 1987. The following year the PLA Navy sunk three Vietnamese ships, killing 70 soldiers enroute to Johnson South Reef in the Spratlys.

#### *Military Coercion, Persuasion and Defense*

In 1979, China invaded Vietnam for oppressing Chinese minorities, strengthening Soviet ties, and eliminating China's client regime in Cambodia. The PLA suffered heavy casualties, but indirectly demonstrated the Soviet Union's unwillingness to support Vietnam. Internally the operation exposed the technological inferiority of the PLA, enabling China's leader Deng Xiaoping to neutralize die-hard advocates of People's War. The overall effect coerced two splits (Soviet-Vietnam and Soviet-Cambodia) and persuaded PLA modernization that improved the defense of China's border.

#### *Diplomatic-Economic Inducement and Military Coercion*

A new set of maritime operations followed China's withdrawal of its invasion forces from Vietnam. The ensuing increase in bilateral ties facilitated China-contracted drilling in Vietnam-claimed portions of the Spratly islands. Beijing had established an oceanographic outpost in 1978, ratified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The expanded presence enticed Vietnam to conduct counter-surveys, which escalated into lop sided naval battles. Once again China induced conflict to coercively assert sovereignty in disputed waters.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Diplomatic Dissuasion and Economic Inducement*

Beijing dissuaded Myanmar military governments (1988-2010) from expanding external ties and induced business support through military relationships, oil pipelines, hydroelectric power and mining projects. Myanmar's democratic government is decidedly less receptive as China sought port access to the South China Sea. Beijing diplomats also applied diplomatic pressure on South Korea, leveraging its economic status as its largest trading partner in an attempt to dissuade Seoul officials from accepting US deployment of Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) batteries.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> According to two Chinese scholars, the oceanographic observation station in Nansha became "the only sign of de facto existence of China's sovereignty in the Nansha area." Xie Zheping and Zhang Xiaojin, "To Share and Teach--A Study on China's Cooperation with UNESCO," in Jinjun Zhao and Zhirui Chen, *Participation and Interaction: The Theory and Practice of China's Diplomacy* (Hackensack NJ: World Century Publishing, 2013), 201-246, 211.

<sup>17</sup> Since the South Korean government decision to deploy THAAD, China's Foreign Ministry protested the decision as destabilizing, China's Ministry of Information and Communication boycotted South Korean entertainment, and several South Korean groups conducted anti-THAAD demonstrations. Jenna Gibson, "Is China Already Taking Its Revenge for THAAD?" *The Diplomat*, August 3, 2016.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/08/is-china-already-taking-its-revenge-for-thaad/>. Choe Sang-Hun, "South Korean Villagers Protest Plans for U.S. Missile Defense System," *The New York Times*, [http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/07/14/world/asia/south-korea-thaad-us.html?\\_r=0](http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/07/14/world/asia/south-korea-thaad-us.html?_r=0).

### Diplomatic and Military Coercion

In 1995, China occupied disputed territory in the Spratlys on Mischief Reef. Subsequent negotiations with the Philippines led to a Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea frequently breached by an assortment of Chinese fishing vessels and armed ships. China's use of diplomatic coercion<sup>18</sup> expanded to other reefs including Scarborough Shoal. In 2012 a Philippine Navy frigate attempting to arrest Chinese fisherman with illegal catch was blocked by China Maritime Surveillance ships. This incident was the precipitating cause of the Philippines' successful legal challenge to China made the following year.

### Informational Persuasion and Social Compellence

China operates a vast information network to persuade overseas Chinese and other foreigners that its military and economic rise is innocuous.<sup>19</sup> White papers and videos like the one that played over 100 times a day in New York's Times Square<sup>20</sup> in the summer of 2016 reflect Beijing's commitment to manipulating information in targeted societies. Internally, Beijing compels citizens to support the liberation of territory with authoritative cultural narratives such as the China Dream, a harmonious society, national development, strategic rights, and China's peaceful rise.

## **China's strategy in the East and South China Seas**

China's territorial expansion accelerated as new capabilities provided more tools. In the 1990s, market reforms and industrial modernization boosted China's capacity to project power. Lawfare helped shape its contours. The domestic Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zones (1992) demonstrated China's will to secure territory variously claimed by every one of its maritime neighbors. China claimed sovereignty over an expansive south-middle-west arc into the Paracel and Spratly islands. Beijing signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1996. This served as another venue to persuade, deter, induce, compel, and coerce the acquisition of territory. With mixed results, China's combined effects fully radiate into maritime East Asia. The primary targets are Taiwan, Japan, Southeast Asian claimants, the United States, and any potential ally or partner. How do these strategies work?

