

The Chinese Communist Party's Insidious Infiltration

LT COL KATHLEEN HASSON, USAF, GSS

Abstract

Under Xi Jinping's leadership, the People's Republic of China (PRC), directed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), is pursuing a grand strategy to achieve national rejuvenation. Its strategy incorporates various malign influence methods to control, persuade, intimidate, and manipulate foreign entities and citizens to support this vision. In its insidious infiltration, the CCP is leveraging economic coercion and interference in domestic affairs in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to implement its national grand strategy of rejuvenation that, if left unchallenged, could have detrimental consequences. The United States should prepare now and implement a united, interagency cooperative posture that also extends across applicable institutions and national governmental echelons to prevent an imbalance in favor of the PRC. Diplomacy is encouraged, but it requires transparency resulting in an overt, legitimate display of intentions and behavior that also includes reciprocity between participating nations. Open, free democracies should not be at a disadvantage because they implement soft power in alignment with their enduring principles, values, and international standards. While this article will not attempt to cover all aspects of the grand strategy pursued by the CCP, it will attempt to explain that its seemingly innocuous and insidious use of malign influence and interference needs to be recognized and countered by the United States and its allies.

Introduction

The unscrupulous aspect of China's rise in power necessitates an immediate and coordinated response from the United States, its allies, and partners. In the words of the last Director of National Intelligence (DNI), John Ratcliffe, "the People's Republic of China poses the greatest threat to America today, and the greatest threat to democracy and freedom worldwide since World War II."¹ The question is how China² will implement its vision of prominence and to what end. Some say China's goals are more regional than global, whereas others, such as former DNI Ratcliffe, clearly think otherwise. It is unlikely that China's president, Xi Jinping, wishes to confront American forces on the traditional battlefield, but there are different methods to defeat an adversary. Chinese guiding principles

on conducting warfare date back to approximately 500 BCE during the Sun Tzu era.³ Through its grand strategy, the Chinese Communist Party has modernized the art of deceiving an adversary through noncombative warfare and achieving victory without engaging in kinetic operations.

The United States' grand strategy is guided by the *National Security Strategy* (*NSS*), which labels China as a revisionist state expanding its power at the expense of other nation's sovereignty.⁴ The *NSS* describes a China that gathers and exploits data on an unrivaled scale.⁵ Led by Xi Jinping, the CCP's efforts and associated tensions with the United States and its allies have only increased in the twenty-first century. Regardless of the threat, our nation's enduring security interests, as spelled out in the *NSS* and guided by the principles enshrined in the US Constitution, remain relatively unaltered. America seeks security for our homeland and citizens, as well as for our allies, economic prosperity, and preservation of universal values.⁶ The pursuit of these interests should be in a rule-based international order, advanced by US leadership with strong global cooperation to confront various challenges.⁷

Battlespace Transformation

China's National Grand Strategy

Although our interests have stayed constant over the decades, the battlespace in which the United States pursues those interests has changed dramatically, with the economy, information, and technology today being just as critical to national security as soldiers with rifles. This intangible battlespace has provided the CCP an opportunity to inconspicuously insert its national agenda into other countries' domestic affairs around the globe, targeting unsuspecting citizens in the hope of remaining undetected. There is concern that the insidious nature of this malign influence may delay detection for an extended period. Regardless, when detected, as it was in Australia, the CCP responds by inflicting economic coercion upon the nation opposing the infiltration. Protecting a nation's interests becomes more complicated when dealing with an adversary that employs a multitiered strategy comprising both the physical, more obvious military threat and a seemingly innocuous and insidious threat emboldened through economic power. In its insidious infiltration, the CCP is leveraging economic coercion and interference in domestic affairs in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to implement its national grand strategy of rejuvenation that, if left unchallenged, could have detrimental (if not dire) consequences.

