

*NATO Field School*

**RomeSec 2024**

***THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL STRATEGIES OF CHINESE  
REVISIONISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO***

**Emilia Kuczynski, Julie Latrémouille, Josefine Paulsen, and  
Lorenzo Termine**

**Introduction**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has faced numerous emergent challenges in the contemporary era of power transitions and increased strategic

competition. One particular strategic competitor NATO now faces is China.<sup>1</sup> Emerging from decades of significant economic growth, China is now prepared to demonstrate its willingness and strong desire to assertively pursue its interests.<sup>2</sup> In the 2024 Washington Summit Declaration, NATO stated that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) continues “to challenge our interests, security and values.”<sup>3</sup> The distinct nature of China’s foreign policy makes it a unique strategic challenge for NATO. It is often characterized by scholars to be revisionist in nature.<sup>4</sup> Revisionism is an approach to understanding the presence of these states, examining how they attempt to challenge or change the status quo they are dissatisfied with.<sup>5</sup> With an evident increase in the presence of revisionist states in world politics, further research and attention is necessary. This analysis will examine the case of China as a revisionist power, and how Chinese revisionism affects and challenges NATO. Revisionism will be employed as a guiding theoretical framework through which revisionist strategies can be examined. Understanding the strategies utilized by revisionist powers is critical as they illustrate the broader strategic objectives behind such policies and clarify the kind of structural pressure the international system is subjected to.<sup>6</sup> The strategies employed by revisionist states vary in their means and the ways in which they challenge, undermine, or threaten the status quo and the powers that defend it.<sup>7</sup> With immense technological developments, the strategies employed by revisionist states are growing in complexity and often target the hybrid domain, which

<sup>1</sup> Sheng Ding, “Digital Diaspora and National Image Building: A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study in the Age of China’s Rise,” *Pacific Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2007): pp. 627–648.

<https://doi.org/10.5509/2007804627>; Eric Kim et al., “NATO’s position and role in the Indo-Pacific,” *Defence Studies* 22, no 3 (2022): pp. 510–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2082956>.

<sup>2</sup> Ding, “Digital Diaspora and National Image Building,” Kim et al., “NATO’s position and role in the Indo-Pacific.”

<sup>3</sup> NATO, “Washington Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government (2024): p. 4, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_227678.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Gabriele Natalizia and Lorenzo Termine, “Tracing the modes of China’s revisionism in the Indo-Pacific: a comparison with pre-1941 Showa Japan,” *Italian Political Science Review* 51, no 1 (2021): 8pp. 3–99.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2020.28>; Gabriele Natalizia and Lorenzo Termine, “The return of Prometheus. Dominant powers and the management of careful revisionists,” *Italian Political Science Review* 54, no 1

(2024): 84–100. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2023.26>; Ketian Zhang, “Cautious Bully: Reputation, Resolve, and Beijing’s Use of Coercion in the South China Sea,” *International Security* 44, no. 1 (2019): pp. 117–159.

[https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00354](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00354).

<sup>5</sup> Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis 1919–1939* (London: Macmillan, 1939); Natalizia and Termine, “Tracing the modes of China’s revisionism in the Indo-Pacific.”

<sup>6</sup> Natalizia and Termine, “Tracing the modes of China’s revisionism in the Indo-Pacific.”

<sup>7</sup> Natalizia and Termine, “Tracing the modes of China’s revisionism in the Indo-Pacific.”

---

rests between the political and military domains, while remaining just below the threshold of war.<sup>8</sup>

As new revisionist states emerge, status quo-defending actors are faced with an unavoidable problem. The following question will thus guide this analysis: *How does Chinese revisionism affect NATO?* This article is organized into four main sections, beginning with a literature review on revisionism. This section will introduce foundational aspects of the concept and provide an overview of relevant works. The following section will put forth the argument that China is a revisionist power, examining the nature of Chinese revisionism. The analysis section will follow, where China's revisionist strategies are examined across three domains. Lastly, the conclusion will provide an overview of the analysis, delving into findings and areas for further research.

## Literature Review

### *Revisionism in a Contemporary Context*

Revisionism is a concept of international relations theory which attempts to understand the issue of dissatisfied states and political change within world politics.<sup>9</sup> It is based upon the existence of a dominant world order, one that is accepted and strengthened by some and is rejected and weakened by others.<sup>10</sup> A world order or status quo can be understood as "a social order composed of a power and status relationship between states and a set of norms and rules that help constitute and legitimate the order."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, revisionism can be understood as a means for the characterization of revisionist and status quo-defending powers based on how a state's interests align with

---

<sup>8</sup> Michael J. Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict*, (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2015).

<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/428>.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Chan, Weixing Hu, and Kai He, "Discerning states' revisionist and status-quo orientations: Comparing China and the US," *European Journal of International Relations* 25, no. 2 (2019): pp. 613–640.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066118804622>

<sup>10</sup> Natalizia and Termine, "Tracing the modes of China's revisionism in the Indo-Pacific."

<sup>11</sup> Steven Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers: Obstructed Ambitions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 12.

the existing world order.<sup>12</sup> A state characterized as revisionist is assumed to be adopting a particular positionality towards the status quo, expressing a sense of dissatisfaction.<sup>13</sup>

While there is agreement within the literature on the fundamental meanings of revisionism in international relations, there is still debate about what exactly makes a state revisionist.<sup>14</sup> This analysis will thus employ a distinction between two types of revisionism drawn from Gilpin's<sup>15</sup> works on revisionism, Ward's<sup>16</sup> on revolutionary revisionism, and Natalizia & Termine's<sup>17</sup> analyses. These works distinguish between incremental and revolutionary revisionism, a distinction based on the strategies utilized by each type of revisionist.<sup>18</sup> In *War and Change in World Politics*, Gilpin introduces these concepts as forms of political change.<sup>19</sup> Incremental change, according to Gilpin, is characterized by "bargaining, coercive diplomacy, and warfare over specific and relatively narrowly defined interests."<sup>20</sup> Revolutionary change is encompassed by the idea that a revisionist state may "believe that their interests can be served only by more sweeping and more profound changes in the international system."<sup>21</sup> Incremental revisionism occurs below the threshold of war and is gradual in nature, while revolutionary revisionism can be much more catastrophic, potentially resulting in a hegemonic war.<sup>22</sup> This analysis assumes China is an incremental revisionist. The following section will then examine characteristic elements of the PRC's foreign policy and strategies to illustrate Chinese incremental revisionism.

