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**CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO**

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

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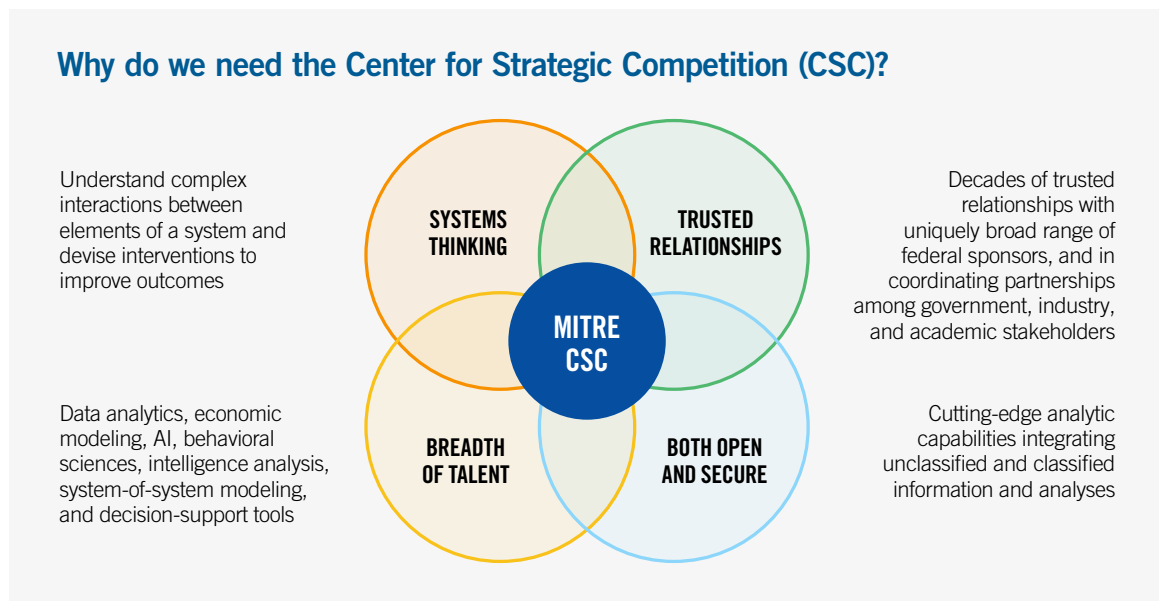
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Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>The Tools</b>	2
Economic Weight and Growth	2
The Centrality of Technological Innovation	4
Acquiring Foreign Knowledge	6
Leveraging Chinese Information	8
Military Power	8
Discourse Control	12
<b>Conclusion</b>	15
<b>About the Author</b>	16
<b>Endnotes</b>	17

## Introduction

This paper is the second in a three-part series on the worldview and strategic ambitions of the People's Republic of China (PRC) published by MITRE's Center for Strategic Competition. Part I offered an outline of the primary concepts that PRC officials and its ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bring to the table in approaching the world beyond China's borders, and in framing Beijing's approaches to foreign affairs and national security issues.

In this paper, I discuss the specific axes of competition that China envisions through the concept of "comprehensive national power" (CNP), and through which it approaches the

strategic ambitions it has set for itself: in other words, the various facets of national power China pursues, which include economic development, technological innovation, and

military power. Finally, in Part III, I will describe the future world order that Chinese strategists imagine to be possible, and that CCP leaders have made it their objective to bring into being.

**ACCORDINGLY,  
THIS SERIES OF  
PAPERS OFFERS  
AN EXEGETICAL  
OUTLINE OF CHINA'S  
STRATEGIC VISION.**

## The Tools

As outlined in Part I, in China's strategic vision, achieving "national rejuvenation" by restoring the country to the preeminent global position it feels itself to have "lost" during its "Century of Humiliation" requires that Beijing augment its comprehensive national power. Significantly, achieving rejuvenation in this sense will also flow naturally from the acquisition of a commanding position in CNP. Augmenting national power is thus critical, and Chinese thinkers have stressed the importance of—and have frequently tried to track in quantifiable terms<sup>1</sup>—China making progress vis-à-vis other countries in a range of economic, military, technological, political, social, and even cultural arenas. The following pages describe some of the areas of advance that CCP leaders feel are most important to China's success.

### Economic Weight and Growth

The first and perhaps most important factor in building CNP, as Sun Bin is said to have told the king of Qi,<sup>2</sup> is simply economic growth. As Rush Doshi has recounted, the pursuit of "wealth and power"—in the words of the late Qing Dynasty official Wei Yuan—has been viewed as central to China's return to greatness and a key focus ever since the Celestial Empire first encountered European power in the mid-19th century.<sup>3</sup> This is repeatedly emphasized by Chinese officials today, who have declared that "[d]evelopment is the foundation and key to solving all of China's problems."<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the country "places economic development at the center of its national rejuvenation."<sup>5</sup>

CCP intervention in the economy and Chinese industrial policies today reflect this emphasis upon continued development, which is also understood to involve completing the transition from export-led growth to a phase marked more by growth driven by internal consumer demand. According to the 14th Five-Year Plan, the idea is to

"coordinate and promote the construction of a strong domestic market and the construction of a trade powerhouse (贸易强国), form a powerful gravitational field to attract global resources and factors of production, promote the coordinated development of domestic and foreign demand, imports and exports, and the introduction of foreign capital and foreign investment, and accelerate the cultivation of new advantages to be used in international cooperation and competition. ... We will deeply implement the strategy of expanding domestic demand, enhance the fundamental role of consumption in economic development and the key role of investment in optimizing the supply structure, and build a strong domestic market with copious demand for consumption and investment. ... We will adhere to a domestic foundation (立足国内), ameliorate shortcomings, diversified assurances (多元保障), and strengthened reserves, improve the production, supply, storage, and marketing system, enhance our capacity to sustain the stable supply of energy and to perform risk management and control, realize the security bottom line for our coal supply, and rely on our own ability to ensure core oil and gas needs and a stable and reliable power supply."<sup>8</sup>

Despite aiming for a more "balanced" approach with respect to demand, manufacturing remains an essential priority, as expressed in the CCP's "Made in China 2025" agenda:

"A national leading group for rejuvenating Chinese manufacturing will be established and led by the head of the State Council, with group members appointed from relevant departments of the State Council. The main responsibilities of the leading group are: making overall plans and coordinating the overall rejuvenation of Chinese manufacturing;

## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

deliberating on major plans, policies, special projects, issues and working arrangements; strengthening strategic planning and guidance departments to support local governments in implementing plans.”<sup>9</sup>

As always, however, this push is linked to “national rejuvenation”—an objective for the achievement of which CCP officials have set themselves a deadline:

“By 2049, the centennial of the founding of New China, China’s manufacturing sector status will become more consolidated and China will become the leader among the world’s manufacturing powers.”<sup>10</sup>

The plan is to “transform China into the global manufacturing leader before the centennial of the founding of New China, which will lay the foundation for the realization of the Chinese dream to rejuvenate the Chinese nation.”<sup>11</sup>

This vision also includes an important role for building out China’s financial power and the role of the Renminbi (RMB or Yuan) as an increasingly widely-used reserve currency—thus by implication clearly displacing the U.S. dollar, a process which Chinese officials refer to obliquely as “steadily promot[ing] the diversification of the international monetary system.”<sup>12</sup> CCP documents, for instance, promise

“[c]ontinuing internationalization of the Renminbi. The internationalization of the Renminbi has [already] broadened monetary settlement options for global trade and promoted diversity in the international monetary system.”<sup>13</sup>

The CCP’s 14th Five-Year plan pledges to “strengthen the construction of the RMB cross-border payment system, promote the security and control of the core technology of financial industry informatization, and maintain the security of our financial infrastructure.”<sup>14</sup>

As its power and weight grow, China also envisions playing an ever greater role in global institutions of financial and economic governance. As Hu Jintao put it in 2009, “we must participate more actively in the formulation of international rules, [and] actively promote the reform of the international economic and financial system.”<sup>15</sup>

Crucially, as noted earlier, this push for continued economic growth and stature is not just about achieving prosperity for the Chinese people. According to the 14th Five-Year Plan, China has already achieved its interim objective of “establishing a well-off society in an all-round way.”<sup>16</sup> By 2049, the objective is grander, focusing on the “role” of economic weight in making China “a stabilizing force and power source” in the world,<sup>17</sup> reflecting the assumption that geopolitical centrality flows from the possession of superlative CNP.