Toward Taiwan, China persuades reunification and deters independence. The role of force in inducing this dilemma became obvious in 1995-1996, when Beijing launched unarmed missiles just north of Taiwan to intimidate voters prior to the first free presidential elections on the island. Pro-independence candidate Lee Teng-hui won the election, but the missile shots polarized Taiwan politics, tensing its dilemma of whether

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<sup>18</sup> Storey analyzes China's strategy as one that combines diplomacy with seizure of unoccupied territory: "...a gradual policy of establishing a greater physical presence in the South China Sea, without recourse to military confrontation." James Storey, "Creeping Assertiveness: China, the Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* Vol. 21, No. 1 (April 1999), 95-118, 99.

<sup>19</sup> Anne-Marie Brady, "China's Foreign Propaganda Machine." The Wilson Center's Kissinger Institute on China and the United States (October 2015). [www.wilsoncenter.org/article/chinas-foreign-propaganda-machine](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/chinas-foreign-propaganda-machine).

<sup>20</sup> Rahul Mishra, "Storm clouds gathering in the South China Sea," *East Asian Forum* (July 30, 2016). [www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/07/30/storm-clouds-gathering-in-the-south-china-sea/](http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/07/30/storm-clouds-gathering-in-the-south-china-sea/).

to reunify with or seek independence from China. Economic disruptions and fears of more threats led to calls in Taiwan for cross-Strait dialogue even as President Lee advocated independence. Other elements of China's strategy are to isolate Taiwan diplomatically and increase dependence on Chinese markets and finance. Under these pressures, alternating Nationalist Party and Democratic Progressive Party administrations in Taiwan have leveraged globalization to navigate a degree of independence while preserving a thriving democracy.<sup>21</sup>

Against Japan, China dispatches and facilitates civilian, military and paramilitary vessels into disputed territory. Since the 1990s, Chinese oil exploration and drilling operations have been fixtures in Tokyo's claimed exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Japan relinquished a portion of this contested space by proposing a median line that bisects the overlap of each EEZ claim. China does not recognize this as a boundary, and frequently intrudes onto Japan's side. Aggressive maneuvers and weapons-targeting against Japan's Self-Defense Forces operate to compel and coerce a reaction for further exploitation. Sharpening this antagonistic effect are China's state-run think tanks that run an information campaign portraying Chinese claims as innately defensive and Japan's as uniquely imperialistic.<sup>22</sup> On top of this, economic and diplomatic inducements try to elicit recognition that a dispute exists, which Tokyo refuses to concede.

At the same time, Beijing's diplomacy, trade, and financial initiatives, social media, and military operations induce accommodation of China's expansion by dissuading and deterring US endorsement of Japan's sovereignty claims. The US-Japan alliance commits the US to defend Japan and its administered territories against armed attack, but Washington does not recognize either nation's claim to sovereignty. This neutrality leaves China plenty of room for combined-effect operations. So in 2012 when Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko nationalized the Senkaku Islands also claimed by China, Beijing stirred up anti-Japanese nationalism, increased air and sea patrols, and announced the establishment of an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone.

CCP themes include strident messaging that urges Chinese citizens to resist the threat of foreign culture. Maintaining a national identity that supports single-Party rule is very much at stake. With that in mind, President (and Party General-Secretary and Central Military Commission Chairman) Xi Jinping envisions a China Dream: "national rejuvenation, improvement of people's livelihoods, prosperity, construction of a better society and military strengthening as the common dream of the Chinese people that can be best achieved under one party, Socialist rule."<sup>23</sup> All of this intends to strengthen Beijing's hold on a rising middle class, the real threat to authoritarian control.

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<sup>21</sup> Taiwan's democratically elected presidents include Lee Teng hui (Nationalist Party, 1988-2000), Chen Shui bian (Democratic Progressive Party, 2000-2008), Ma Ying-Jeou (Nationalist Party, 2008-2016), and Tsai Ing-wen (Democratic Progressive Party, 2016-present).

<sup>22</sup> A short list includes the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Development Research Center of the State Council, Academy of Military Science of the PLA, China Institute of International Studies, and China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

<sup>23</sup> See "Xi Jinping and the Chinese dream," *The Economist*, May 4, 2013.