---

<sup>12</sup> Steve Chan, "Can't Get No Satisfaction? The Recognition of Revisionist States," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 4, no. 2 (2004): pp. 207–38. <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/4.2.207>.

<sup>13</sup> Ward, "Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers."

<sup>14</sup> Andrej Krickovic, "Revisionism revisited: developing a typology for classifying Russia and other revisionist powers," *International Politics* 59, no 4 (2022): pp. 616–639. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-021-00322-3>.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*.

<sup>17</sup> Natalizia and Termine, "Tracing the modes of China's revisionism in the Indo-Pacific"; Natalizia and Termine, "The return of Prometheus."

<sup>18</sup> Natalizia and Termine, "Tracing the modes of China's revisionism in the Indo-Pacific"; Natalizia and Termine, "The return of Prometheus."

<sup>19</sup> Gilpin, *In War and Change in World Politics*.

<sup>20</sup> Gilpin, *In War and Change in World Politics*, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Gilpin, *In War and Change in World Politics*, p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> Gilpin, *In War and Change in World Politics*; Natalizia and Termine, "Tracing the modes of China's revisionism in the Indo-Pacific"; Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*.

*China as an Incremental and Coercive Revisionist*

To demonstrate the incremental nature of Chinese revisionism, this section will introduce the concept of coercion as a characteristic aspect of Chinese revisionist strategies. Coercion is argued by scholars to be a notable aspect of foreign policy that often shapes state interaction.<sup>23</sup> Coercion theory emerged initially in Thomas C. Schelling's *Arms and Influence*, where he outlined coercion as an act intended to deter or compel a target state.<sup>24</sup> Coercion can be understood as "the power to hurt" which confers "bargaining power."<sup>25</sup> This notion of bargaining power is similar to credibility, forcing the target state to decide both the credibility of the coercive threat and whether it will resist or comply.<sup>26</sup> Literature indicates four types of coercion: "diplomatic coercion, economic sanctions, gray zone coercion and military coercion."<sup>27</sup>

Many scholars argue that China employs coercive tactics in its foreign policies, ranging across the four types.<sup>28</sup> In terms of diplomatic coercion, China is noted to utilize coercion to weaken adversarial partnerships, one example is China deepening its partnership with the Philippines to challenge the US commitment to the nation.<sup>29</sup> Economic sanctions are a type of coercion often utilized by China, as demonstrated by Zhang & Shanks in their examination of the Chinese Economic Sanctions dataset.<sup>30</sup> The PRC's use of economic sanctions indicates an increasingly aggressive Chinese foreign

<sup>23</sup> Tami D. Biddle, "Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (2020): pp. 94–109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/8864>; Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1966).

<sup>24</sup> Biddle, "Coercion Theory;" Schelling, *Arms and Influence*.

<sup>25</sup> Biddle, "Coercion Theory," p. 98; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*.

<sup>26</sup> Biddle, "Coercion Theory."

<sup>27</sup> Mazarr, "Mastering the Gray Zone"; Zhang, "Cautious Bully," p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Jon R. Lindsay and Erik Gartzke, "Coercion through Cyberspace: The Stability-Instability Paradox Revisted," in *Coercion: The Power to Hurt in International Politics*, ed. Kelly M. Greenhill and Peter Krause (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Zhang, "Cautious Bully"; Ketian Zhang, "Explaining Chinese Military Coercion in Sino-Indian Border Disputes," *The Journal of Contemporary China* 32, no. 141 (2022): pp. 399–416. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2090081>.

<sup>29</sup> Robert S. Ross, "Chinese Coercion, Wedge Strategies, and the U.S.-Philippine Alliance," *The Journal of Contemporary China*, (2024): pp. 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2024.2351858>.

<sup>30</sup> Jiakun J. Zhang, and Spencer Shanks, "Measuring Chinese Economic Sanctions 1949–2020: Introducing the China TIES Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1177/07388942241248274>.

policy.<sup>31</sup> Gray zone coercion blurs the line between military and non-military coercion while remaining just below the threshold of war.<sup>32</sup> This type of coercion is enacted through disinformation, foreign interference operations, or cyber-attacks.<sup>33</sup> Lastly, military coercion is a display of military force or capabilities.<sup>34</sup> China's military build-up, particularly in the maritime domain, demonstrates a clear display of force and capability.<sup>35</sup> Coercion theory adds to the concept of incremental revisionism, allowing for more insights into the tools utilized by revisionist states. This focus on incremental revisionism, supplemented by coercion theory, will allow for a comprehensive examination of the Chinese case and its implications for NATO.

*Both Regional and Global: The Geographical Dimensions of Chinese Revisionism*

Randall Schweller argues that there are four dimensions defining whether a revisionist power constitutes a threat to the established system: the extent of the aims, the risk the revisionist is willing to take, the nature of the revisionist aims, and the means it employs to pursue its aims.<sup>36</sup> Chinese revisionism, however, is difficult to place on these spectrums. As a global power, China's interests are broad in scope and geographically diverse, and Chinese revisionism does not look the same on the regional and global levels.<sup>37</sup> Chinese revisionism is fundamentally regional - one can argue that China

<sup>31</sup> Zhang and Shanks, "Measuring Chinese Economic Sanctions."

<sup>32</sup> Zhang, "Explaining Chinese Military Coercion."

<sup>33</sup> Mazarr, "Mastering the Gray Zone."

<sup>34</sup> Zhang, "Explaining Chinese Military Coercion."

<sup>35</sup> Jennifer Rice and Erik Robb, "The Origins of 'Near Seas Defense and Far Seas Protection'," *CMSI China Maritime Reports* 13 (2021). <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/13/>; Janka Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge," *Whitehall Papers* 95, no. 1 (2019): pp. 67-80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02681307.2019.1731211>.

<sup>36</sup> Randall Schweller, "Rising Powers and Revisionism in Emerging International Orders," *Valdai Papers* 16 (2015). <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/rising-powers-and-revisionism-in-emerging-international-orders/>; Barbara Pisciotta, "Russian Revisionism in the Putin Era: An Overview of Post-Communist Military Interventions in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria," *Italian Political Science Review* 50 (2019): p. 90. <https://doi.org/10.1017.ipo.2019.18>.