This concept thus envisions benefits to China from economic size that go beyond simple prosperity. These benefits even go beyond the clear practical advantages that would accrue from dominating global market share in key industries—such as in giving Beijing tools of strategic leverage for peacetime competition and limiting the ability of foreign powers to mobilize economic pressures against China in a conflict.<sup>18</sup> It is certainly clearly understood that economic weight is a source of political leverage, as Premier Li Peng made quite clear to a European delegation in 1996:

“If the Europeans adopt more cooperation with China in all areas, not just in economic areas but also in political and other areas, I believe the Europeans can get more orders from China.”<sup>19</sup>

Most fundamentally, however, economic power is seen as essential to returning China to its lost “Middle Kingdom” status as the rule-setting central player in all respects, and as the paramount political and civilizational model in international affairs. Not for nothing do Chinese

## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

officials frequently discuss economic progress in martial metaphors and with explicitly zero-sum competitive objectives in mind. High-level strategy documents, for instance, call for all of China to be oriented toward

“the main battlefield of the national economy, clearly define the main directions of attack for China’s innovative development, achieve breakthroughs in key fields as quickly as possible, and strive to form more competitive advantages.”<sup>20</sup>

On this battlefield, the CCP hopes to “capture the ... high ground in the new competitive landscape,”<sup>21</sup> and help bring about national rejuvenation by making China into “an economic superpower.”<sup>22</sup>

### The Centrality of Technological Innovation

Perhaps not surprisingly, given China’s history as a realm patronizingly contemptuous of Western manufactured goods presented to the Qianlong emperor by a British envoy in 1795,<sup>23</sup> but which also found itself desperately outmatched by Britain’s early Industrial-Age firepower in the Opium War half a century later, leaders in Beijing have long focused upon possessing cutting-edge technology as a key to winning back China’s position at the center of the world. For today’s CCP, “science and innovation are at the heart of Beijing’s international standing,” and it is a key priority for Xi Jinping—as he told the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Engineering in June 2014—that China “catch up and surpass others” in this realm.<sup>24</sup>

There has long been a “close relationship between China’s efforts to develop its national power ... and [to] acquire foreign technology, expand exports, and attract foreign investment,”<sup>25</sup> and CCP planning documents emphasize technology almost obsessively. In Xi’s remarks to the 19th Party Congress in 2017, he proclaimed to the rest of the CCP leadership:

“We should aim for the frontiers of science and technology, strengthen basic research, and make major breakthroughs in pioneering basic research and groundbreaking and original innovations. We will strengthen basic research in applied sciences, launch major national science and technology projects, and prioritize innovation in key generic technologies, cutting-edge frontier technologies, modern engineering technologies, and disruptive technologies. These efforts will provide powerful support for building China’s strength in science and technology, product quality, aerospace, cyberspace, and transportation; and for building a digital China and a smart society.”<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, Chinese industrial policy prioritizes cutting-edge technology areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, integrated circuits, “[b]rain science and brain-inspired research,” genetics and biotechnology, clinical medicine and healthcare technology, environmental sciences, aerospace and marine equipment, pharmaceuticals, and “deep space, deep earth, deep sea, and polar exploration.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the CCP’s new “Innovation-Driven Development Strategy” (IDDS),<sup>28</sup>—a plan that has been described as “the most high-level, authoritative, and comprehensive strategy that the Xi Jinping regime has ever issued on the role that science, technology, and innovation plays in China’s development”<sup>29</sup>—aims to situate Beijing at the center of a global technology economy. It proclaims the country’s intention to

“... [s]eize the historic opportunities in the accelerating flow of global innovation resources and China’s rising economic position, and boost China’s ability to allocate innovation resources at the global level. Support deployment of globally oriented innovation networks by corporations, encourage

the establishment of overseas R&D centers, carry out mergers and acquisitions of, and joint venture investment and equity participation in, innovation-oriented enterprises and R&D institutions, and increase operational capabilities with respect to overseas intellectual property. Encourage China's advanced technology and equipment to go global (走出去), with particular focus on satellites, high-speed rail, nuclear energy[,] and supercomputers. Encourage foreign investment in strategic emerging industries, high-tech industries and modern service industries, support establishment of R&D centers in China by multinational companies, and successfully attract a combination of foreign investment, talent, and technology.”<sup>30</sup>

As with economic strength more generally, however, this is not being attempted merely for its own sake. Rather, the CCP sees technological innovation as being essential to its project of geopolitical “return.” As one recent paper on the topic by Western experts observed,

“... [t]he foundation of IDDS is that science and technological power are the basis for political and economic power. Therefore, control over critical fields of science and technology [is] paramount for national and economic security and to ensure that China avoids becoming the ‘technological vassal of other countries’ [and is able to] ... [b]ecome a strong global innovation power by 2050[,] realize [its] dream of national renewal[, and] overtake the U.S. as the world leader in science, technology, and innovation ...

“Xi Jinping’s administration has set the implementation of IDDS against a Hobbesian backdrop of a life-or-death struggle for the economic and strategic survival of China. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders see the world engaged in a zero-sum technological revolution for national and

military dominance that requires China to urgently enhance its capabilities so it can seize the global commanding heights of national science and technology development.”<sup>31</sup>

Thus do CCP leaders today see technology competition as very much akin to war, urging their countrymen to “successfully fight tough battles (攻坚战) for key and core technologies”<sup>32</sup> so that China “shall be established as a world S&T innovation superpower (世界 科技创新强国) ... occupying the high ground in innovation.”<sup>33</sup> Technology, therefore, will provide

“powerful support for building China into a rich, strong, democratic, civilized, harmonious modernized socialist nation, and for achieving the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”<sup>34</sup>

It is also quite clear that this dream necessarily involves displacing the United States as the economic and technological center of the international system. By 2035, CCP planners declare, “major breakthroughs will be achieved in key and core technologies (关键核心技术), and China will enter the first rank of innovation-oriented countries.”<sup>35</sup> Thereafter, it will move from what the 14th Five-Year Plan describes as “the current situation in which China is ... mainly ‘catching up,’ to a situation in which China is mainly ‘pulling even’ and ‘taking the lead’”<sup>36</sup>—thereby “realiz[ing] the transformation from *Made in China to Created in China*.”<sup>37</sup>

Viewing itself as being in a “technology war with the United States” in which the winner will be able to realize “potentially game-changing” strategic benefits,<sup>38</sup> China seeks to “[s]eize the historical opportunities [that lie] in the accelerating flow of global innovation resources and China’s rising economic position.”<sup>39</sup> Through the zero-sum lens<sup>40</sup> of the CCP’s grievance ideology and the CNP-



based theorems of Sinic hegemony theory, technology has long been a key to greatness. It has also long been what David Shambaugh once described as “the value that apparently all Chinese envy about the United States,”<sup>41</sup> and its acquisition is viewed by CCP leaders today as being essential to Beijing’s goal of displacing the Americans at the center of global power.<sup>42</sup>

### Acquiring Foreign Knowledge

Post-Imperial China has not always thought it needed Western technology. For a time, Mao Zedong assumed that the socialist bloc would be able to prevail over Western capitalism on the strength of Soviet-led technological innovation, as epitomized by the Sputnik satellite launch of 1957.<sup>43</sup> Ever since the Qing’s first encounter with British warships, however, Beijing has strongly felt it needed to acquire *others’* technology to achieve its dreams.

Accordingly, in order to make possible the requisite degree of economic growth and technological progress—and to provide the necessary heft and dynamism to China’s advancement on an ongoing basis—CCP leaders have articulated aggressive policy agendas that seek to acquire whatever knowledge China still needs from overseas sources. They also call for building rigorous protections around both what China has obtained and what it creates indigenously.