<http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21577070-vision-chinas-new-president-should-serve-his-people->

With respect to Southeast Asian states, Beijing seeks to prevent unification against Chinese expansion. Because the 10 member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) restrict themselves to consensus rather than majority rule, China can deadlock the group on any given issue with just one state's vote. This helps China isolate targets such as Vietnam and the Philippines. In 2012, China compelled Cambodia, host of the annual ASEAN Foreign Ministers Conference, to omit from the final report any reference to the China-Philippines territorial dispute. This denied the issuance of a joint communiqué at a summit for the first time in ASEAN's history. In 2013, China's only state-authorized national map publisher, SinoMaps Press, signaled China's determination by publishing a map depicting 130 disputed maritime features as part of China.

China continued ratcheting up its combined effects. In 2014, Beijing proposed an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that induces ASEAN compliance with Chinese jurisdictional claims.<sup>24</sup> The massive One Belt One Road Island initiative financed largely by Chinese development banks is building infrastructure across Central Asia. At the same time, China accelerated its land reclamation throughout the Spratly Islands with construction and dredging operations. In 2015, the PLA began militarizing in ways that creatively seized land. By taking the initiative and setting new conditions, China cloaks confrontation as cooperation. In response, the US and other states engage China with less provocative and more compromising responses.<sup>25</sup>

In 2016, just before the ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague on claims made by the Philippines against China, the PLA Navy conducted a multi-fleet exercise in the South China Sea. After the court's unanimous ruling rejected nearly all of China's claims, China's State Council Information Office blamed the verdict on lies and a US ploy to prevent China's rise.<sup>26</sup>

The same month, China blocked a proposed joint ASEAN communiqué that would have referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration's decision, this time targeting

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[not-nationalist-state-xi-jinping](#); and Evan Osnos, "Can China Deliver the China Dream(s)?," *The New Yorker*, March 26, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-china/can-china-deliver-the-china-dreams>.

<sup>24</sup> According to the president of the Cambodian Institute for Strategic Studies, "ASEAN member nations will have to adjust their policies to reflect those [China's] interests in a realistic manner." Kung Phoak, "Why ASEAN should embrace Chinese initiatives," *East Asian Forum*.

[www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/10/01/why-asean-should-embrace-chinese-initiatives/](http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/10/01/why-asean-should-embrace-chinese-initiatives/).

<sup>25</sup> Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., "'We've Got to Continue to 'Engage' China: CNO Richardson,'" *Breaking Defense* (September 12, 2016), [http://breakingdefense.com/2016/09/weve-got-to-continue-to-engage-cno-richardson-on-china/?utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=34201854&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8TpX2k9NWbHXsPljm4sIAYIAoLYNNWb7za2iTBY5lETJLARJdjwVRROMwx1W6XxkaOYw5KH3DScp\\_ifxR1IxflDQS3Bw&\\_hsmi=34201854](http://breakingdefense.com/2016/09/weve-got-to-continue-to-engage-cno-richardson-on-china/?utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=34201854&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8TpX2k9NWbHXsPljm4sIAYIAoLYNNWb7za2iTBY5lETJLARJdjwVRROMwx1W6XxkaOYw5KH3DScp_ifxR1IxflDQS3Bw&_hsmi=34201854).

<sup>26</sup> "China attacks international court after South China Sea ruling." *Pinnacle Legal Support Services* (July 13, 2016). [www.pinnacle-investigations.co.uk/china-damns-international-court-after-south-china-sea-slapdown/](http://www.pinnacle-investigations.co.uk/china-damns-international-court-after-south-china-sea-slapdown/).

Cambodia and Laos.<sup>27</sup> China's Vice Foreign Minister announced the right to establish an air defense zone over the South China Sea and wage war. Combined arms warfare is part of the arrangement but not the only main tool. Well-publicized PLA Air Force and Navy combat patrols over the occupied areas demonstrate China's resolve to secure the islands.<sup>28</sup> Combined arms weaponry assures a deterrence already coerced through combined effects warfare.