<sup>37</sup> Walter R. Mead, "The return of Geopolitics: the Revenge of the Revisionist Powers," *Foreign Affairs* 93 (2014): pp. 69-79; Gabriele Natalizia and Lorenzo Termine, "Building a more robust framework on

demonstrates more assertive aims, takes more risks and employs more direct means to alter the balance of power in Asia, and would therefore be considered more of a challenger of the *regional* status quo as per Schweller's<sup>38</sup> definition. This is evident from Chinese territorial claims in the region, economic initiatives to strengthen regional influence and continuously strengthening the Chinese Armed Forces and its operational capacity.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, Chinese revisionism has a global nature that cannot be overlooked. Increasing economic investments abroad drive Chinese strategic interests beyond its region. As put by Barbara Pisciotta, "Since every kind of revisionism always seeks a change in the status quo, differing in intensity but in any case always substantial, it follows that even when economic means are employed to attain the set objectives, the effects produced are anything but mild."<sup>40</sup> Although differing in aims, nature and means, Chinese revisionism has both a regional and a global dimension. This analysis will dive deeper into the soft, sharp and hard power dynamics that constitute these dimensions, both in the regional and the global theatre.

## **China's Revisionist Strategies Across Three Domains: The Economy, Society, and Culture**

### *China's Economic Soft Power*

An important dimension of China's revisionist strategy is soft power. This concept, coined by Joseph Nye in 1990, is "the ability to affect others by attraction and persuasion rather than just coercion and payment."<sup>41</sup> In 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated, "We should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative,

---

revisionism: a reply to Lawson and Legrenzi." *Italian Political Science Review* 53 (2022): pp. 260-264. Doi: 10.1017/ipo.2022.33

<sup>38</sup> Schweller, "Rising Powers and Revisionism in Emerging International Orders."

<sup>39</sup> Mead, "The return of Geopolitics"; Schweller, "Rising Powers and Revisionism in Emerging International Orders"; Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge."

<sup>40</sup> Pisciotta, "Russian Revisionism in the Putin Era", p. 92.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Nye, "Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept," *Palgrave Communications* 3, 17008 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.8>

and better communicate China's message to the world."<sup>42</sup> Soft power aims to change the world's view of China, making it a key instrument in China's revisionism.

China's economic growth and technological advancements have laid the foundation for its ability to exert power globally. Since 1978, GDP growth has averaged over 9 percent annually.<sup>43</sup> According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China has replaced the United States as the world's largest economy since 2017.<sup>44</sup> China's long-term economic plan includes technological superiority and self-sufficiency. The "Made in China 2025 Plan" aims for 70 percent self-sufficiency in 10 high-tech areas.<sup>45</sup> China leads in several scientific fields, backed by massive research spending, second only to the United States.<sup>46</sup> China has a virtual monopoly on rare minerals, crucial for clean growth and defence technologies. China accounted for 70 percent of the world's rare earth mine production in 2022 and 89 percent of key metals for electric vehicle (EV) magnets.<sup>47</sup> With its export-oriented growth, accounting for one-fifth of global exports of manufactured goods, and low domestic consumption, China has amassed tremendous savings, playing an outsized role in global finances and positioning itself for broader influence.<sup>48</sup>

Economic tools, such as loans and financial aid, represent more direct strategies utilized by China to promote its revisionist interests and expand global influence. Between 2000 and 2021, China gave \$1.34 trillion in grants and loans for over 20,000 projects to 165 low and middle-income countries, making other nations around the world

---

<sup>42</sup> David Shambaugh, "China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 4 (2015): pp. 99–107. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483821.21>.

<sup>43</sup> The World Bank, "The World Bank in China," (2022). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview>.

<sup>44</sup> International Monetary Fund, "GDP based on PPP, Share of World," *International Monetary Fund*. (2019). <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPSH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>.

<sup>45</sup> James McBride and Andrew Chatzky, "Is 'Made in China 2025' a Threat to Global Trade?" *Council on Foreign Relations*. 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/background/made-china-2025-threat-global-trade>.

<sup>46</sup> "China Has Become a Scientific Superpower," *The Economist*. (2024.) <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2024/06/12/china-has-become-a-scientific-superpower>.

<sup>47</sup> Shuang-Liang Liu et al., "Global Rare Earth Elements Projects: New Developments and Supply Chains," *Ore Geology Reviews* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oregeorev.2023.105428>.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Baldwin, "China is the world's sole manufacturing superpower: A line sketch of the rise," *The Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)* (2024). <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/china-worlds-sole-manufacturing-superpower-line-sketch-rise>.

economically dependent on China.<sup>49</sup> The Belt and Road Initiative, founded in 2013, is a Chinese global infrastructure investment strategy with 147 countries either involved or showing interest, accounting for two-thirds of the world's countries and 40 percent of its GDP.<sup>50</sup> Between 2000 and 2022, China's ownership of U.S. debt grew from \$101 billion to \$855 billion.<sup>51</sup> While this does not directly confer power to China, it presents a vulnerability to the United States and other indebted countries. China may leverage its debt holdings for political and economic gain, further advancing its revisionist agenda.

China claims it does not attach political preconditions for aid and loans. However, scholars note the existence of certain conditions that indeed demonstrate hard power elements in Chinese financial support, such as adhering to the one-China principle and agreeing to use Chinese labour and resources.<sup>52</sup> Another example of a hard power flowing from a soft power is China's ban, as of 21 December 2023, on the export of rare earth mineral extraction and separation technologies,<sup>53</sup> making it harder for other countries to develop their sectors and hence support the conversion to cleaner growth. China's ability to restrict access to rare earth minerals or impose economic sanctions in response to political disagreements demonstrates how economic support can transition into hard power tactics. By fostering economic reliance, China can gradually escalate from persuasion to coercion. Much of the world has become dependent upon China for foreign assistance, debt funding, and provision of rare minerals. This growing influence could affect the NATO alliance in the near future, particularly in how allies position themselves on potential Article 5 action involving China.

### *Chinese Soft Power in the Social and Cultural Sectors*

<sup>49</sup> Seth Goodman et al., "AidData's Geospatial Global Chinese Development Finance Dataset," *Scientific Data*, 11, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-024-03341-w>

<sup>50</sup> James McBride, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2023). <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

<sup>51</sup> USA Facts, "Which countries own the most US debt?" (2023). <https://usafacts.org/articles/which-countries-own-the-most-us-debt/>

<sup>52</sup> Sun Xuefeng et al. "Conditionality in China's Aid Model," Carnegie Endowment for National Peace. (2012). <https://carnegieendowment.org/events/2012/01/conditionality-in-chinas-aid-model?lang=en>.