Directed and led by President and General Secretary Xi Jinping, China's grand strategy strives to fulfill national rejuvenation while reassuring other nations that

China's rise does not pose a threat.⁸ The strategy has the CCP seeking to reform the international system and resisting change that hinders China's advancement of its core interests while simultaneously rebuilding a wealthy and powerful nation.⁹ China's grand strategy aims to protect and promote the CCP's interests, including expanding Chinese influence among its neighbors, assuring China's prosperity, and ensuring that the CCP has a voice in the international arena. One key element is to reassure sovereign and international entities that China's ascendancy presents the opportunity for mutual benefit.¹⁰ This *perception* of opportunity has permitted China to gain a competitive edge by building unbalanced economic relationships in numerous countries and thereby becoming indebted to the economically powerful benefactor nation.¹¹ These relationships have also provided the CCP the means to influence foreign governments, groups, and individuals to offer policy concessions.¹² China continues to build on this approach as it moves toward a more aggressive stance to safeguard and secure its national interests. This strategy demands reform in the international community in ways that allow China to rebuild it to suit its vision of greatness.¹³ In doing so, the CCP resists when other international entities and sovereign nations' efforts do not, at least passively, support its national interests—as we see through its use of malign influence and interference.¹⁴

While diplomacy, or the use of soft power, has been utilized throughout history to solve conflict without military force, *diplomacy* is not the proper term to describe the CCP's covert, manipulative, and at times corrupt influence and interference. Some have used the terms “sharp power” or “political warfare” to describe this element of the CCP's national grand strategy execution. The CCP uses its United Front Work Department to target businesses, universities, think tanks, scholars, government officials, and journalists worldwide to execute their malign influence operations.¹⁵ As Clive Hamilton and Marieke Ohlberg point out in their book *Hidden Hand*: “The CCP seemed to be following a dictum attributed to Stalin: ‘Ideas are more powerful than guns. We would not let our enemies have guns, why should we let them have ideas?’”¹⁶ Thus, part of the interference in other nation's domestic affairs is espionage, monitoring, and nefariously collecting research and development, technology, and design.¹⁷ In analyzing the CCP's malign influence in Australia, Hamilton and Ohlberg describe the CCP's efforts to influence not only that country but also North American and European elites, the Chinese diaspora, media, think tanks, and academia.¹⁸ Hamilton's interest in uncovering malign Chinese influence globally first began with unsettling indications that the CCP was drawing Australia into its sphere of influence.

Australia—Canary in a Coal Mine

More than almost any other nation in modern history, Australia has felt the impact of China's malign influence operations.¹⁹ The CCP's interest in Australia is due partly to its strong partnership with the United States and Australia's economic dependency on China, its largest trade partner.²⁰ The CCP also targeted Australia because of its openness, multicultural composition, and the liberal rights and freedoms enjoyed by its citizens, all of which provided an opportunity for infiltration. Australia has prospered economically for nearly 30 years, thriving with little interruption. As Australia looked for opportunities to ensure this fortuitous trend continued, it seemed natural to satisfy China's healthy appetite for Australian exports of iron ore, coal, and other minerals.²¹ This open-ended opportunity resulted in China purchasing one-third of all Australian exports.²² Numerous Chinese tourists also visit Australia, spending more than AU\$11 billion annually.²³ In addition, more than 260,000 Chinese students account for nearly 17 percent of the country's nine leading universities' total revenue.²⁴ The numerous ethnic Chinese residing in Australia also provided a method for more interpersonal meddling. The CCP took all this into account as it built a mutually beneficial relationship but insidiously created an imbalance in China's favor. China and Australia's relationship continued to appear beneficial for both nations until it became evident that the CCP was interfering in Australia's domestic political and civil affairs.