Overall, China is pursuing the following combined effects to normalize its expansion in the East and South China Seas (abbreviations for cooperative effects are italicized):

- (a) toward Taiwan, induced persuasion and deterrence for eventual reunification: *I P Dt*
- (b) toward Japan, induced persuasion, compellence, and coercion to isolate Japan from US support, force recognition of and an overreaction to the dispute: *I P Cp Cr*
- (c) toward Southeast Asian states and potential United Nations support, induced persuasion, compellence, deterrence, and coercion to divide them into support of China's territorial claims: *I P Cp Dt Cr*
- (d) toward the United States, inducement to accommodate China's territorial expansion, and dissuasion, and deterrence of supporting Japan or contesting China's territorial expansionism: *IDs Dt*

In sum, China leads with inducement and follows with military, diplomatic, informational, and economic effects to isolate, divide, and force accommodation by its intended targets.

### The US needs more than technological “offsets”

All the preceding combinations of effects include direct and indirect shaping of the information environment to influence perceptions and decisions. To fully comprehend and counter China's combined effects, the US government must first understand the Chinese strategy, and then needs to upgrade its own strategy. At a minimum, we need to discern capabilities and intent among key Chinese leaders and influential groups, and develop effective counterstrategies. Within the Department of Defense, the use of structured analytics and virtual collaboration is spreading beyond intelligence professionals to include strategists, planners, and operators. Recent guidance

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<sup>27</sup> Nishihara Masashi points out that Laos and Cambodia have weak economies, are dependent on Chinese aid, and are not maritime claimants therefore are vulnerable to Chinese pressure. Masashi Nishihara, “A separate group for the ‘Maritime’ ASEAN nations,” *PacNet* #63 (August 25, 2016), <http://us8.campaign-archive2.com/?u=fd9b07c6818bebcd9951d95&id=6c7be&e=f488f2e0f0>.

<sup>28</sup> See Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, Cristina Garafolo, Astrid Cevallos and Arthur Chan, “China Signals Resolve with Bomber Flights Over the South China Sea,” *War on the Rocks* (August 2, 2016). <http://warontherocks.com/2016/08/china-signals-resolve-with-bomber-flights-over-the-south-china-sea/>

from the secretary of defense on military strategy for operations in the information environment places new emphasis on this vital aspect of warfare.<sup>29</sup>

To compete with China's multiple effects, the US needs offsets that integrate advanced technologies into synergistic strategies.<sup>30</sup> Superior weapons technology is not enough. As called for by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter with respect to operations in the information environment, "...the Department must be prepared to synchronize information programs, plans, messages, and products as part of a whole of government effort."<sup>31</sup>

It follows that US military power should contribute to the sustainment of dynamic, adaptable combined effects. This is no simple feat for any government, but it has been a chronic challenge for pluralistic democracies. To accomplish this, US national security strategy needs to organize assorted and otherwise fragmented national capabilities into flexible lines of effect.

The purpose of constructing lines of effect, as distinct from lines of operation (involving military activity) and lines of effort (involving military and/or other activities), is three-fold. First, to remind commanders and operators what desired effects are.<sup>32</sup> This clarity increases the likelihood that most appropriate tools on targets will be selected, and developed, to achieve and maintain a dynamic end-state.<sup>33</sup> Second, to elicit discussions about undesired effects as well, and subsequent nth-order effects. This process requires embracing complexity, minimizing or exploiting uncertainty, and assigning responsibilities for making decisions. Third, lines of effect focus collaboration on how to adjust effects, targets, and tools as circumstances change. Any agency or actor may be able to contribute to combined effects and would need to explain how, under what conditions, and attendant risks.

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<sup>29</sup> *Department of Defense Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment* (June 2016). <http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/DoD-Strategy-for-Operations-in-the-IE-Signed-20160613.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> For a conventional military power critique of an offset strategy that emphasizes critical technologies to support the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons, see Richard A. Bitzinger, *Third Offset Strategy and China's A2AD Capabilities*, Center for a New American Security's Alliance Requirements Roadmap Series (May 2016). [http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS\\_Bitzinger-third-offset-strategy.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS_Bitzinger-third-offset-strategy.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> The full quotation is: "Information is such as powerful tool, it is recognized as an element of U.S. National power—and as such, the Department must be prepared to synchronize information programs, plans, messages, and products as part of a whole of government effort." *Department of Defense Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment* (June 2016), 2.