Additionally, current plans call for measures to collect, aggregate, and analyze all digital information available to the Chinese state—including the Digital Silk Road’s increasingly far-flung proxy infrastructural bastions in the developing world.<sup>44</sup> This digital harvest is intended to provide leverage for further metropolitan Chinese progress, as well as to build for Beijing an increasingly commanding position in international finance, analogous

to what strategists in Beijing feel first British and then American leaders have used in consolidating and perpetuating their own global advantage during those countries’ eras of geopolitical hegemony.

China’s IDDS, for instance, declares that it remains the case that “[s]ome critical core technologies are controlled by others (受制于人), [and certain] advanced nations are still clearly ahead at the cutting edge of science and in high-tech fields.”<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, it is imperative for China to make “[b]reakthroughs ... on the major bottleneck problems constraining economic and social development and national security,” so that

“the passive situation where key and core technologies have long been controlled by others shall be reversed, and unique advantages will be formed in a number of strategically contested fields, providing strategic reserves and strategic space for expansion for the nation’s prosperous development.”<sup>46</sup>

Desperate to catch up and overtake the West in leveraging technology and modern methods to boost CNP, China has thus been intensely focused upon acquiring foreign knowledge, giving it access to what it cannot (yet) produce or develop indigenously, and seeking—as an old Chinese Buddhist saying goes—to “acquire the sutras”<sup>47</sup> of cutting-edge modernity. Some of this effort has involved coerced transfers of intellectual property (IP) from foreign companies operating in China,<sup>48</sup> and some of it has come in the form of a massive, worldwide campaign of cyber-facilitated IP theft, which the former director of the U.S. National Security Agency has described as having brought about “the greatest transfer of wealth in history.”<sup>49</sup>

Technology is also a major focus of traditional Chinese spying, with one recent analysis of nearly 600

documented espionage cases in the West suggesting that “nearly half” of them involved efforts to target military and space technology, and Beijing’s espionage targets closely tracking those technologies prioritized in CCP technology and industrial planning documents such as *Made in China 2025* and the 13th Five-Year Plan. Chinese espionage, in other words, focuses hugely upon “developing China’s industries and transferring foreign wealth” by means of a sprawling, “whole-of-society” approach that involves not merely professional spies, but even fairly ordinary employees of state-owned enterprises, university researcher organizations, private companies, and other “non-traditional collectors.”<sup>50</sup> (Nor have these efforts been unavailing. By some accounts, theft of intellectual property from foreign companies and production of counterfeit goods may in recent years have added as much as eight percent to China’s GDP.<sup>51</sup>)

Perhaps because they are uncomfortable admitting the residual backwardness that such activities imply—or the underhanded and notably unvirtuous methods involved, or the fact that the purpose is to augment Chinese *power*—CCP officials do not generally admit such practices, claiming that corporate IP transfers are willingly given<sup>52</sup> and simply denying cyber theft entirely.<sup>53</sup> What they *do* admit is a comprehensive program to acquire knowledge and talent from abroad and “attract” it to China, seemingly in ways reminiscent of how the magnificence of the Ming Dynasty court is said to have attracted clever foreigners such as the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci in the early 17th century, who was able to employ his European knowledge of astronomy and calendrical science to the greater glory of the Celestial Empire.<sup>54</sup>

Chinese planning documents, for instance, have declared numerical targets for recruiting foreign experts

with critical knowledge and skills, with the objective of recruiting “500-1,000 high-level foreign experts ... working in China for at least 3 consecutive years and no less than 9 months per year.”<sup>55</sup> There exists, in fact, an elaborate bureaucracy devoted to such recruitment and to implementing what the CCP calls its “talent superpower strategy.” According to the Party’s Central Organization Department,

“[i]n order to attract more high-level foreign experts to participate in China’s modernization and to promote a deeper implementation of the ‘talent superpower’ (人才强 国) strategy, pursuant to the Opinions of the Central Coordinating Group on Talent on the Implementation of Overseas High-Level Talent Recruitment Programs (中央人才工作协 小组关于实施海外 层次人才引 划的意), the ‘Thousand Talents Program’ (千人 划) High-Level Foreign Experts Work Platform has been established to implement the Thousand Talents Program High-Level Foreign Experts Project (the ‘Thousand Foreign Experts Program’ [外专千人 划], specifically for non-Chinese [非华] foreign experts).”<sup>56</sup>

The 14th Five-Year Plan also places emphasis upon sending “talented young professionals and students, especially those with a professional and technical background,” to foreign countries “for study and training, while building international training bases in China.”<sup>57</sup> Research universities abroad also appear to be primary targets for such recruitment, and there are estimated to be “at least 200 Chinese talent programs designed to employ academic and professional expertise from the West into serving China’s national development.” (There are also “600 overseas stations that gather information on foreign scientists” to aid recruitment targeting.)<sup>58</sup>

## Leveraging Chinese Information

CCP planning documents also stress the importance of taking better advantage of the enormous amounts of data generated by and within the modern Chinese digital economy, envisioning a future in which “the cross-department, cross-level, and cross-regional convergence and in-depth utilization of data”<sup>59</sup> will enable new advances in economic production, technological innovation, and social control. In the data-driven technoutopia evoked by the 14th Five-Year Plan,

“[w]e will welcome the digital age, activate the potential of data factors of production, promote the construction of a cyber powerhouse (网络强国), accelerate the construction of a digital economy, digital society, and digital government, and leverage digital transformations to drive overall changes in production methods, lifestyles, and governance. ... We will promote the construction of new smart cities based on different levels and categories, incorporate IoT [‘Internet of Things’] perception facilities and communication systems into the unified planning and construction of public infrastructure, and promote IoT applications and intelligentized transformations such as in municipal public facilities and buildings. We will improve the city information model platform and operation management service platform, build a city data resource system, and promote the construction of city data brains (城市数据大脑). ... We will improve the level of urban intelligentization (智慧化) and promote ‘one map’ (‘一张图’) digitalized management of urban buildings, public spaces, and underground pipe networks and the unified network management (一网统管) of urban operations.”<sup>60</sup>

As China comes to be able to innovate and create more on its own—perhaps in part by leveraging the treasure troves of data created through such ubiquitous

networking—CCP officials also intend to be able to protect that data against exploitation by others. In an irony apparently lost upon leaders in Beijing, the 14th Five-Year Plan promises to develop a strong and effective system for protecting Chinese IP against theft by anyone else.<sup>61</sup>

## Military Power

### The Military Facet of CNP and Civil-Military Fusion

Though Beijing’s conception of national power is an explicitly “comprehensive” one that includes prominent economic, technological, cultural, and political elements, the acquisition of ever-increasing amounts of raw military power has been central to China’s imaginings of “national rejuvenation” ever since the country’s first painful encounter with Europe’s then Industrial-Age firepower in the 19th century.

“...[T]he emergence of CNP thinking in the 1980s and the revival of classically inspired hegemony theorizing encouraged the view that possessing significant military power was essential to China’s return to first-rank status in the world—not only for whatever such capabilities convey the ability directly to *do* but also, more generally, for the psychopolitical heft that the mere possession of such muscle conveyed. The possession of high-technology military forces seems to have been regarded as a benchmark of modernity and global status by Chinese ever since they first suffered at the hands of the then dominant Royal Navy in the Opium War. Such capabilities symbolized international stature and, in a kind of geopolitical rectification of names, were an important part of one’s overall [global] ranking ... that, as any good Confucian might assume, provided what order there was in the international system.”<sup>62</sup>

Not surprisingly, given the way in which CNP theory assumes that various aspects of national power complement each other in a “comprehensive” fashion, the concept of “security” as it is used in Chinese documents “now encompasses 11 fields, including not only the political, economic, and military spheres but also territorial, cultural, social, scientific and technological, informational, ecological, financial, and nuclear domains.”<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, CCP strategies have in recent decades strongly emphasized military capabilities, and particularly those derived from the possession of cutting-edge technology.

Such technological advantage, however, is not presumed to come solely from military-specific technology. Instead, the CCP assumes that a wide range of cutting-edge technological capabilities, including those from the civilian sphere, can be employed in support of augmenting Chinese military power.