After years of cooperation between the two trade partners, the relationship hit its first significant obstacle when Australia discovered Chinese meddling in its political affairs and domestic debates.²⁵ These initial unsettling indications of unwelcome and inappropriate interference came in 2017 with the revelation of large political donations from ethnic Chinese linked to the CCP.²⁶ These donations appeared to have the purpose of swaying China policy within Australia's major political parties to support the CCP's interests.²⁷ Suspicions of Chinese influence in Australian universities also surfaced, as well as concern over CCP assimilation in Chinese-language media and civic groups in the Chinese Australian community.²⁸ Australia responded by using former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's "3 C's" framework to determine if they were dealing with malign influence and interference far beyond legitimate diplomacy.²⁹ When the CCP behavior was "covert, coercive, or corrupting," the conduct moved from legitimate influence into the domain of "unacceptable interference."³⁰ Due to Australia's lenient laws regarding political contributions, the CCP was able to infiltrate and influence this sovereign nation beyond acceptable standards. Prime Minister Turnbull recognized this vulnerability and led the effort to develop and implement new legislation to eliminate

foreign interference.³¹ The Australian government then banned Huawei and ZTE from Australia's 5G network in an attempt to further protect itself.³²

Unfortunately, Australia's economic dependency on China enabled the CCP to respond negatively when it perceived that Australia was no longer passively playing into China's national grand strategy. The CCP began by rejecting a small number of Australian exports, but the adverse response soon increased in intensity. Nearly the entire world was affected by the coronavirus in 2020, but Australia would likely have seen a derailment of almost 30 years of economic growth regardless of the pandemic. What started as a boycott of beef has grown to restricting or placing significant tariffs on barley, cotton, timber, wine, and coal.³³ China has progressively escalated its punitive reaction in response to Australia's unwillingness to tolerate the CCP's malign influence and interference, followed by demands for an investigation into the coronavirus's origins.³⁴ Australia recognized and responded to the CCP's infiltration by taking swift action that united internal agencies, capitalizing on an open press and the willingness to be transparent.³⁵ In the decades prior to this, the two nations developed and sustained a mutually beneficial relationship that could have legitimized China's claim—per its grand strategy—that China's rejuvenation could provide opportunity and be considered beneficial for other nations.³⁶ However, given the malign influence, this viewpoint changed and enhanced other nations' awareness of this unacceptable behavior by the CCP.

United Kingdom—2020 Reset

Until recently, the United Kingdom was one of the few allies of the United States that did not appear to have a narrative opposing the CCP's malign influence. To a certain degree, the United Kingdom's narrative supported its mutually beneficial relationship with China as an economic powerhouse.³⁷ However, things began to change in 2020; as with nearly every other nation, the coronavirus's spread did not help the situation, but the draconian security law levied on Hong Kong by the CCP was in clear violation of the handover agreement between the two countries.³⁸ As with Australia, the United Kingdom has been targeted by the CCP because of its ethnic Chinese population, the number of Chinese students enrolled in local universities, as well as its economically significant open markets and technological expertise.³⁹ Like the United States' optimistic viewpoint after normalizing relations with China in 1979, the United Kingdom also worked toward a mutually beneficial relationship.⁴⁰ Reinforced by significant trade between the countries as two strong economic powers, the relationship grew because both were ultimately profiting from the exchange. The United Kingdom also joined the United States by initially striving to include China in the international system and working together to combat global issues such as climate change.⁴¹ The United Kingdom was the

first country in the G7⁴² to become a member of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (founded by China) and went so far as to compliment China's progress in public forums.⁴³ However, again similar to Australia's experience, the United Kingdom saw the CCP take advantage of an open, multicultural society with liberal rights and freedoms of speech and press.⁴⁴ These actions incentivized the Royal United Services Institution for Defense and Security Studies to conduct an inquiry into the CCP interference. It found that targets within the United Kingdom included Cambridge University Press, which was pressured to remove articles relating to controversial topics in China including Taiwan, Tibet, and the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.⁴⁵ The study recommended continued efforts to determine the extent of the interference, described as a "rigorous, ruthless advancement of China's interests and values at the expense of those of the West."⁴⁶ Revelations such as this are also part of the reason the United Kingdom is removing Huawei from its 5G network and clamping down on Chinese investments.⁴⁷ Characteristics in liberal societies, such as freedom of speech and press, appeal to those seeking a better life. Nations with societies bearing these characteristics—Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States among them—should not be exploited by others seeking infiltration vulnerabilities.