<http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/DoD-Strategy-for-Operations-in-the-IE-Signed-20160613.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> "Line of operation" refers to the geographic orientation of a force in relation to an enemy or objective. "Line of effort" was developed to link military and nonmilitary activities toward desired conditions. *Joint Publication 5.0: Joint Operation Planning*, p. III-28. [www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp5\\_0.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp5_0.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> Joint operation planning doctrine (*JP 5.0*) prescribes lines of operation and lines of effort in support of objectives, which are themselves designed to bring about desired conditions for an end-state (the goal). Lines of effect would clarify how conditions can produce a combined effect. The combined effect helps maintain the end-state, which is not static.

Deliberately achieving confrontational and cooperative effects is not the US interagency's comfort zone. Most departments favor either cooperation or confrontation for the simpler purpose of sending a consistent message. Leaders often disagree on which approach is best at a given time and under different circumstances. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed the difficulty of changing undesirable Chinese behavior (in this case, unfair trade) given interdependent Chinese and US interests: "How do you walk away from China, a country that holds a trillion dollars in US Treasuries and with which we have a half trillion dollars in trade every year and at the same time say we're gonna launch a trade war against them at the same time we're asking them to pressure North Korea."<sup>34</sup>

Behind Gates' examples lurk Chinese tools that complicate an effective US response to unfair trade: currency manipulation, which increases China's central bank holdings of US Treasury securities; practices such as dumping and subsidized state-owned enterprises that increase China's trade surplus, thereby garnering foreign exchange reserves; and propping up nuclear North Korea with weapons and energy as leverage against the South Korea-US alliance. These tools cut both ways. China needs price stability to forestall unrest. China invests in the US because it's the safest place for its reserves. And, China loses international respect by supporting a brutally irresponsible North Korean regime. US strategy can take advantage of these vulnerabilities by combining confrontation with cooperation.

With clear decisions on what US national security combined effects are, lines of effect can focus resources more efficiently than separately provided capabilities in support of general goals. The key question, *what do we want to cause, and what do we want to prevent*, enables efforts to be assessed with respect to desired effects. Managing this critical decision provides needed focus for organizations with identities that are not connected to strategic effects. In the absence of such discipline, US responses to complex threats are at best, coordinated combined arms and diplomacy in pursuit of goals that are ambiguous (stability) or existential (boots on the ground, sea control, air superiority). At their worst, US responses complete our strategic capture. Turn, for example, to US Pacific Command's basic strategy:

In accordance with our national guidance, our desired end state is that the Asia-Pacific is secure and prosperous, underpinned by US leadership and a rules-based international order. To this end, we will strengthen alliances and partnerships, maintain an assured presence in the region, and effectively communicate our intent and resolve to safeguard U.S. national interests.

As we work closely with partners across the U.S. government and in the region to address shared challenges and prevent conflict, we will ensure we are ready to respond rapidly and effectively across the full range of military

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<sup>34</sup> Jack Heretik, "Gates Slams Trump's Foreign Policy: He Doesn't Listen to People," *The Washington Free Beacon* (May 1, 2016). [www.freebeacon.com](http://www.freebeacon.com).

operations. United States Pacific Command is committed to be agile, flexible, and ready to meet the challenges of an uncertain and dynamic security environment.<sup>35</sup>

First, the strategy's end state raises hard questions pertinent to creating competitive combined effects toward China. What is the meaning of "secure" in terms of falsifiable causative and preventative effects? Unless this term is specified and able to be disproven, security is likely to be more an ambiguous symbol<sup>36</sup> than a reasonably identifiable end-state.

Second, does US leadership permit room for shared leadership based on an international order? That is, whose rules would those be – that of the United Nations, the US system of bilateral alliances and partnerships, a trilateral (US, South Korea, Japan) consensus, a new regional East Asian security grouping, or negotiated Sino-US rules?

Third, how do US forces prevent conflict by responding with military operations? Maintaining the initiative needs to precede rapid response. What proactive roles can US forces play in shaping the security environment not just meeting its challenges after the fact? In Pacific Command parlance, "effectively" is limited to military response and resolve. This usage is understandable but inadequate.

These grand yet practical questions need to be resolved at the national level, and answered at all levels. If military activities are not part of a broader combined effect, then by themselves Pacific Command operations such as demonstrations of force, freedom of navigation operations, multilateral exercises, and military relations with Chinese leaders, are unlikely to change China's behavior. China can continue to envelop US strategy with diverse tools such as land reclamation, illegal fishing, environmental destruction, financial blackmail, expansionist rhetoric with domestic traction, socio-cultural disinformation, and cyber attacks.