<sup>53</sup> Gracelin Baskaran, "What China's ban on rare earths processing technology exports means," *Center for Strategic International Studies*. (2024). <https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-chinas-ban-rare-earths-processing-technology-exports-means>.

Another form of soft power utilized by China is cultural diplomacy through the Confucius Institutes (CIs). These institutes are non-profit language and cultural institutions funded by the Chinese government. Confucius Institutes partner with universities in 146 countries, including NATO member states.<sup>54</sup> However, there has been growing skepticism about transparency and censorship on political and historical topics such as Taiwan and Tiananmen Square. Such concerns led to the closing of 104 of 118 Confucius Institutes in the United States, though some have reopened under new names.<sup>55</sup>

China also utilizes the media in an attempt to expand its global influence. Freedom House analyzed the influence of Chinese media in 30 countries and found the intensity of Beijing's media influence to be High or Very High in 16 of them. Freedom House noted the mass distribution of Beijing-backed content via mainstream media as well as harassment and intimidation of outlets that published news depicting China negatively.<sup>56</sup> However, China's soft power efforts have not achieved the 2014 objective of better communicating its message to the world. Though China is viewed favourably in much of Africa and somewhat favourably in Latin America,<sup>57</sup> public opinion of China has deteriorated in key Western democracies since 2011. While China attempts to export positive sentiments, the authoritarian motives behind its actions are widely recognized.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> James Pamment et al., "Hybrid Threats: Confucius Institutes," *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence*. (2019). <https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/hybrid-threats-confucius-institutes/88>.

<sup>55</sup> National Association of Scholars, "Press Release: Confucius Institutes Rebrand to Circumvent U.S. Policy," (2022). [https://www.nas.org/blogs/press\\_release/press-release-confucius-institutes-rebrand-to-circumvent-us-policy-report-finds](https://www.nas.org/blogs/press_release/press-release-confucius-institutes-rebrand-to-circumvent-us-policy-report-finds).

<sup>56</sup> Freedom House, "Authoritarian Expansion and the Power of Democratic Resilience." (2022). <https://freedomhouse.org/report/beijing-global-media-influence/2022/authoritarian-expansion-power-democratic-resilience>.

<sup>57</sup> Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny and Edem E. Selormey, "Africans Welcome China's Influence but Maintain Democratic Aspirations," *Afrobarometer* (2021).

<https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad489-africans-welcome-chinas-influence-maintain-democratic-aspirations/>; Pew Research Center, "China's Approach to Foreign Policy Gets Largely Negative Reviews in 24-Country Survey," *Pew Research Center*. (2023). <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/07/27/views-of-china/>.

<sup>58</sup> Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries," *Pew Research Center* (2020).

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/>

## China's Revisionist Strategies Across Three Domains: The Hybrid Domain

### *Sharp Power as a Revisionist Strategy*

The information space is increasingly a target of Chinese disinformation, foreign interference, and influence projection. Such actions and operations are by their very nature revisionist; they strive to undermine the integrity of the institutions and values that uphold the world order.<sup>59</sup> The concept of sharp power, outlined by Christopher Walker accurately encompasses the revisionist nature of strategies that target the information space.<sup>60</sup> This concept was developed to expand upon existing ideas of power, such as soft and hard power.<sup>61</sup> Sharp power “seeks to pierce, penetrate, or perforate the political and information environments of targeted countries”.<sup>62</sup> When exercised, sharp power strives to target all sectors of society, particularly those which are open and accessible due to their democratic nature, such as academia and the media.<sup>63</sup> The deceptive and coercive nature of sharp power is what distinguishes it from Nye's<sup>64</sup> soft power.<sup>65</sup> The following section will examine some forms of sharp power, as outlined by Walker<sup>66</sup>, to examine if China employs sharp power as a revisionist strategy.

Foreign electoral interference is one tool that is increasingly employed by revisionist states. According to Mohan & Wall, foreign electoral interference “serves as an effective way of advancing specific interests, destabilizing democratic societies, and replacing the influence of the West.”<sup>67</sup> There have been various reports of Chinese attempts to infiltrate the domestic politics of various countries including Australia, New

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Walker, "What Is 'Sharp Power'?" *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (2018): pp. 9–23.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2018.0041>.

<sup>60</sup> Walker, “What is Sharp Power?”

<sup>61</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept," *Journal of Political Power* 14, no. 1 (2021): pp. 196–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572>.

<sup>62</sup> Walker, “What is Sharp Power?” p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> Walker, “What is Sharp Power?”

<sup>64</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Nye, "Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept."

<sup>65</sup> Walker, “What is Sharp Power?”

<sup>66</sup> Walker, “What is Sharp Power?”

<sup>67</sup> Vasu Mohan. & Alan Wall, “Foreign Electoral Interference: Past, Present, and Future,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 20 (2019): p. 111, <https://doi.org/10.1353/gia.2019.0019>.

Zealand, the United States (US) and Canada.<sup>68</sup> China's global reach and advances in information technology have facilitated their interference operations and cyberattacks. In May 2024, Chinese hackers targeted Britain's Ministry of Defence, exposing sensitive information.<sup>69</sup> A May 2024 report from Canada's Communications Security Establishment (CSE) detected Chinese espionage activity against eight members of Parliament and one senator since 2021.<sup>70</sup>

China's international trade policies also depict sharp power strategies. From 2019 to 2022, China restricted imports of canola from Canada, alleging pest infestation. The restrictions came after the arrest of Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver, and it is widely thought to be a provocation.<sup>71</sup> In 2010, China blocked rare earth mineral shipments to Japan for two months following the Japanese detention of a Chinese fishing trawler captain attempting to fish in Japanese waters.<sup>72</sup>

These examples make it clear that China's sharp power efforts are not strictly regional, but rather part of its global strategy. With China's efforts at foreign electoral interference clearly targeting liberal democracies, it poses a significant challenge to

---

<sup>68</sup> Anne-Marie Brady, "Magic Weapons: China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping," *Wilson Centre* (2017). <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/magic-weapons-chinas-political-influence-Activities-under-xi-jinping>; James M. Lindsay, "Election 2024: China's Efforts to Interfere in the U.S. Presidential Election 2024," *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/election-2024-chinas-efforts-interfere-us-presidential-election>; Rachele Loudon and Richard Frank, "Information trolls and democracy: A qualitative examination of disinformation campaigns in Canada," *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.21428/88de04a1.4ae3e59b>; Walker, "What is Sharp Power?"