“China believes that the first country able to make full use of these technologies, such as 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum, and bio-pharmaceuticals, will not only enjoy increased economic prosperity, but because of their dual-use potential, will attain military superiority.”<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the Party has set in motion an entire national bureaucracy—“a military-civil fusion (军民 合) platform for collaborative innovation in national defense science and technology”<sup>65</sup>—the purpose of which is to identify and leverage military technologies for civilian use and civilian ones for military use. Pursuant to the IDDS, the objective in these regards is to:

“Strengthen basic cutting-edge and high-technology research directed at national strategic needs. Centered around the ‘stranglehold’ problems involving long-term development and national security, strengthen the forward-looking layout

of basic research; expand basic research in the space, marine, network, nuclear, materials, energy, information and biological fields, and increase strategic high-technology research efforts; and achieve security, independence[,] and controllability (安全、主、可) in key core technologies.”<sup>66</sup>

To such ends, China’s “military-civil fusion development strategy” aspires to support national defense science and technology innovation, as well as to:

“accelerate the establishment and improvement of the integrated military-civil innovation system, and form new patterns of deeply integrated military-civil science and technology development. ... Carry out coordinated military-civil innovation. Establish mechanisms for the formation of major scientific research tasks for military-civil fusion, with an integrated design of the innovation chain, from basic research to key technology R&D and integrated applications; devise joint demonstration and implementation modes for military-civil shared technology projects; and establish military-civil technological innovation systems combining production, teaching [,] and research.”<sup>67</sup>

This strategy of “merging ... the basic elements for military-civil science and technology” and “[e]ncourag[ing] two-way transfer and transformation of military-civil technology”<sup>68</sup> aims to entirely erase the barrier between China’s civilian and military industrial and innovation sectors, for the mutual benefit of both. In theory, at least, by “promot[ing the] application of advanced civilian technology in military fields” and “actively guid[ing] the accelerated transformation and application in civilian fields of national defense scientific and technological achievements,”<sup>69</sup> military-civil fusion (MCF) hopes to make the entire Chinese economy a source of potentially game-changing military technology innovation.<sup>70</sup>



“If any given technology is in any way accessible to China, in other words, and officials there believe it can be of any use to the country’s military and national security complex as Beijing prepares itself to challenge the United States for global leadership, one can be quite sure that the technology *will* be made available for those purposes—pretty much no matter what.”<sup>71</sup>

As one recent study observed,

“Through purposefully opaque and blurred lines between commercial and defense activities—in academic collaboration, joint-ventures, capital market fundraising, and foreign mergers and acquisitions—PRC entities are able to access foreign technology and knowledge, raise capital, and expand their commercial market share while ultimately advancing military modernization efforts.”<sup>72</sup>

### Technology for “World-Class” Armed Forces

According to no less an authority than Xi Jinping, “technology is the core combat capability.” It is therefore China’s objective to

“adapt to the trend of a new global military revolution and to national security needs; we will upgrade our military capabilities, and see that ... by the mid-21st century our people’s armed forces have been fully transformed into world-class forces.”<sup>73</sup>

The CCP’s goal, Xi has declared, is to build China’s armed forces “into world-class forces that obey the Party’s command, can fight and win.”<sup>74</sup> And there should be little doubt about *against whom* it is envisioned that this objective is directed.

“In terms of force development, the 19th Party Congress report [by Xi Jinping] stated that by midcentury, China intends to build a ‘world class military.’ Given that the PLA is already one of the

world’s most powerful militaries, this wording may be interpreted to mean that China intends to build a military equal or perhaps superior to that of the United States in some ways. ... Given Xi’s ambition about China becoming a global technology leader, as well as the PLA’s clear interest in becoming a more technologically advanced force, a posited goal that China aims to have the most technologically advanced military in the world by midcentury seems reasonable.”<sup>75</sup>

Nor is this envisioned as a steady process of advancement, for Chinese officials believe military technology and military capabilities to develop stepwise, through successive “Revolutions in Military Affairs” (RMAs) through which the state in possession of the most advanced new technology acquires dramatic military advantages over all others and can leverage this superiority for broad geopolitical gains. As we saw earlier, an article in the CCP theoretical journal *Study Times* in 2018 outlined the Party’s heavily technology-driven view of history. In this conception, earlier technological revolutions—both in the civilian and military spheres—had enabled Britain to replace the hegemony of the Spanish Empire and thereby “establish an empire on which the sun never set,” after which the United States leveraged its own Industrial-Age and then Information-Age technological prowess in order to seize “the dominant power” role in turn.<sup>76</sup>

Going forward, China intends to gain such advantages for itself through means such as the CCP’s MCF strategy. Through MCF, Beijing aims to be the first country to transition to what it calls “intelligent warfare” rooted in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and data analytics,<sup>77</sup> and operating across novel battlespace domains such as cyberspace and outer space as well as in more traditional ones.<sup>78</sup>

“Driving this enormous [MCF] effort is an acute Chinese perception that their country’s 19th Century downfall resulted from falling behind along the technology and doctrinal curves that defined the ‘revolutions in military affairs’ (RMA[s]) that dominated and shaped warfare across the 20th century. These past RMAs included the mechanization of warfare which integrated aviation, armor, and mobile communication capabilities in World War II, as well as what Chinese writings would eventually call the ‘informationization’ of warfare following from the wars of the 1990s—characterized by the total integration of the battle space through modern communications and computing capabilities, and even an ability to win wars without putting any ‘boots on the ground’ at all, as was demonstrated by NATO in the Kosovo campaign. ...

“Simply put, China aims to *lead* the next RMA, and to reap the geopolitical benefits accordingly, by exploiting cutting-edge civilian technology—much as industrial production and steam power allowed for Europe when the Qing met its match in the 19th Century, as mechanization did for the great powers of the mid-20th Century, and as communications technology facilitated the net-centric warfighting exhibited by the United States after the end of the Cold War. This is the CCP’s blueprint for China’s global ‘return’ to military preeminence.”<sup>79</sup>

When China accomplishes this military-technological preeminence, moreover, CCP leaders expect that dramatic geopolitical benefits will flow therefrom. As Timothy Heath and his coauthors at the RAND Corporation have noted, in keeping with China’s “ambition to become a regional and international leader,” it is expected that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) will play “a role in shaping a favorable international security environment.”<sup>80</sup> This became increasingly apparent in December 2004,

when Hu Jintao first articulated the idea of the PLA’s “new historic missions” as his distinctive contribution—as CCP leader—to China’s military strategy.<sup>81</sup> Hu included “help maintain world peace” as one of these missions,<sup>82</sup> and indeed the PLA has been building a steadily more effective global power projection capability ever since.<sup>83</sup>

What this means, however, may be notably idiosyncratic, tied to Chinese conceptions of a dominant power’s right to set the basic norms of the international system and China’s *destiny* of “returning” to its ancient position as such a dominant power. Through this lens, “maintaining peace” seems more likely to mean cowing others into accepting Beijing’s primacy within a Sinocentric system—which is to say, challenging and replacing the *current* international system—than it does standing firm against those who would disrupt the free and open world order that has prevailed in the Indo-Pacific, and more broadly, for generations.

As Heath and his coauthors observe, Xi Jinping has “urged the United States to adopt a ‘new type of major power relationship’ premised largely on U.S. strategic concessions as a way to reduce the risk of conflict.”

“Chinese leaders seem intent on using the PLA as an instrument of military diplomacy to reshape the security architecture in Asia and, to a lesser extent, globally to expand Chinese leadership and influence, weaken those of the United States, and build a supportive network of client states.”<sup>84</sup>

Military power is essential to this vision, in part precisely because the United States and its own alliance relationships stand in the way of the Sinocentric end state the CCP envisions. With enough military capability in China’s hands, however, Chinese strategic writers seem to imply not only that the PLA will “feel[] it can coerce and, if necessary, fight regional powers with little fear of a U.S. military response,” but also that “if push comes to shove, the United States will choose to peacefully accept

## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

its supersession by China rather than risk great-power war.”<sup>85</sup> Thus, it would appear, is the PLA expected to achieve what CCP officials describe as levels of power “commensurate with China’s international status,” and with this power to help Beijing build “a global community of shared future.”<sup>86</sup>

### Discourse Control

In the CCP’s vision, China’s tools for strategic competition also go far beyond mere “material” aspects of power such as economic weight, technological sophistication, and military prowess. In addition, to use the fashionable Western vernacular, there are pronounced “soft power” aspects to modern China’s pursuit of “comprehensive” national power.