United States—Awareness and Prevention

The CCP interferes in the United States by targeting Congress, state and local governments, the Chinese American community, universities, think tanks, media, corporations, technology, and research.⁴⁸ In 2018, Peter Navarro, serving as the White House trade advisor, labeled some Wall Street bankers and hedge fund managers as "unregistered foreign agents" acting as part of Beijing's influence operations in Washington.⁴⁹ In their book, Hamilton and Ohlberg assert that American finance powerhouses have guided US policy regarding China, stating that Wall Street titans have used their influence to persuade former American presidents to back off stricter policy toward China. Previously, when the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations threatened to stop China's currency manipulation or technology theft, they were convinced to be more tolerant. The authors also claim that pressure from Wall Street proved decisive in the Clinton administration's support of China's admission into the World Trade Organization despite its serial violations of trade rules.⁵⁰ Financial institutions have been the CCP's most influential advocates in Washington. Beijing incentivizes US investors to buy into Chinese-listed companies, thereby giving the CCP leverage within the United States.⁵¹ Revelations of such influence in the US financial arena have made the CCP's insidious infiltration more apparent and disconcerting to other entities as well.

In 2020, *Newsweek* conducted an investigation that exposed CCP interference in a range of US domestic affairs including social media and federal, state, and local government to “foster conditions and connections that will further Beijing’s political and economic interests and ambitions.”⁵² Those conducting the investigation determined that the CCP was not out to destroy the United States but to change or subvert it from within—all while fostering a positive view of China.⁵³ The CCP appears to be in pursuit of not only US technology but also the hearts (or at least the minds and wallets) of American citizens. Anna Puglisi, a senior fellow at Georgetown University’s Center for Security and Emerging Technology and a former national counterintelligence officer for East Asia, stated that the CCP is determined and organized. In her view: “We [in America] don’t think in these ways. It flies in the face of how people in the US see the world.”⁵⁴ The difference in thinking between the two nations makes it that much more critical to alert unsuspecting American citizens and lower-level echelon government officials about the CCP’s insidious infiltration.

It has become clear that the CCP has now adjusted its tactics to attempt to influence unsuspecting private, state, and local political, business, and community interests in the United States.⁵⁵ Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned the National Governors Association that the CCP was identifying and grooming state and local politicians.⁵⁶ The goal of the CCP was to identify local government officials who would support its interests, stating that a Chinese think tank had already graded governors on their “friendliness” toward the CCP.⁵⁷ According to the report, 17 governors were considered friendly, 14 ambiguous, and only six were considered “hardline,” with the other governors labeled as having unclear sentiments toward the CCP.⁵⁸ An example of gubernatorial influence was witnessed when diplomats at the Chinese consulate in Houston wrote to the Mississippi governor, Phil Bryant, threatening to cancel a Chinese investment in his state if he traveled to Taiwan.⁵⁹ Another anecdote included a Chinese diplomat in Chicago who wrote to a Wisconsin lawmaker, Republican Roger Roth, asking him to sponsor a bill that praised China’s response to the coronavirus.⁶⁰ When viewed separately these events seem benign enough, but when viewed as a whole the long-term impact and overall objective of the CCP becomes increasingly troublesome. Ultimately, the *Newsweek* report linked approximately 600 American groups to the CCP system, which is even more disconcerting when associated with Xi Jinping’s statement to top economists and sociologists that China would double down on seeking cooperation with US politicians and business leaders.⁶¹ The influence is targeted at Congress and the presidential administration as well. Former DNI Ratcliffe made clear his concerns over economic espionage, which he described as the CCP robbing US companies of their intellectual property,

replicating that technology, and replacing American firms in the global marketplace. He also stated: “This year [2020], China engaged in a massive influence campaign that included targeting several dozen members of Congress and congressional aides.”⁶² This influence campaign and the other insidious and malign interference in Australia and the United Kingdom are consistent with the CCP’s grand strategy of rejuvenation, utilizing insidious infiltration to bolster the perception that China is wielding only peaceful diplomatic power.