<sup>69</sup> Dan Sabbagh, "About 270,000 UK forces records exposed to Chinese hackers," *The Guardian* (7 May 2024). <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/may/07/270000-uk-forces-records-thought-to-have-been-exposed-to-chinese-hackers>.

<sup>70</sup> Center for Strategic International Studies, "Significant Cyber Incidents" (2024). <https://www.csis.org/programs/strategic-technologies-program/significant-cyber-incident>.

<sup>71</sup> Global Affairs Canada, "Statement by Minister Ng and Minister Bibeau on China's removal of restrictions on Canadian canola exports." *Government of Canada*. (2022). <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2022/05/statement-by-minister-ng-and-minister-bibeau-on-chinas-removal-of-restrictions-on-canadian-canola-exports.html> and The Associated Press, "China says pest concerns justify ban on Canadian canola," *CBC* (March 6, 2019). <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/china-justifies-canadian-canola-ban-1.5044661>.

<sup>72</sup> Simon Evenett and Johannes Fritz, "Revisiting the China–Japan Rare Earths dispute of 2010," *The Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)*. (2023). <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/revisiting-china-japan-rare-earths-dispute-2010>.

NATO and EU members.<sup>73</sup> Hybrid and cyber-attacks are also forms of sharp power that enable China's efforts to influence, coerce, and interfere in the affairs of other states. The 2024 NATO Washington Summit Declaration stipulates that states – including China's – "hybrid operations against Allies could reach the level of an armed attack and could lead the North American Council to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty."<sup>74</sup>

Disinformation campaigns are another form of sharp power outlined by Walker.<sup>75</sup> These campaigns involve the manipulation of information to promote state interests and desired narratives.<sup>76</sup> Similar to foreign electoral interference, disinformation campaigns allow states to promote narratives that serve the state's interest, another means to project influence.<sup>77</sup> Disinformation campaigns can also serve as a tool for image building, and they often target diaspora populations abroad.<sup>78</sup> Chinese disinformation campaigns target many NATO and EU nations, capitalizing on the openness of the information space in democracies.<sup>79</sup> China's disinformation campaigns are argued by Curtis as "intended to attack the existing U.S.-led international order but at a level unlikely to provoke a violent response".<sup>80</sup> China employs such campaigns as part of its revisionist strategy, challenging the global status quo.

A blending of soft and sharp power can be seen in China's technological advancement. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) charges that China is the world's principal infringer of intellectual property, costing the U.S. economy between \$225 and \$600 billion annually.<sup>81</sup> The Centre for Strategic & International Studies found that 49 percent of corporate espionage incidents directly involved Chinese military or

<sup>73</sup> Mohan and Wall, "Foreign Electoral Interference"; Lindsay, "Election 2024."

<sup>74</sup> NATO, "Washington Summit Declaration," p. 13.

<sup>75</sup> Walker, "What is Sharp Power?"

<sup>76</sup> Global Engagement Centre (GEC), "How the People's Republic of China Seeks to Reshape the Global Information Environment," *US Department of State Global Engagement Centre* (2023). [gec-special-report-how-the-peoples-republic-of-china-seeks-to-reshape-the-global-information-environment](https://www.globalsengagement.org/2023/09/20/how-the-peoples-republic-of-china-seeks-to-reshape-the-global-information-environment)

<sup>77</sup> Global Engagement Centre (GEC), "How the People's Republic of China Seeks to Reshape"; Loudon and Frank, "Information trolls and democracy."

<sup>78</sup> Ding, "Digital Diaspora and National Image Building."

<sup>79</sup> Global Engagement Centre (GEC), "How the People's Republic of China Seeks to Reshape."

<sup>80</sup> Jesse S. Curtis, "Springing the 'Tacitus Trap': Countering Chinese State-Sponsored Disinformation," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 32, no. 2 (2021): p. 230, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.1870429>.

<sup>81</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "China: The Risk to Corporate America." *Federal Bureau of Investigation Documents* (n.d.). [china-risk-to-corporate-america-2019%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.fbi.gov/document/china-risk-to-corporate-america-2019%20(1).pdf)

government employees, and 46 percent involved cyber espionage, usually by State-affiliated actors.<sup>82</sup> Not only does this undermine fair competition and threaten economic security, but it also exemplifies the coercive nature of sharp power. China's use of soft power has provided a foundation for sharp power. Coercion through trade restrictions would not be effective if China had not built global trade relationships. States would not be beholden to China under financial assistance if China had not created the wherewithal to provide more than a trillion dollars of global funding. Cyber-attacks, disinformation, corporate espionage, and election interference would not be possible without China's technological sophistication and global relationships. China's use of foreign electoral interference, disinformation, and other means of influence projection indicates the pervasiveness of sharp power in China's revisionist strategies.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the use of these strategies supports the notion that China is an incremental revisionist. Sharp power is covert and gradual, while still challenging the status quo.<sup>84</sup>

## **China's Revisionist Strategies Across Three Domains: Military Power**

### *China's Exercise of Military Power*

China's revisionist ambitions also play out through military power. China's strategic ambitions are global, and because of this, Chinese armed forces must be able to project power globally.<sup>85</sup> This ambition can be seen in the modernization efforts the Chinese government is undertaking in its military. Defence modernization accelerated significantly after President Xi Jinping took over the Central Military Commission in 2012.<sup>86</sup> As of 2023, Chinese military expenditure has risen consecutively for 29 years, and China remains the second biggest military spender globally, only sitting below the United

---

<sup>82</sup> Shawn Rosteker et al., "Survey of Chinese Espionage in the United States Since 2000," *Center for Strategic International Studies*. (2023). <https://www.csis.org/programs/strategic-technologies-program/survey-chinese-espionage-united-states-2000>.

<sup>83</sup> Walker, "What is Sharp Power?"

<sup>84</sup> Walker, "What is Sharp Power?"