One major part of this effort simply involves propaganda and overt messaging. CCP Propaganda Department<sup>87</sup> officials, for instance, openly talk of their country’s struggle for global “discourse power” against Western “discourse hegemony.”<sup>88</sup>

“Chinese theorists consider influence over the language, vocabulary, ideas, and concepts used to discuss international issues—known as *discourse power* [*huayu quan*—to be an important attribute of global power. ‘Only when Chinese diplomatic discourse is generally prevalent internationally,’ noted Yang Jiemian, a prominent scholar at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, ‘will China exert the influence and play the role of a great power.’”<sup>89</sup>

Discourse control, and what CCP propaganda organs describe as “grabbing the microphone,” are felt essential to creating a new global order centered around China.

The push for discourse control draws upon both Marxist and ancient Chinese antecedents, grounded in “assumptions about the power of ideas and of the

constructed narratives of propaganda discourse to reshape not just the mental world of citizens at home but in fact the international environment as well.”<sup>90</sup> Chinese thinking has also been reinforced by CCP interest in Western thinkers such as Norman Fairclough and Noam Chomsky, who themselves emphasize the role of language and discourse in shaping and controlling behavior.<sup>91</sup> (As Fairclough once put it, for instance, “a language has its own army and navy.”<sup>92</sup>) In keeping with CNP theory, reinforced by quasi-Confucian “rectification of names” thinking, it is assumed discourse control can help both create and perpetuate geopolitical dominance, “alter[ing] the international political structure and cultural landscape” to China’s benefit<sup>93</sup>.

For a while, this messaging effort was primarily defensive and prophylactic. The CCP dramatically stepped up its emphasis upon controlling global discourse about China in the wake of the country’s international isolation following the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989, hoping thereby “to make Western media coverage more ‘helpful’ and ‘more selective in favor of the constructive factor’” in its descriptions of China and CCP rule.<sup>94</sup> To this end, the Party accentuated its propaganda in what the reader should by now find unsurprising ways, emphasizing both “narratives of Western threats of political subversion” and the supposedly non-threatening nature of China’s rise.

“China’s narratives of America’s ideational threat to CCP rule and its hegemonistic threat to China’s global rise, in fact, became powerfully intertwined with virtuocratic instincts toward politico-moral posturing in the international arena, producing a veritable fixation on China’s image and status in foreign eyes. ... Both from a defensive perspective and, increasingly, from an offensive one, Chinese scholars and officials fixated on issues of discourse control and politico-moral agenda setting in China’s

relationship with the West – and, in particular, with the United States. ... Chinese scholars seem to have ranked reputational attack as being nearly as worrisome as any other kind of aggression, commonly listing China's anti-American grievances as including not just Washington's purported role in fomenting near-revolution at Tiananmen and trying to impede the development of the Chinese economy but also its 'attacking China's reputation both in the United States and on the international stage.'"<sup>95</sup>

From at least 1994—even as Jiang Zemin's "patriotic education" campaign attempted to whip up domestic narratives of nationalistic grievance against sinister outside threats—the CCP's outward-focused messaging attempted to persuade the rest of the world that China "would behave only in cooperate ways as it became stronger."<sup>96</sup> The Party aimed "to bring about a world supportive of its leadership's agenda for engineering orderly modernization at home and a steady great-power rise abroad"<sup>97</sup>—which is to say, it wanted to convince others "in effect, to smile and relax while China quietly and steadily moves to restore itself to the global centrality and status that it feels has always been its birthright."<sup>98</sup>

But China's success in building itself into a vastly stronger and more influential global power than it was in the wake of the Tiananmen Square Massacre in no way lessened the CCP's fixation upon discourse control. Its messaging campaign, however, has evolved, and it is today taking on an increasingly *offensive* nature—aimed no longer simply at *protecting* China's rise but at reshaping the international environment into the form that Beijing desires it to take.

Such narrative warfare is felt to be essential to China's "national rejuvenation." As Neil Renwick and Cao Qing have noted, Chinese political discourse can be seen as consisting of three elements: building a consensus (*gongshi*), a drive for unity (*tuanjie*), and the need to

propagate this "consensus" through education (*jiaoyu*).<sup>99</sup> CCP officials carefully track the cases in which they see Chinese narratives being accepted elsewhere in the world, treating them as indicia of geopolitical progress toward national rejuvenation. The Party feels itself to have won a victory, for instance, whenever China's rise is depicted as "an opportunity for the world,"<sup>100</sup> when they can say that "China's international image is improving,"<sup>101</sup> or when "we have seen a further rise in China's international influence, ability to inspire, and power to shape" global affairs.<sup>102</sup>

The Party's efforts to shape global discourse include not just explicit Chinese government propaganda, but also secretive influence operations carried out through foreign "media, academia, businesses, and political elites,"<sup>103</sup> including efforts to suborn foreign politicians<sup>104</sup> and the use of a variety of pressures to punish those elsewhere in the world who express sentiments that the CCP dislikes.<sup>105</sup> These efforts also include what Xi Jinping has bragged are

"extensive contacts with overseas Chinese nationals, returned Chinese and their relatives[,] ... [to] unite them so that they can join our endeavors to revitalize the Chinese nation ... [and] strengthen the great unity of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and the great unity of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and abroad."<sup>106</sup>

This emphasis on using ethnic Chinese overseas to strengthen the CCP's propaganda narratives is not new. In the Maoist era, for instance, Chinese officials established organizations dedicated not just to the "integration and control" of diaspora Chinese who had returned to China but also to that of those overseas. The co-optation of overseas Chinese to the CCP's agenda was deemed essential to counteracting Taiwan's influence in the international arena, but the Party has also sought to turn to them in a variety of additional ways since then. In



the years following its Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989, the CCP stepped up its campaign of overseas Chinese propaganda work (*Huaqiao shiwu gongzuo*, or *qiaowu* for short), using a combination of “references to Confucianism, Chineseness and ethnicity” to gain “a significant influence in determining the future direction of the [overseas Chinese] diaspora.”<sup>108</sup> Today, the CCP regards influence over overseas Chinese as what Xi Jinping has termed “an important magic weapon for strengthening the Party’s ruling position ... [and] for realizing the China Dream of the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation.”<sup>109</sup>

Yet deep “discourse control” is not simply about propaganda messaging, for CNP theory also believes socio-cultural factors contribute to a country’s “soft power.” The expansiveness of this view has been powerfully enhanced by ancient Chinese conceits about the role of China’s supposedly superlatively attractive and virtuous civilization in drawing foreign barbarians toward it in awestruck devotion. Such an ancient framing, and its importance to the CCP’s view of the *future* world order, will be discussed further in Part III of this paper series. For present purposes, it is necessary to stress merely that the CCP places considerable emphasis upon promoting traditional culture as an element of what will make China great again.

This is quite explicit in major planning documents, where the CCP emphasizes promoting appropriate deference to and respect for Chinese culture as a key element in both domestic and foreign policy, in both cases as a central element of China’s “national rejuvenation.” According to the 14th Five-Year Plan, for instance,

“We will ... have firm cultural self-confidence, adhere to cultural construction led by socialist core values, and focus on the mission of raising our banner, rallying public support, fostering the new generation, revitalizing our culture, and presenting a

positive image. We must also promote the meeting of people’s cultural needs in unison with increasing the people’s spiritual strength (精神力量) and promote the building of China into a socialist cultural powerhouse (社会主义文化强国). ...