As a synthesis, China's coerce-induce-compel-persuade (Cr I Cp P) and dissuade-deter (Ds Dt) effect exerts a potent cause-and-prevent dynamic. What does US strategy manage in response? Countering China's combined effect is an intellectual and operational challenge, one that might begin with national strategies that promote unified effects. However, the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Quadrennial Defense Review are written in terms of strategic objectives and with the purpose of garnering Congressional support for force capabilities. They present simple objectives that avoid potential controversy. Now, we examine these documents from a combined effects perspective.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) is written at the level of values, interests, and overarching goals and is supposed to inform the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), the National Military Strategy (NMS), and other national strategies such as the National Strategy for Homeland Security and the

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<sup>35</sup> USPACOM Strategy, U.S. Pacific Command, [www.pacom.mil](http://www.pacom.mil).

<sup>36</sup> Arnold Wolfers, "'National Security' as an Ambiguous Symbol," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 67 No. 4 (December 1952), 481-502.

National Strategy for Counterterrorism. These subordinate documents could advance the values, interests, and goals expressed in the NSS if they provided policy guidance for orchestrating combined effects – but they do not.

## **What's missing in US strategy**

### *National Security Strategy*

The President's National Security Strategy of 2015 communicates basic values, interests, and goals of advancing democracy and human rights, strengthening alliances and partnerships, and increasing trade and investment. The NSS asserts that the US will lead with all instruments of national power, and retains all options to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and reinforce diplomacy backed by superior military strength and economic leverage. The national priorities are: catastrophic attack on the US homeland or critical infrastructure; attacks on US citizens or allies abroad; global economic crisis; proliferation or use of WMD; severe global outbreak of infectious disease; climate change; major energy or market disruption; and unspecified security consequences related to weak or failing states.

The top priority consists of strengthening defense of the homeland, conducting global counterterrorism operations, deterring aggression, and assuring allies with a forward presence that can deny and defeat aggression. However, when it comes to specifying enforcement and including the use of military force, the NSS conveys contingency and separated lines of effort. For instance, enforcing WMD counterproliferation and counterterrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq are limited to implementing sanctions and building partnership capacity (BPC). BPC can help reduce grievances with better governance, but any role military force might play in enhancing diplomacy, reinforcing or reducing sanctions, or improving social cohesion against threats, is not mentioned. With respect to threats in the South China Sea and other instances of coercion that avoid direct violence, the strategy sends an incomplete message. The stated priority is to assure access to shared international space by rejecting illegal territorial claims, condemning attacks, encouraging peaceful resolution, supporting a code of conduct, and pressing China to observe customary international law. Again there is no credible indication that force might be used in combination with any of the preceding priorities.

### *National Defense Strategy*

The Secretary of Defense's National Defense Strategy of 2012 lays out priority missions with a clear assumption: "as we end today's wars." The strategy asserts that all of the tools of US power have been strengthened: military, diplomacy, development, intelligence, and homeland security. The Joint Force is responsible for 10 primary missions: counter terrorism and irregular warfare; deter and defeat aggression; project power despite anti-access and denial challenges; counter WMD; operate effectively in cyberspace and space; maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities; provide a stabilizing presence; conduct

stability and counterinsurgency operations; conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations. Only two of these missions frame causative or negative effects: deter and defeat aggression, and defend the homeland. The others describe activities, not effects.

The NDS propounds eight principles to guide force and program development. These are: maintain a broad, versatile portfolio of capabilities; maintain reversible investment priorities depending on the situation; maintain readiness and capabilities as forces are reduced; reduce expenditures; adjust existing plans with these more limited forces; examine the mix of active component and reserve component forces; retain and build on advances in networked warfare and interdependent forces; and maintain an adequate defense industrial base and investment in science and technology.

The message that these priorities and principles send is to do more with less, and to do so flexibly to meet the needs of a dynamic environment. This guidance charges military professionals with operating in a wide range of situations that involve proactive frenemies with long-term strategies. Victory can take many forms. At least if all of the priority missions were specified in terms of desired effects, then applying the principles would matter, particularly with respect to assuming risk.

### *Quadrennial Defense Review*

The Quadrennial Defense Review proposes updated initiatives that implement the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG), the DSG itself being an update of the National Defense Strategy. Like the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy, the QDR repeats the national priorities with an emphasis on rebalancing the joint force. The threat of automatic Congressional budget reductions figures prominently, so the QDR proposes to balance capabilities across the joint force. Most of the document restates what is known about the emerging security environment, risks of sequestration-produced cuts, and individual services' needs for capabilities.