<sup>85</sup> Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge"; Tytti Eräströ, Fei Su, and Wilfred Wan, "Navigating Security Dilemmas in Indo-Pacific Waters: Undersea Capabilities and Armament Dynamics," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.55163/DKWB3559>.

<sup>86</sup> Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge."

States.<sup>87</sup> These funds are being strategically invested in new and improved capabilities that can support both regional and global power projection.

In the maritime domain, Chinese naval forces have shifted focus from just “near seas defense” to also including “far seas protection.”<sup>88</sup> The Chinese aircraft carrier programmes clearly demonstrate ambitions of projecting military power worldwide, significantly expanding its possible area of operations.<sup>89</sup> Building a blue water navy is both a key component in realizing China’s claims in the East and South China Seas, and in reaching global power.<sup>90</sup> In 2017, China opened its first overseas maritime base in Djibouti, taking a significant step in bringing Chinese military might abroad.<sup>91</sup> These developments do not necessarily entail aggressive Chinese ambitions or plans of militarily confronting Western powers in other regions. It is likely tied to the expansion of the Chinese economy and the need to protect international trade routes from turmoil, piracy and terrorism, and a reaction to what China perceives as an increasingly confrontational USA in its home region.<sup>92</sup> In any case, expanded military reach entails a bolstered deterrent posture, and should be noted by status-quo defenders such as NATO.

The intentions behind the expanded area of operations can better be understood by analyzing military exercises abroad. Chinese forces are increasingly exercising farther away from Chinese territory. In 2015, the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and the Russian Fleet conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Mediterranean Sea, and in 2017 their first-ever joint naval exercise in the Baltic Sea.<sup>93</sup> The joint naval exercises are claimed to be focused on peacekeeping mission support, anti-piracy and search and

---

<sup>87</sup> Nan Tian, Diego Lopes Da Silva, Xian Liang, and Lorenzo Scarazzato, "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2023," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (2024).  
<https://doi.org/10.55163/BQGA2180>.

<sup>88</sup> Eräströ, Su, and Wan, “Navigating Security Dilemmas in Indo-Pacific Waters,” 4 and Rice, “The Origins of Near Seas Defense and Far Seas Protection.”

<sup>89</sup> Oertel, “NATO’s China Challenge.”

<sup>90</sup> Eräströ, Su and Wan, “Navigating Security Dilemmas in Indo-Pacific Waters” and Oertel, “NATO’s China Challenge,”

<sup>91</sup> Oertel, “NATO’s China Challenge.”

<sup>92</sup> Eräströ, Su, and Wan, “Navigating Security Dilemmas in Indo-Pacific Waters,”

<sup>93</sup> Oertel, “NATO’s China Challenge”; Richard Weitz, “Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises - Past Progress and Future Trends,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2021)

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/assessing-chinese-russian-military-exercises-past-progress-and-future-trends>.

rescue missions, but also include anti-submarine warfare and joint air defence training.<sup>94</sup> This year, Chinese and Belarussian land forces are conducting a joint exercise just miles from the border of Poland.<sup>95</sup> These are important developments for NATO to keep in mind as Chinese military activity closes in on NATO's core. Additionally, China has been increasingly involved in Africa through peacekeeping operations, for example in the context of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.<sup>96</sup> The involvement in peacekeeping operations abroad gives the PLA experience in deployments and integrated operations and serves as a strategy for increasing hard power potential.<sup>97</sup> These developments demonstrate that China is increasingly prepared and willing to fight and defend its interests far away from its own borders, if necessary.

An example of Chinese hard power that already affects NATO is China's alignment with Russia. Although the relationship is often described as a marriage of convenience, that does not mean the relationship is not significant and cannot last.<sup>98</sup> Both powers are described as revisionist, although they normally choose different courses of action to achieve these ambitions.<sup>99</sup> Both powers also see the US and its allies as the main threat to their own interests.<sup>100</sup> This growing alignment among revisionist states was highlighted in the 2024 Washington Summit Declaration, in which NATO expresses "profound concern" about the "deepening strategic partnership between Russia and the PRC and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut and reshape the rules-based international order."<sup>101</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Weitz, "Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises."

<sup>95</sup> Isaac Yee, Ivana Kottasova, and Simone McCarthy, "Belarus and China Conduct Joint Military Exercises Right Next to NATO and EU's Border," *CNN* (9 July 2024).

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/08/europe/china-belarus-military-exercises-poland-intl/index.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge"; Benjamin Schreer, "A Geographical and Geostrategic Blueprint for NATO's China Challenge," *Comparative Strategy* 41, no. 2 (2022): pp. 189-202.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2022.2039013>.

<sup>97</sup> Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge."

<sup>98</sup> Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge."

<sup>99</sup> Mead, "The return of Geopolitics."

<sup>100</sup> Etterretningstjenesten, "Kapittel p. 3: Kina's Globale Ambisjoner." *Fokus 2024* (2024).

[https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/fokus/Fokus24\\_innhold/Fokus24\\_kapittel\\_3](https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/fokus/Fokus24_innhold/Fokus24_kapittel_3); Mead, "The return of Geopolitics"

<sup>101</sup> NATO, "Washington Summit Declaration," p. 4.

The partnership between the PRC and Russia is not new, however, there have been notable developments in recent years. Cooperation between the two has increased, not just within security and defence but also in political and economic sectors.<sup>102</sup> Russian arms sales to China have constituted the backbone of Chinese military modernization since 1989, resulting in the two states being increasingly interoperable.<sup>103</sup> Since 2017, Russia and China have been planning their military cooperation at five-year roadmaps, which suggests a higher level of military integration than before.<sup>104</sup> The impacts of the Sino-Russian alignment for NATO became ever more evident after the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022; China has been accused of supporting Russia with materials and dual-use components necessary to sustain the Russian war effort.<sup>105</sup> According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Russia Eurasia Center, Chinese exports to Russia have risen by more than 60 percent since February 2022, including significant amounts of goods covered by the G7's high-priority export control list.<sup>106</sup> In the 2024 Washington Summit Declaration NATO issued its strongest-ever language about China, stating that "the PRC has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine through its so-called *no limits* partnership and its large-scale support for Russia's defence industrial base."<sup>107</sup> This language indicates NATO's recognition of the challenges Chinese involvement in Russian hard-power projection poses.