“We will strengthen the holistic and systematic research on, publication and dissemination of, and propaganda on and interpretation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and promote the Sinicization, modernization, and popularization of Marxism. We will implement Marxist theoretical research and construction projects in an in-depth manner, promote the construction of the Research Center (Institute) for Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and the Research Center for the theory system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and build and make good use of learning platforms such as ‘Xuexi Qiangguo.’ We will construct curricula systems, academic systems, and discourse systems for philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics, implement philosophy and social science innovation projects in an in-depth manner, and strengthen the construction of new think tanks with Chinese characteristics.”<sup>110</sup>

Cultural promotion thus overlaps with outright propaganda, as was made clear, for instance, by Meng Jian of Fudan University in explaining the CCP’s approach to developing entertainment programming directed at foreign audiences:

“The Chinese dream will be more easily accepted by foreign audiences when it is manifested in small and touching stories.”<sup>111</sup> Indeed, the two fields support each other, and both are deemed essential to China’s success in winning for itself the norm-setting central role in the international system that it needs in order to feel that it has achieved “national rejuvenation.”

## Conclusion

Chinese strategic planning documents thus demonstrate a full-spectrum, “whole of nation” approach to augmenting the various elements of “comprehensive national power” that CNP theorists in Beijing feel are necessary to bringing about China’s “national rejuvenation.” This approach, therefore, represents the concretization of a strategic agenda grounded in the CNP thinking described in Part I of this series, for these are the CCP’s envisioned axes of competition with other powers—and particularly with the United States—and they are the facets of power whose growth will help China achieve the victory it desires.

In the final paper of this series, I will turn to the sweeping question of what China seeks to *do* with the norm-setting dominance that it hopes its growing CNP will soon give it. Part III will thus spell out the CCP’s vision for a future Sinocentric world, how such a system might be expected to work, and certain notable characteristics of the system of international order “with Chinese characteristics” that Chinese strategists seem to be trying to build.

## About the Author

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2000), at 203-58 (discussing CNP calculations by Chinese scholars, especially methodologies advanced in the 1990s by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Academy of Military Science).
- <sup>2</sup> Sun Bin, *The Art of Warfare* (D.C. Lau & Roger T. Ames, trans.) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), ch.16, at 135-36 (recounting story of Sun Bin's advice to King Wei of Qi to "make the state prosperous").
- <sup>3</sup> Rush Doshi, *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), at 28.
- <sup>4</sup> National People's Congress, *Outline of the People's Republic of China 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives for 2035* (published by Xinhua News Agency, March 12, 2021) ["14th FYP Outline"], at 8, available at [https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/t0284\\_14th\\_Five\\_Year\\_Plan\\_EN.pdf](https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/t0284_14th_Five_Year_Plan_EN.pdf) [Chinese source <https://perma.cc/73AK-BUW2>].
- <sup>5</sup> State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, "China and the World in the New Era" (September 27, 2019) [hereinafter "SCIO, 'China and the World in the New Era'"], at 39, available at [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201909/27/content\\_WS5d8d80f9c6d0bcf8c4c142ef.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201909/27/content_WS5d8d80f9c6d0bcf8c4c142ef.html).
- <sup>6</sup> "China's National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy: A Path to Comprehensive National Power," MITRE Corporation paper prepared for the U.S. Air Force Office of Commercial and Economic Analysis (January 2022), at 37.
- <sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, remarks to the 19th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party" (October 18, 2017), *Xinhua News Agency* (November 4, 2017) (arguing that "the principal contradiction facing Chinese society in the new era is that between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life"), available at [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpconationalcongress/2017-11/04/content\\_34115212.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpconationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm).
- <sup>8</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 35-37 & 125. It is presumably meant here that China will "diversify" assurances and "strengthen" reserves.
- <sup>9</sup> State Council of the PRC, *Made in China 2025* (July 7, 2015), § 48, at 37, available at <http://www.cittadellascienza.it/cina/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/loT-ONE-Made-in-China-2025.pdf>.
- <sup>10</sup> *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 2.3, at 8.
- <sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 1 (from the introduction).
- <sup>12</sup> Doshi, *supra*, at 248 (quoting Hu Jintao's remarks to the G20 in 2008).
- <sup>13</sup> SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 43.
- <sup>14</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 126.
- <sup>15</sup> Quoted in Doshi, *supra*, at 239. Indeed, there is scarcely any sector in which CCP planners do not imagine China eventually at least pulling even with any conceivable foreign competitors. See, e.g., 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 50 (calling for building "internationally competitive corporate credit reporting agencies and credit rating agencies").
- <sup>16</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 1.
- <sup>17</sup> SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 17.
- <sup>18</sup> "China's National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy," *supra*, at 24; see also *id.* at 7 (noting emphasis in 14th Five-Year Plan upon "economic securitization," a concerted and comprehensive large-scale effort to fortify and safeguard the national economy against perceived severe threats to the country's economic well-being" and prevent "'strangulation' by U.S.-led efforts to choke off China's access to foreign technology and knowledge"); 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 20 (noting importance of strengthening "strategic" supply chains, keeping "the key links of production chains" inside China, "strengthen[ing] the abilities of central, western, and northeastern regions to undertake industrial relocation," and implementing "the emergency product production capacity reserve project and build[ing] regional emergency material production assurance bases").



## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

- <sup>19</sup> Quoted by John Garver, "China's U.S. Policies," in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Yong Deng & Fei-Ling Wang, eds.) (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), at 225.
- <sup>20</sup> CPC Central Committee and the State Council, *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy* (May 19, 2016), at 4, available at <https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/outline-of-the-national-innovation-driven-development-strategy/> [Chinese source: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-05/19/c\\_1118898033.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-05/19/c_1118898033.htm)].
- <sup>21</sup> *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 1.1, at 3.
- <sup>22</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 4.
- <sup>23</sup> See, e.g., French, *supra*, at 38-40.
- <sup>24</sup> Elizabeth C. Economy, *The World According to China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022), at 137. As this quoted phrasing suggests, global leadership in technological innovation is important to China not just for the material benefits it can bring (e.g., greater wealth, prosperity, and well-being) but also for symbolic value: its ability to show that it is *China* that now sits at the top of the global civilizational rankings.
- <sup>25</sup> Garver, *supra*, at 214.
- <sup>26</sup> Xi, "Secure a Decisive Victory," *supra*.
- <sup>27</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 12-13 & 23.
- <sup>28</sup> CPC Central Committee and the State Council, *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy* (published by Xinhua News Agency, May 19, 2016), available at <https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/outline-of-the-national-innovation-driven-development-strategy/> [Chinese source: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-05/19/c\\_1118898033.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-05/19/c_1118898033.htm)].
- <sup>29</sup> "China's National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy," *supra*, at 8.
- <sup>30</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 16-17.
- <sup>31</sup> "China's National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy," *supra*, at 8-10.
- <sup>32</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 11.
- <sup>33</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 5.
- <sup>34</sup> *Id.* at 5.
- <sup>35</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 7.
- <sup>36</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 7; see also, e.g., "China's National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy," *supra*, at 11 ("The United States still has an absolute scientific and technological edge in virtually every individual industrial sector, but Chinese policy-makers believe that the arrival of a new technological revolution presents an extraordinary once-in-a lifetime opportunity to close the gap.").
- <sup>37</sup> *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 1.3, at 4.
- <sup>38</sup> Anonymous, "The Longer Telegram: Toward a New American China Strategy," *Atlantic Council* (2021), at 53.
- <sup>39</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 16.
- <sup>40</sup> William A. Callahan, *China: The Pessoptimist Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), at 45 (quoting Jiang Tingfu, *Zhongguo jindai shi* [Modern Chinese History] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2005), at 2 ("In the past century the basic question facing us is 'Can the Chinese people modernize?' ... If we can, our nation's future will be bright. If we can't our nation will have no future.")).
- <sup>41</sup> David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), at 160; see also David Arkush & Leo O. Lee, "Introduction," in *Land without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (David Arkush & Leo O. Lee, eds.) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), at 9.
- <sup>42</sup> On occasion, however, it would seem that China's desire to lead the world in technological and scientific creativity and its desire to bolster its international image can run at cross purposes. In the early 2010s, for example, it was reported that a journal at the University of Zhejiang had found that "nearly a third of all papers it received contained plagiarism or sections copied from

## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

previous papers.” A government-backed study of 6,000 Chinese scientists around the same time, moreover, found that “one-third admitted that they had fabricated data or plagiarized.” Christopher Ford, *China Looks at the West: Identity, Global Ambitions, and the Future of Sino-American Relations* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), at 239 (citing Evan Osnos, *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2014), at 321; “Looks Good on Paper,” *The Economist* (September 28, 2013); Mara Hvistendahl, “Copycat Papers Flag Continuing Headache in China,” *Science Insider* (October 14, 2014)).