The only part of the QDR that mentions mission priorities is in the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's section on assessment. The 12 priorities are: maintain a secure and effective nuclear deterrent; provide for military defense of the homeland; defeat an adversary; provide a global, stabilizing presence; combat terrorism; counter WMD; deny an adversary's objectives; and respond to crisis and conduct limited contingency operations. Of these, less than half are written in terms that lend themselves to desired effects: deter, defend, defeat, counter, and deny. All of the others are about conducting operations with no reference to testable goals. So in the absence of unambiguous guidance for combined effects, planning documents such as the Unified Command Plan, Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, and assorted combatant commands' campaign plans must derive them.

Now let's return to PACOM and the East and South China Seas where China is waging complex warfare. Let's also assume it is possible for a joint and interagency team

to develop a combined effects strategy using the most relevant instruments of national power.

What would an effective strategy that implements the NSS goals and priorities look like? From the priorities uttered in the NDS and QDR, the joint force has to deter and defeat aggression, assure allies with a forward presence and the ability to deny and defeat aggression, and project power despite anti-access and denial challenges. But US strategy has neither deterred nor defeated China's territorial aggression, unless that is defined narrowly as armed attack. "It's not in my lane" does nothing to out-think and out-execute scalable strategies. So we propose an operating strategy that supports all of the above, mindful that China potentially poses the following priority threats mentioned in the NSS:

- (a) Major energy or market disruption that may even trigger a global economic crisis, as a result of armed conflict in the South China Sea;
- (b) Attacks on the US homeland, US or allied citizens and critical infrastructure in East Asia with a variety of weapons to include cyber attack;
- (c) Proliferation or use of WMD by China or other opportunistic or security-seeking states in the region.

### **An operating strategy for complex warfare**

Fortunately, the elements of a combined effect are present among the various policies that loosely comprise what may be regarded as US strategy. But policy needs to be converted to executable operations that produce superior results. Let's consider a strategy that confronts Chinese aggression with regional cooperation, leveraged by a collective commitment to applying dilemma-inducing effects. The goal of this combined effect would be to ensure access to international space and to preserve legitimate sovereignty claims of all states. We use the DIMES typology to describe notional lines of effect. Each statement below proposes tools that act on will and/or capability targets to bring about a particular type of effect.

Diplomatic Compellence: intimidate China's will to flout international law by forming a bloc of resistance among South China Sea claimants. Other states committed to implementing global governance could join in support. Claimants would be empowered to submit claims against Chinese actions via the Permanent Court of Arbitration, as the Philippines has done.

Informational Persuasion: assure the coalition's will through various venues (summits, conferences, social media) calling for adherence to and enforcement of the rule of law. Building on the UN ruling against China's illegal activities, other claimants and states at risk can expose China's claims to rigorous scrutiny and global condemnation.

Military Security, Defense and Inducement: demonstrate the will and exercise the capability to secure and defend the South China Sea with international law-abiding

powers. Plan and practice air, space, cyber, surface and sub-surface operations with such partners and allies. Conduct defensive operations from internationally recognized sovereign territory and through the global commons to deny any actor the capability to seize and occupy space. Assist China in evacuating personnel and equipment from illegally obtained territory as an environmental operation and a prerequisite to participation.

Economic Inducement: exercise the capability to attract East Asian investments not subject to China's neo-mercantilist control. Short of reforming and re-capitalizing the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the US needs to assert regional leadership. The Trans-Pacific Partnership may be the lone liberal alternative to the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Development Bank, and the BRICS New Development Bank.<sup>37</sup>

Social Dissuasion: enhance the capability of political competitors to exploit divisions among Chinese decision makers by expanding social networks in China. Relationships with decision makers and connections with individuals who value universal human rights can promote awareness that realizing the "China Dream" depends upon international standards of conduct and relations.

What combined effect could these lines of effect produce? The causative element, compellence-persuasion-inducement-security (Cp P I S), increases the benefits for China to comply with international standards. The preventative part, dissuasion-defense (Ds Df), raises the costs of continued illegal activity. Together this combined effect presents a dilemma: comply with international law or face costly consequences. The military combination of security-defense-inducement provides a path toward a trusted leadership role for China.