## Conclusion

This analysis has made it clear that NATO does indeed face increasingly diverse challenges from China's revisionist ambitions, which manifests across all spectrums of power projection: soft, sharp and hard. China's increasing economic power, combined with technological development provides the PRC with the ability to develop military and non-military capabilities, conferring global reach to China's revisionist strategies.

---

<sup>102</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg et al., "Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation: an Increasingly Unequal Partnership," *Center for Naval Analysis* (2023).

<sup>103</sup> Oertel, "NATO's China Challenge."

<sup>104</sup> Gorenburg et al., "Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation."

<sup>105</sup> Etterretningstjenesten, "Kapittel p.3: Kina's Globale Ambisjoner."

<sup>106</sup> Nathaniel Sher. "Behind the Scenes: China's Increasing Role in Russia's Defense Industry". *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2024).

<sup>107</sup> NATO, "Washington Summit Declaration," paragraph p, 26.

The comprehensiveness of the Chinese incremental revisionist strategy makes it challenging for NATO to fully understand, and even more challenging to effectively respond across domains. The strategy also poses challenges to NATO's cohesion, since several NATO allies have significant dependencies and relations with China, creating internal challenges for NATO to address. As a status-quo defender, Chinese revisionist ambitions pose significant challenges to NATO's interests, and it is therefore imperative that NATO takes steps to better understand it, and then develop a unified strategy to address and counter this emergent issue across the alliance.

### Bibliography

- Abbas, Ali. "Interpreting Rising China and Its Impact on World Politics." *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations* 8, no.1 (2022): pp. 44–IX.
- Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny, Josephine and Edem E. Selormey. "Africans Welcome China's Influence but Maintain Democratic Aspirations." *Afrobarometer* (2021).  
<https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad489-africans-welcome-chinas-influence-maintain-democratic-aspirations/>
- Baldwin, Richard. "China is the world's sole manufacturing superpower: A line sketch of the rise". *The Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)* (2024).  
<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/china-worlds-sole-manufacturing-superpower-line-sketch-rise>.
- Baskaran, Gracelin. "What China's ban on rare earths processing technology exports means."

---

Center for Strategic International Studies (2024). <https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-chinas-ban-rare-earths-processing-technology-exports-means>

Biddle, Tami D. "Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners". *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (2020): pp. 94–109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/8864>

Brady, Anne-Marie. "Magic Weapons: China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping." *Wilson Centre* (2017). <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/magic-weapons-chinas-political-influence-Activities-under-xi-jinping>

Carr, Edward H. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939*. London: Macmillan, 1939.

Center for Strategic International Studies. "Significant Cyber Incidents". (2024). <https://www.csis.org/programs/strategic-technologies-program/significant-cyber-incidents>

Center for Strategic International Studies. "Survey of Chinese Espionage in the United States Since 2000". (2023). <https://www.csis.org/programs/strategic-technologies-program/survey-chinese-espionage-united-states-2000>

Chan, Steve et al. *Contesting Revisionism: China, the United States, and the Transformation of International Order* (1st ed.) Oxford University Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197580295.001.0001>

Chan, Steve. "Can't Get No Satisfaction? The Recognition of Revisionist States." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 4, no. 2 (2004): pp. 207–38. <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/4.2.207>.

Chan, Steve, Weixing Hu and Kai He. "Discerning states' revisionist and status-quo orientations: Comparing China and the US". *European Journal of International Relations*, 25 no. 2 (2019): pp. 613–640. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066118804622>

Curtis, S., Jesse. "Springing the 'Tacitus Trap': Countering Chinese State-Sponsored Disinformation." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 32, no. 2 (2021): pp. 229–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.1870429>.

---

Ding, Sheng. "Digital Diaspora and National Image Building: A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study in the Age of China's Rise." *Pacific Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2007): pp. 627–648. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2007804627>

Eräströ, Tytti, Fei Su and Wilfred Wan. "Navigating Security Dilemmas in Indo-Pacific Waters: Undersea Capabilities and Armament Dynamics." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.55163/DKWB3559>.

Etterretningstjenesten. "Kapittel 3: Kina's Globale Ambisjoner." *Fokus 2024* (2024). [https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/fokus/Fokus24\\_innhold/Fokus24\\_ka\\_pittel\\_3](https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/fokus/Fokus24_innhold/Fokus24_ka_pittel_3)

Federal Bureau of Investigation. "China: The Risk to Corporate America." [fbi.gov](https://www.fbi.gov) (n.d.). Accessed on July 17, 2024. [china-risk-to-corporate-america-2019%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.fbi.gov/press-releases/2019/07/17/china-risk-to-corporate-america-2019%20(1).pdf)

Fravel, M. Taylor, George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham. "Estimating China's Defense Spending: How to Get it Wrong (and Right)." *Texas National Security Review* 7, no. 3 (2024). <https://tnsr.org/2024/06/estimating-chinas-defense-spending-how-to-get-it-wrong-and-right/>

Freedom House. "Authoritarian Expansion and the Power of Democratic Resilience." (2022). <https://freedomhouse.org/report/beijing-global-media-influence/2022/authoritarian-expansion-power-democratic-resilience>

Gilpin, Robert. *War and change in world politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Global Engagement Centre (GEC). "How the People's Republic of China Seeks to Reshape the Global Information Environment." *US Department of State Global Engagement Centre* (2023) [gec-special-report-how-the-peoples-republic-of-china-seeks-to-reshape-the-global-information-environment](https://www.gec.gov/special-report-how-the-peoples-republic-of-china-seeks-to-reshape-the-global-information-environment)

Goodman, Seth, et al. "AidData's Geospatial Global Chinese Development Finance Dataset." *Scientific Data* 11, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-024-03341-w>

Gorenburg, Dmitry, Elizabeth Wishnick, Brian Waidelich, and Paul Schwartz. "Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation: an Increasingly Unequal Partnership". *Center for*