Recommendations

The US Department of State is undoubtedly aware of the insidious infiltration and the CCP’s unconventional methods of influence and interference with America and other nations. Certain entities within China have been using this more aggressive use of sharp power for decades, if not centuries, and have perfected their tactics and methodology. If the CCP’s methodology was true and legitimate diplomacy, it would not be using covert, deceptive, and manipulative methods to infiltrate and influence. Because of the insidious nature of the CCP’s infiltration and the broad spectrum of targets that range from schools, think tanks, Wall Street, and local leaders, the Department of State’s narrative has not made it to all necessary audiences. Neither is there a strong mechanism for sharing information among the many entities on different levels and disciplines. A united approach starts with awareness and builds into interagency cooperation in the United States to counter the CCP’s influence operations. Open communication is also necessary between American and Chinese leaders, not only to avoid miscalculations but also to ensure the message is being received that the United States is not deceived and will not be influenced or intimidated. The message is equally important to be received by US allies: a strong, united alliance of like-minded and free nations should work together to deter and counter the CCP’s malign influence and interference.

On a broader scale, now is the time to use the self-inflicted Chinese impetus to our own advantage and to educate American citizens that contributing to and leading alliances is not only in America’s best interest but also necessary to secure our own freedoms and security at home. The seemingly innocuous and insidious use of influence and interference are real threats that travel in this information age with unprecedented speed, distributed to millions of citizens in almost all nations. The battlespace is no longer a rigid domain in the air, on the ocean, or over the ground; it has transformed, and with it comes a demand for reform in our approach to protect enduring national principles, values, and interests. While former President Donald Trump supported an inward focus on domestic issues over foreign affairs, President Joe Biden’s administration understands the value of international institutions and allies across the globe.⁶³ Now is the time to ensure this

new momentum continues, and the United States should increase alliances, treaties, and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region as necessary to protect its interests as well as the interests of allies and partners.

In prior years, the CCP's political warfare and use of unacceptable, covert influence operations and inference may have been less apparent to agencies outside the Department of State. However, under President Biden, new National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan is fully aware and ready to counter these less obvious threats.⁶⁴ This interagency willingness to engage provides an opportunity to build awareness and a comprehensive approach first in the United States and then other nations as we lead to counter the malign influence. In an article published prior to beginning his official duties as the National Security Advisor, Sullivan stated in direct reference to the coronavirus pandemic (but with a broader application to malign influence also) that America was ready to once again be engaged in the world:

The American people will understand now, better than they have in a long time, that a threat that emanates from elsewhere can cause massive disruption and catastrophic loss of life. And so being engaged in the world—being out there with our diplomats and our public health professionals and being part of institutions and systems that can help track and prevent threats before they arrive at our shores—that matters profoundly to working families across this country.⁶⁵

The Biden administration has already expressed its intent and viewpoint that alliances are important to ensure American interests are secure. In President Biden's opening statement in the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, he reaffirms his commitment "to engage with the world once again."⁶⁶ The cost will be high to form a strong, competitive, and driven alliance focused on deterring and countering the CCP's malign influence and interference, but it is certainly worth the cost if approached in a prudent, cost-sharing, team-balanced effort with the United States taking the lead.⁶⁷ This viewpoint is even more necessary because there are also indications that the CCP is currently taking steps to increase its malign influence in America with the Biden administration.⁶⁸ According to *BBC News* (quoting counterintelligence official William Evanina prior to his resignation):

Mr. Evanina, chief of the Director of National Intelligence's counter-intelligence branch, said China had been attempting to meddle in the US efforts to develop a coronavirus vaccine and recent American elections. He continued: "We've also seen an uptick, which was planned and we predicted, that China would now re-vector their influence campaigns to the new [Biden] administration. And when I say that, that malign foreign influence, that diplomatic influence plus, or on steroids, we're starting to see that play across the country to not only the folks starting in the new administration, but those who are around those folks in the new administration."⁶⁹