The strategy requires strong US leadership and character to maintain its own contributions as well as to embolden a network of partners. Predominant military capabilities in the air, space, cyber, surface and sub-surface domains are essential. With these two critical ingredients, even states with starkly different priorities can cooperate to confront a common threat. For instance, US mediation and multilevel strategic dialogues have nudged Japan and South Korea toward resolving bitter historical issues in the face of the North Korean nuclear threat. Again, this would not be possible if US military capability were not dominant and credible. In this regard, the joint force has to maintain operational breadth with unmatched capabilities under resource constraints. Economic strength is foundational. The ability of a relatively open US trade, finance, and political system to adapt to global changes is greater than China's state-centric governance in a liberal global economy. The latter ought not be taken for granted.

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<sup>37</sup> The BRICS states of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa agreed in 2014 to establish the New Development Bank as an alternative to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Headquartered in Shanghai, the bank's governance includes majority voting with each member's vote equal to the number of its shares in the capital stock of the bank. See <http://ndbbrics.org/agreement.html>.

If any line of effect fails, the combined effect becomes vulnerable to competing effects. For instance, if coalition forces cannot or will not defend internationally recognized Philippines territory by demonstrating the ability to coerce illegal Chinese occupation forces, then diplomats are unlikely to achieve an acceptable agreement. There are many ways China can adjust its strategy, but the tendency is to exploit a divided opposition. One of Beijing's courses of action would be to annex the entire 9-dash bounded South China Sea as a new province.

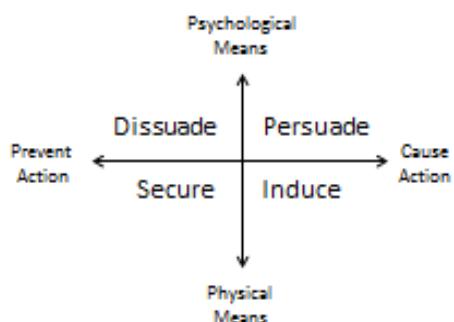
If however the US-led coalition holds, China would be subject to comply with the UN ruling in some form. Total compliance is not likely unless it fits China's domestically effective cultural-nationalist narrative. China might claim partial compliance to negotiate a version of its continued occupation. Another option could be a UN rules-based and CPC ideology-based hybrid outcome that ensures free access and sovereignty. China and other states could share tasks such as counter-piracy, disaster response, search and rescue, environmental monitoring, freedom of navigation operations, and other agreed upon responsibilities. For all these contingencies, the US military needs to provide cross-domain dominance inside a robust interagency capacity to deal with the challenges of contemporary warfare.

Combined arms superiority by itself is not an effective response to the kind of warfare China is waging. Technological offsets and trained capabilities for cross-domain dominance must be coupled with upgraded strategy. A combined effects approach can help integrate effects from the joint force and other instruments of power. Different combinations of effects and their attendant risks provide more options for the complex variety of situations we face. This way of warfare requires: (a) proactive analysis of the information environment for anticipating capabilities and attributing intent and (b) flexible lines of effect for orchestrating adaptive interagency operations.

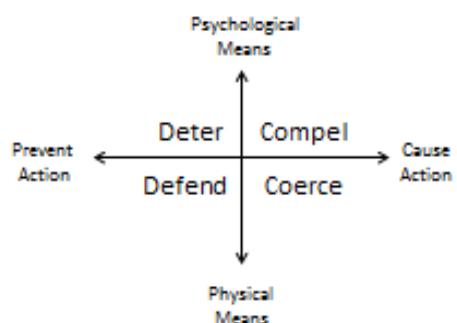
Failure to adjust our strategic thinking affords actors with the capacity for combined effects unimpeded capability to impose powerful dilemmas upon us. The stakes are high. Combined effects power is unleashing new mixtures of diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and social influence. These forms of confrontation and cooperation will alter the meaning of security as they shape the rules of a future international order.

## APPENDIX A

### Cooperation



### Confrontation





## **APPENDIX B**

### **About the Author**

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Colonel Drohan holds a B.S. in National Security Studies from the USAF Academy, an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Hawaii, and a Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University. His academic experience includes Council on Foreign Relations Fellow in Japan, Curriculum Advisor at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, and Visiting Scholar at the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. He is the author of *A New Strategy for Complex Warfare*, *American-Japanese Security Agreements*, and articles on defense strategy, Asian security, and military education.