<sup>43</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, “Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (Peter J. Katzenstein, ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), at 216, 243.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., MITRE Corporation Technical Analysis Competition Team, “‘We Connect the World’: ‘Point-Line-Plane’ Strategy Along the Silk Road” (February 14, 2022) (discussing Chinese strategy for supporting military “strategic strong points” doctrine with ostensibly civilian “Digital Silk Road” infrastructure projects), available at <https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/publications/pr-21-3354-we-connect-the-world-point-line-plane-strategy-along-the-silk-road.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 2-3.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>47</sup> The phrase refers to the efforts by Chinese monks, after Buddhism first came to China during the Tang Dynasty, to travel to India in order to obtain sacred Buddhist writings (sutras) and translate them into Chinese. This was perhaps the only prior case in which the self-satisfied Middle Kingdom felt a need to obtain wisdom from foreigners, and “going and getting the sutras” is thus something of a catchphrase for seeking out wisdom at its source and bringing it back to one’s own country. See Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 135. Ford credits the journalist Benjamin Lim with applying this ancient concept to China’s search in the West for the secrets of modernity.

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., Keith Bradsher, “How China Obtains American Trade Secrets,” *New York Times* (January 15, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/business/china-technology-transfer.html>; Economy, *supra*, at 153 (discussing mandatory technology transfers from foreign firms operating in China).

<sup>49</sup> General (ret.) Keith Alexander, testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services on “The Future of Warfare” (November 3, 2015), at 3 (declaring that “the value of theft of intellectual property from American industry is significantly greater than accounted for in this study and, in fact, represents the single greatest transfer of wealth in history”), available at [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Alexander\\_11-03-15.pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Alexander_11-03-15.pdf). According to the National Bureau of Economic Research’s Intellectual Property Commission, intellectual property theft costs the U.S. economy between \$225 billion and \$600 billion a year. The U.S. Department of Justice has also noted that between 2011 and 2018, some 90 percent of state-sponsored espionage cases under investigation involved China. Economy, *supra*, at 154 (recounting these figures), 136 (discussing specific intellectual property theft involving Chinese technology company Huawei), & 151-52 (discussing intellectual property theft cases in the United States associated with Chinese talent recruitment programs).

<sup>50</sup> Nicholas Eftimiades, *Chinese Espionage Operations and Tactics* (State College, Pennsylvania: Vitruvian, 2020), at 2-6, 12, & 37.

<sup>51</sup> Eftimiades, *supra*, at 3, 5-6, & 37.

<sup>52</sup> Bradsher, *supra*.

<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., Philip Wen, “China denies ‘slandorous’ economic espionage charges from U.S., allies,” Reuters (December 20, 2018), available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-cyber-usa-ministry/china-denies-slandorous-economic-espionage-charges-from-u-s-allies-idUSKCN1OK03Y>.

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci: A Jesuit at the Ming Court* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

- <sup>44</sup> CPC Central Organization Department, Notice No. 45 (2011) *Detailed Rules for the “Thousand Talents Program” High-Level Foreign Expert Project* (published by Beijing Institute of Technology, September 25, 2015) [hereinafter “Thousand Talents Program”], at 2, available at <https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/detailed-rules-for-the-thousand-talents-program-high-level-foreign-expert-project/> [Chinese source: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200502211227/http://renshichu.bit.edu.cn/docs/20150925153138638/>].
- <sup>56</sup> “Thousand Talents Program,” *supra*, at 1; see also, e.g., 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 19 (“We will support the establishment of international S&T organizations within China, and foreign scientists filling positions in Chinese academic S&T organizations.”). As Elizabeth Economy has recounted, this program began in 1994 as the “Hundred Talents Program,” but was expanded into the “Thousand Talents Program” in 2008. Its ambition was to recruit 1,000 overseas scientists over 10 years, with 100 of them coming from the very top ranks of professions. (By 2019, she writes, over 10,000 scientists and technicians had participated in some form, though only 390 non-Chinese scientists had apparently opted to move to China). Economy, *supra*, at 148.
- <sup>57</sup> *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 4.5, at 35
- <sup>58</sup> Eftimiades, *supra*, at 18.
- <sup>59</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 42.
- <sup>60</sup> *Id.* at 38, 41, & 67. A translator’s note observes that “[a]lternate English translations for the Chinese term *wǎngluò qiángguó* (网络强国)—here translated as ‘cyber powerhouse’—include ‘cyber superpower,’ ‘network powerhouse,’ ‘network superpower,’ and so on. For a more thorough discussion in English of the meaning of the term *wǎngluò qiángguó*, see: <https://www.newamerica.org/cybersecurity-initiative/digichina/blog/lexicon-wangluo-qiangguo/>.” *Id.* at 38 n.10. Chinese digital technology advances overseas also help China refine its electronic control techniques. A study by the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab, for instance, showed that the Chinese WeChat application surveils and collects data from *foreign* users as well as from Chinese ones, using this to improve censorship [at least] in China. The Chinese role in undersea cables—which carry about 95 percent of international voice and data traffic worldwide, and in which the Chinese company Huawei alone commands about a one-quarter share—also provides opportunities to “monitor or divert data or even to cut traffic entirely in the event of a conflict.” Economy, *supra*, at 130-31.
- <sup>61</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 18 (discussing China’s “intellectual property powerhouse (知识产权强国) strategy”); see also *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 3.1, at 12; Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy, *supra*, at 17-18. The 14th Five-Year Plan also promises that China will do more “national security reviews, anti-monopoly reviews, national technology security list management, unreliable entity lists, and other systems for foreign investment.” 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 100.
- <sup>62</sup> Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 201.
- <sup>63</sup> Timothy R. Heath, Derek Grossman, & Asha Clark, “China’s Quest for Primacy: An Analysis of Chinese International and Defense Strategies to Outcompete the United States,” RAND Corporation (2021), at 70, available at [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA400/RRA447-1/RAND\\_RRA447-1.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA400/RRA447-1/RAND_RRA447-1.pdf).
- <sup>64</sup> “China’s National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy,” *supra*, at 3.
- <sup>65</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 6.
- <sup>66</sup> *Id.* at 10.
- <sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 11-12.
- <sup>68</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 12; see also *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 3.1, at 11-12 (“promote two-way transfer between military and civilian technologies”).
- <sup>69</sup> *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy*, *supra*, at 12.