At home, the United States will continue to use the *NSS* as the broad, overarching guide to executing its own grand strategy to secure American values and enduring interests. To protect the American people, homeland, and American way of life, promote domestic prosperity, and preserve peace through strength while advancing American influence, we must develop and implement an appropriate strategy against the insidious threat coming from the CCP.⁷⁰ The approach must incorporate an American response to the full range of threats emanating from the PRC. The challenges include not only the more traditional military threat but also the United States' ability to respond to economic challenges, challenges to our values, and the full range of security challenges that includes malign influence, interference, and political warfare.⁷¹ While government officials are taking action with the consulate closure in Houston in July 2020, and the recent exodus of approximately 1,000 Chinese researchers being investigated for espionage, more needs to be done.⁷²

An element of the US approach requiring better development is making the average American citizen who is not involved in governmental entities aware of potential deceptive tactics. The Policy Planning Staff from the Office of the Secretary of State made this assessment:

The United States must educate American citizens about the scope and implications of the China challenge. Only an informed citizenry can be expected to back the complex mix of demanding policies that will enable the United States to secure freedom. Executive branch officials and members of Congress must address the public regularly and forthrightly about China's conduct and intentions, and about the policies the US government must implement to secure freedom at home and preserve the established international order. In addition, the State Department, Congress, think tanks, and private sector organizations must work together to ensure that government officials as well as the public have access to English-language translations of CCP officials' major speeches and writings along with important publications and broadcasts from China's state-run media, scholarly community, and worldwide propaganda machine.⁷³

The overarching strategy and associated plan need to originate in those US government agencies that hold the expertise, experience, resources, and passion for deterring and countering China, but it requires a much more comprehensive approach. This approach begins with acceptance and willingness to acknowledge and support this concept. This first step is something former senior US National Security Council official Robert Spalding discusses at length in his book *Stealth War: How China Took Over While America's Elite Slept*. He describes his struggle to enlist the private sector and government officials to counter the PRC's malign influence.⁷⁴ This is, however, only where it begins. The whole-of-government ap-

proach must quickly morph into so much more—spreading out across interagency, intergovernmental, and interinstitutional entities.

Some (including the PRC itself) would argue that China is using influence operations to legitimately implement its grand strategy of national rejuvenation. As such, influence is being utilized for communicating its intent of a “peaceful rise,” reassuring other nations that China does not pose a threat but provides an opportunity to build mutually beneficial relationships.⁷⁵ More specifically, the PRC would contend that it is merely trying to use assertive diplomatic means to accomplish economic and political objectives. There are other nations or independent entities that also contend that China is not an immediate threat and that there is no need to pivot resources and attention to the Indo-Pacific. Even with Australia serving as the canary in the coal mine—providing a warning for other democracies—there have been US senior officials arguing this point.⁷⁶ The issue with a strategy that uses seemingly innocuous and insidious malign influence operations is that it is often too late to deter and counter successfully once the threat is fully realized.

Conclusion

Although the United States greatly values the diplomatic instrument of power, it will not tolerate malign influence and interference by one sovereign nation's political entity in another country's domestic affairs. The CCP continues to perfect its tactics and methodology of sharp power in an attempt to claim the use of legitimate diplomacy while using covert, deceptive, and manipulative methods to influence. While some are aware of this unacceptable influence and interference, what remains undeveloped is a robust mechanism for sharing information among the many affected democratic entities to ensure awareness of the CCP's malign intentions. The United States must commit resources to gain in-depth knowledge of this insidious threat and simultaneously provide a transparent narrative to those customarily removed from the battlespace, including universities, bankers, and Wall Street investors. This will require an extensive effort that encompasses governmental agencies on multiple echelons across applicable institutions. It will also require an intergovernmental level of effort among our allies and partners, building awareness and adopting a more substantial and united strategy to deter and prevent the CCP's unscrupulous rise in power and reordering of the international system.

The United States needs to develop its own diplomatic, informational, and economic defense so it is better prepared to lead alliances and partnerships and thereby prevent an imbalance or competitive advantage tipping in China's favor. Transparent and open communication is necessary between the national leaders

to prevent escalation and to ensure that American resolve is understood clearly. Diplomacy requires transparency resulting in an overt, respectable display of intentions and behavior that permits the legitimate influence of another sovereign nation's citizens. It also should involve reciprocity among participating nations. Open, free democracies should not be at a disadvantage because they implement soft power consistent with enduring principles, values, and rules-based international standards. Those less concerned with respecting other nations' sovereignty and established international norms should not take advantage of this freeness. As Sun Tzu surmised: "Subjugating the enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence."⁷⁷ This subjugation is what the CCP strives for and what the United States and its allies must prevent the CCP from achieving. The seemingly innocuous and insidious infiltration by the CCP must be expeditiously identified among all applicable entities to effectively deter and counter the malign influence and interference to ensure that other free, open sovereign nations' principles and values endure. ✪

Lt Col Kathleen Hasson

Colonel Hasson is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. She commissioned in 2000 as a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, earning a bachelor of science degree in legal studies. She also holds a master of business administration degree from Oklahoma City University and a master of military operational art and science degree from Air University. Lieutenant Colonel Hasson previously served as an air battle manager and is currently a command pilot with more than 2,300 hours in the T-53 and C-17 aircraft, including 1,000-plus combat hours in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. She has held positions in the squadron, group, wing, and headquarters levels. Prior to her current assignment, she was the commander of the 97th Operations Support Squadron at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

Notes

1. John Ratcliffe, "China Is National Security Threat No. 1: Resisting Beijing's Attempt to Reshape and Dominate the World is the Challenge of our Generation," Opinion, *Wall Street Journal*, 3 December 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/>.

2. People's Republic of China is the official name of the country; however, China will be used for simplicity.

3. Kerry K. Gershaneck, *Political Warfare: Strategies for Combating China's Plan to "Win Without Fighting"* (Quantico, Virginia; Marine Corps University Press, 2020), 32.

4. United States, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 25, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>.

5. United States, *National Security Strategy*.

6. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015), 5, <https://www.jcs.mil/>.

7. Joint Chiefs, *National Military Strategy*.

8. Zhao Yanan, "Chinese Dream' is Xi's Vision," *China Daily*, 18 March 2013, <http://www.china-daily.com.cn/>; and Avery Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy under Xi Jinping: Reassurance, Reform, and Resistance," *International Security* 45, no. 1 (Summer 2020), 165, <https://direct.mit.edu/>.

9. Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy."
10. Zheng Bijian, *China's Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian, 1997–2005*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 9–10, <https://www.jstor.org/>.
11. Elizabeth Rosenberg, Peter E. Harrell, and Ashley Feng, "A New Arsenal for Competition: Coercive Economic Measures in the U.S.-China Relationship," CNAS Report, April 2020, <https://www.cnas.org/>.
12. Rosenberg et al., "A New Arsenal."
13. Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy," 165.
14. Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy," 165.
15. Gershaneck, *Political Warfare*, 9.
16. Clive Hamilton and Marieke Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party is Reshaping the World*, (London, England: Oneworld Publications, 2020), 10.
17. Hamilton and Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand*, 140–41.
18. Hamilton and Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand*, 268–69.
19. Clive Hamilton, *Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia*, (London, England: Hardie Grant Books, 2018), 115–16.
20. Amy Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations: Lessons from Australia," CSIS, 8 May 2020, <https://www.csis.org/>.
21. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
22. Hamilton and Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand*, 110.
23. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
24. Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, "International Student Data Summary," December 2019, <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/>.
25. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
26. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
27. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
28. Larry Diamond and Orville Schell, *Chinese Influence & American Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press: Stanford University: 2018), 27, <https://www.hoover.org/>.
29. Malcolm Turnbull, "National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill" 7 December 2017, Speech, <https://www.malcolmturnbull.com.au/>.
30. Turnbull, "National Security Legislation."
31. Turnbull, "National Security Legislation."
32. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
33. Eleanor Whitehead, "Australia will Rethink Assumptions about Economic Alliances," *The Economist*, The World Ahead, November 17, 2021, <https://www.economist.com/>.
34. Ding Gong, "Expert: What happened to some Australian politicians recently?," *Xinhuanet* (Beijing), 26 June 2020, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/>.
35. Searight, "Countering China's Influence Operations."
36. Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy," 178.
37. Diamond and Schell, *Chinese Influence & American Interests*, 179.
38. Duncan Bartlett, "Hong Kong and Britain's China Reset," *The Diplomat*, 11 June 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/>.