## CHINA'S STRATEGIC VISION | PART TWO

# TOOLS AND AXES OF COMPETITION

- <sup>70</sup> See also, e.g., *Made in China 2025*, *supra*, § 4.1, at 32 (announcing objective of “[s]teadily reform defense-related science and technology industries and promote civil-military integration”).
- <sup>71</sup> Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, “Chinese Technology Transfer Challenges to U.S. Export Control Policy,” remarks at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (July 11, 2018), *available at* <https://www.newparadigmsforum.com/p2176>. This strategy also “supports China’s expanding strategic and geoeconomic influence and presence through defense and dual-use exports, especially in emerging technologies, and with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).” “China’s National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy,” *supra*, at 14.
- <sup>72</sup> “China’s National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy,” *supra*, at 14.
- <sup>73</sup> Xi, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra*.
- <sup>74</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>75</sup> Heath et al., *supra*, at 67-68.
- <sup>76</sup> Quoted by Doshi, *supra*, at 287.
- <sup>77</sup> “China’s National Development Strategy and Industrial Policy,” *supra*, at 13.
- <sup>78</sup> See, e.g., 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 131 (calling for China to “strengthen strategic forces and combat forces for new domains with a new character (壮大战略力量和新域新质作战力量), [and] create a high-level strategic deterrence and joint operations system”).
- <sup>79</sup> Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, “Why Chinese Technology Transfer Threats Matter,” remarks at the U.S. Naval Academy (October 24, 2018), *available at* <https://www.newparadigmsforum.com/p2279>.
- <sup>80</sup> Heath et al., *supra*, at 73.
- <sup>81</sup> See James Mulvenon, “Chairman Hu and the PLA’s ‘New Historic Missions,’” China Leadership Monitor, no. 27 (2009), *available at* <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM27JM.pdf>.
- <sup>82</sup> See, e.g., Cortez Cooper, “The PLA Navy’s ‘New Historic Missions’: Expanding Capabilities for a Re-Emergent Maritime Power,” RAND Corporation, testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (June 11, 2009), at 2, *available at* [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND\\_CT332.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND_CT332.pdf). (The reader will recall that in Part I of this trilogy of papers, it was noted that despite its conceits of benevolence, the traditional Chinese system of tributary state relations with the emperor rested heavily upon the availability of overwhelming military force. See, e.g., Yuan-kang Wang, “Power and the Use of Force,” in *Sacred Mandates* (Timothy Brook, Michael van Walt van Praag, & Miek Boltjes, eds.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), at 70, 71-75. The CCP’s current program to build up first-rank military capabilities may thus have relevance to China’s ability to create (and enforce) its vision for a new global order discussed in Part III.)
- <sup>83</sup> See, e.g., U.S. Department of Defense, Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2021 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Defense Department, 2021) [hereinafter “DoD China Report 2021”], at 81-86, *available at* <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.
- <sup>84</sup> Heath et al., *supra*, at 71-72.
- <sup>85</sup> *Id.* at 107 & 92.
- <sup>86</sup> SCIO, “China and the World in the New Era,” *supra*, at 40.
- <sup>87</sup> In a somewhat ironic illustration of their own sensitivities and vulnerabilities in this regard, CCP officials in 1998 began retranslating the English-language name for the Party’s Central Propaganda Department as the “Central Publicity Department”—even though they did not change the actual Chinese name at all. Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 236.
- <sup>88</sup> See, e.g., Doshi, *supra*, at 322.
- <sup>89</sup> Heath et al., *supra*, at 151-52 (quoting Yang Jiemian, “Great Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics and Discourse Power: Purpose and Challenges [中国特色大国外交和话语权的使命与挑战],” International Problems Research [国际问题研究] (May 13, 2017)).
- <sup>90</sup> Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 234.



- <sup>91</sup> *Id.* at 234. Even beyond simply turning to such foreign scholarship to provide descriptive insights into dynamics of and possibilities for social control, such scholars have also long been attractive to CCP officials for the critiques they offer of Western values and practices. As Haun Saussy has suggested, there has developed something of a cottage industry in China of “us[ing] the aliens to control the aliens” by invoking socially marginal critical discourses from Western academia to attack and marginalize mainstream Western narratives (e.g., about human rights and democracy) in favor of a “new-fashioned cultural chauvinism.” Haun Saussy, *Great Walls of Discourse and other Adventures in Cultural China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), at 122, 127, & 133-38. (Saussy finds such modern Chinese writings problematic, however, essentialist Orientalism being flawed and intellectually sterile whether employed either to stigmatize or to laud the supposed cultures of the East, and whether by Europeans or by Chinese.)
- <sup>92</sup> Quoted by Mei-Ling Wang, “Creating a Virtual Enemy: U.S.-China Relations in Print,” in *Image, Perception, and the Making of U.S.-China Relations* (Hongshan Li & Zhaohui Hong, eds.) (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), at 77; *see also id.* at 95 (discussing influence of Chomsky on PRC propagandists).
- <sup>93</sup> Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 449-55 (and quoting Junhao Hong, “From the World’s Largest Propaganda Machine to a Multipurposed Global News Agency: Factors in and Implications of Xinhua’s Transformation since 1978,” *Political Communication*, vol. 28, no. 3 (November 2011), at 377, 391).
- <sup>94</sup> Jiafeng Chen, “Expectation Meets Reality: Social Changes in China,” in *Image, Perception, and the Making of U.S.-China Relations* (Hongshan Li & Zhaohui Hong, eds.) (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), at 121, 137.
- <sup>95</sup> Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 233-35 (quoting Biwu Zhang, *Chinese Perceptions of the U.S.: An Exploration of China’s Foreign Policy Motivations* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington, 2012), at 184).
- <sup>96</sup> Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), at 105-06.
- <sup>97</sup> Yong Deng, *China’s Struggle for Status* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), at 3.
- <sup>97</sup> Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 233.
- <sup>98</sup> Wang, *supra*, at 122.
- <sup>100</sup> SCIO, “China and the World in the New Era,” *supra*, at 13.
- <sup>101</sup> *Id.* at 12.
- <sup>102</sup> Xi, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra*.
- <sup>103</sup> Heath et al., *supra*, at 173.
- <sup>104</sup> *See, e.g.*, Economy, *supra*, at 38 (discussing Chinese influence operations in Australia and the local political scandals that they have created). Such influence operations go back years, including in the United States, where Beijing attempted to influence U.S. federal elections at least as early as 1996. *See, e.g.*, “Excerpts from a Chapter in the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee Report,” *New York Times* (February 11, 1998) (discussing Chinese efforts to influence U.S. Congressional elections, including the 1996 presidential race), available at <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/politics/021198china-fundraising-txt.html>. (The referenced *New York Times* article reproduces an excerpt from a U.S. Senate report. *See* U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, “Investigation of Illegal or Improper Activities in Connection with 1996 Federal Election Campaigns: Final Report,” Rept. No. 105-167, 105th Congress, 2d Sess. (March 10, 1998), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-105srpt167/pdf/CRPT-105srpt167-pt1.pdf>. It has been reported that U.S. intelligence information found links between Chinese intelligence agencies and certain figures discussed in the unclassified version of the Senate report. *See, e.g.*, Bob Woodward, “Findings Link Clinton Allies to Chinese Intelligence,” *Washington Post* (February 10, 1998), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/campfin/stories/cf021098.htm>.)

<sup>105</sup> See, e.g., Christopher Ford & Thomas Grant, “Exporting Censorship: The Chinese Communist Party Tries to Control Global Speech About China,” National Security Institute Law and Policy Paper (April 2022), available at <https://nationalsecurity.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Exporting-Censorship-FINAL-WEB-2.pdf>; Economy, *supra*, at 25 (“In the same way that it controls speech domestically, Beijing seeks to limit the ability of international actors to speak freely about China.”) & 34-36 (discussing Chinese pressures on Hollywood film studios to ensure favorable depictions of China in global media).

<sup>106</sup> Xi, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra*.

<sup>107</sup> The CCP’s United Front Works Department (UFWD) traditionally handled returnees, but ethnic Chinese actually living overseas were traditionally to be handled jointly by the UFWD, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of State Security. Cheng Gangyuan, *Secrets of the CCP’s United Front Work Department* (Washington, D.C.: Citizen Press, 2019), at 152-54. One of the ways in which the CCP has attempted to leverage the presence of

“Overseas Chinese” in foreign countries is for purposes of espionage. One scholar’s analysis of 595 documented espionage cases found in law enforcement records, for instance, suggested that more than 90 of those cases involved ethnic Chinese. Eftimiades, *supra*, at 2.

<sup>108</sup> James To, “‘Hand-in-Hand, Heart-to-Heart’: Thought Management and the Overseas Chinese,” in *China’s Thought Management* (Anne-Marie Brady, ed.) (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), at 194-65 & 167-76).

<sup>109</sup> Economy, *supra*, at 37-38 (quoting Xi comments to Central United Front Works Department meeting in 2015, and citing Anne-Marie Brady about Chinese UFWD objectives).

<sup>110</sup> 14th FYP Outline, *supra*, at 82-84. The translator’s note here observes that *Xuexi Qiangguo* (学习强国) is “a mobile app run by the CCP Central Propaganda Department that indoctrinates users in Chinese Marxist theory, particularly the speeches of Xi Jinping.” *Id.* at 83 n.19.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Economy, *supra*, at 113.

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