39. Charles Parton, "China-UK Relations: Where to Draw the Border Between Influence and Interference?" Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies. RUSI Occasional Paper, February 2019, 13, <https://rusi.org/>.
40. Diamond and Schell, *Chinese Influence & American Interests*, 12.
41. Thomas des Garets Geddes, "UK-China Relations: From Gold to Dust: The Rapid Recent Souring of British Perceptions of China has as much to do with Domestic Factors as American Pressure," *The Diplomat*, 2 October 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/>.
42. G7 is an organization comprised of the seven countries with the world's most advanced economies. See: "What is the G7 summit and what does it do?," *BBC*, 24 August 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/>.
43. Geddes, "UK-China Relations."
44. Parton, "China-UK Relations," 13.
45. Christian Shepherd, "British Publisher Pulls Academic Journals from China after Government Complaint," *Reuters*, 24 December 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/>.
46. Shepherd, "British Publisher," v.
47. Geddes, "UK-China Relations."
48. Diamond and Schell, *Chinese Influence & American Interests*, 1.
49. Zhou Xin, "White House Trade Adviser Peter Navarro Won't Attend Trump-Xi dinner," *Politico*, 18 November 2018, <https://www.politico.com/>.
50. Hamilton and Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand*, 100.
51. Hamilton and Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand*, 100.
52. Didi Kirsten Tatlow, "Exclusive: 600 U.S. Groups Linked to Chinese Communist Party Influence Effort with Ambition Beyond Election," *Newsweek*, 26 October 2020, <https://www.newsweek.com/>.
53. Tatlow, "Exclusive."
54. Tatlow, "Exclusive."
55. Tatlow, "Exclusive."
56. Michael R. Pompeo, "U.S. States and the China Competition" (speech, Washington, DC, 8 February 2020), U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/>.
57. Pompeo, "U.S. States and the China Competition."
58. Tatlow, "Exclusive."
59. Tatlow, "Exclusive."
60. Melanie Conklin, "Chinese Government Asks Wisconsin Senate for a Commendation," *Wisconsin Examiner*, 10 April 2020, <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/>.
61. Conklin, "Chinese Government."
62. Ratcliffe, "China Is National Security Threat No. 1."
63. United States, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Washington, DC: White House, 2021), 3, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>.
64. Natasha Bertrand, "The Inexorable Rise of Jake Sullivan," *Politico*, 27 November 2020, <https://www.politico.com/>.
65. Bertrand, "The Inexorable Rise of Jake Sullivan."
66. United States, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, 3.
67. "The China Strategy America Needs," *The Economist*, 19 November 2020, <https://www.economist.com/>.

68. "Chinese Step Up Attempts to Influence Biden Team - US Official," *BBC*, December 3, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/>.
69. "Chinese Step Up Attempts to Influence Biden Team," *BBC*.
70. United States, *National Security Strategy*, 4.
71. White House, *United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China*, White House (Washington, DC: White House, 2020) 6, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/>.
72. Lucia Binding, "More than 1,000 Chinese Researchers Leave US Amid Tech Theft Crackdown," *Sky News*, 3 December 2020, <https://news.sky.com/>.
73. Policy Planning Staff, Office of the Secretary of State, "The Elements of the China Challenge", November 2020, 48, <https://www.state.gov/>.
74. Robert Spaulding, *Stealth War: How China Took Over While America's Elite Slept* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2019), 72.
75. Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy," 165.
76. Gershaneck, *Political Warfare*, xiv.
77. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Ralph D. Sawyer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 171.