- 
- Naval Analysis* (2023). <https://www.cna.org/reports/2023/05/russian-chinese-military-cooperation>
- International Monetary Fund. "GDP based on PPP, Share of World". (2019). <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPSH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>.
- Jose, Hino S. and Nashir, Asep K. "The Hot Peace in Indo-Pacific: Contesting Quadrilateral Security Dialogue Against Chinese Geopolitics in the Indian Ocean Region." *Malaysian Journal of International Relations* 9, no 1 (2021): pp. 225–245. <https://doi.org/10.22452/mjir.vol9no1.12>
- Kanet, Roger E. "Russia and global governance: the challenge to the existing liberal order." *International Politics* 55, no 2 (2018): pp. 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-017-0075-3>
- Kim, Eric, Hans-Dieter Lucas, Jeffrey Reynolds and Hazymy Yano. "NATO's position and role in the Indo-Pacific". *Defence Studies* 22, no 3 (2022): pp. 510–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2082956>
- Krickovic, Andrej. "Revisionism revisited: developing a typology for classifying Russia and other revisionist powers." *International Politics* 59, no 4 (2022): pp. 616–639. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-021-00322-3>
- Lindsay, Jon R. and Erik Gartzke. "Coercion through Cyberspace: The Stability-Instability Paradox Revisited". In *Coercion: The Power to Hurt in International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Liu, Shuang-Liang et al. "Global Rare Earth Elements Projects: New Developments and Supply Chains." *Ore Geology Reviews* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oregeorev.2023.105428>.
- Louden, Rachele and Richard Frank. "Information trolls and democracy: A qualitative examination of disinformation campaigns in Canada." *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.21428/88de04a1.4ae3e59b>
- Mazarr, Michael J. "Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict." *US*

- 
- Army War College Monographs, Books, and Publications* (2015).  
<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/428>
- McBride, James. "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative." *Council on Foreign Relations* (2023). <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>
- McBride, James, Chatzky, Andrew. "Is 'Made in China 2025' a Threat to Global Trade?" *Council on Foreign Relations* (2019). <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/made-china-2025-threat-global-trade>.
- Mead, Walter R. "The return of Geopolitics: the Revenge of the Revisionist Powers." *Foreign Affairs* 93 (2014): pp. 69-79.
- Michalski, Anna and Charles F. Parker. "The EU's evolving leadership role in an age of geopolitics: Beyond normative and market power in the Indo-Pacific." *European Journal of International Security* 9, no 2 (2024): pp. 263–280.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.34>
- Mohan, Vasu and Alan Wall. "Foreign Electoral Interference: Past, Present, and Future." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 20 (2019): pp. 110–116.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/gia.2019.0019>
- Natalizia, Gabriele and Lorenzo Termine. "Tracing the modes of China's revisionism in the Indo-Pacific: a comparison with pre-1941 Showa Japan." *Italian Political Science Review* 51, no 1 (2021): pp. 83–99. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2020.28>
- Natalizia, Gabriele and Lorenzo Termine. "Building a more robust framework on revisionism: a reply to Lawson and Legrenzi." *Italian Political Science Review* 53 (2022): pp. 260-264. Doi: 10.1017/ipo.2022.33
- Natalizia, Gabriele and Lorenzo Termine. "The return of Prometheus. Dominant powers and the management of careful revisionists." *Italian Political Science Review* 54, no 1 (2024): pp. 84–100. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2023.26>
- National Association of Scholars. "Press Release: Confucius Institutes Rebrand to Circumvent U.S. Policy." (2022). [https://www.nas.org/blogs/press\\_release/press-](https://www.nas.org/blogs/press_release/press-)

[release-confucius-institutes-rebrand-to-circumvent-us-policy-report-finds](#)

NATO. "Washington Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government" *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)* (2024).  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_227678.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm).

Nye, Joseph S. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Nye, Joseph. Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept. *Palgrave Commun* 3, 17008 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.8>

Nye, Joseph S. "Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept." *Journal of Political Power* 14, no. 1 (2021): pp. 196–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572>.

Oertel, Janka. "NATO's China Challenge." *Whitehall Papers* 95, no. 1 (2019): pp. 67-80.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02681307.2019.1731211>.

Pamment, James, et al. "Hybrid Threats: Confucius Institutes". *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence* (2019).  
<https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/hybrid-threats-confucius-institutes/88>

Pew Research Center. "China's Approach to Foreign Policy Gets Largely Negative Reviews in 24-Country Survey." (2023).  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/07/27/views-of-china/>

Pisciotta, Barbara. "Russian Revisionism in the Putin Era: An Overview of Post-Communist Military Interventions in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria." *Italian Political Science Review* 50 (2019): pp. 87-106. <https://doi.org/10.1017.ipo.2019.18>.

Rice, Jennifer and Erik Robb, "The Origins of 'Near Seas Defense and Far Seas Protection'." *CMSI China Maritime Reports* 13 (2021). Accessed from: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/13/>.

Ross, Robert S. "Chinese Coercion, Wedge Strategies, and the U.S.-Philippine Alliance." *The Journal of Contemporary China* (2024): 1–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2024.2351858>.

- Sabbagh, Dan. "About 270,000 UK forces records exposed to Chinese hackers." *The Guardian*. (2024). <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/may/07/270000-uk-forces-records-thought-to-have-been-exposed-to-chinese-hackers>
- Shambaugh, David. "China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect." *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 4 (2015): pp. 99–107. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483821>.
- Sher, Nathaniel. "Behind the Scenes: China's Increasing Role in Russia's Defense Industry." *Brookings Institution* (2024). <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2024/05/behind-the-scenes-chinas-increasing-role-in-russias-defense-industry?lang=en>.
- Schelling, Thomas C. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1966.
- Schreer, Benjamin. "A Geographical and Geostrategic Blueprint for NATO's China Challenge." *Comparative Strategy* 41, no. 2 (2022): pp. 189-202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2022.2039013>.
- Schweller, Randall. "Rising Powers and Revisionism in Emerging International Orders." *Valdai Papers* 16 (2015). <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/rising-powers-and-revisionism-in-emerging-international-orders/>.
- Silver, Laura; Devlin, Kat; Huang, Christine. "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries." *Pew Research Center*. (2020). <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/>
- Sun Xuefeng et al., "Conditionality in China's Aid Model". *Carnegie Endowment for National Peace* (2012). <https://carnegieendowment.org/events/2012/01/conditionality-in-chinas-aid-model?lang=en>
- Tian, Nan, Diego Lopes Da Silva, Xian Liang and Lorenzo Scarazzato. "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2023." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.55163/BQGA2180>.
- The Economist. "China Has Become a Scientific Superpower." (2024). <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2024/06/12/china-has-become-a-scientific-superpower>.

- The White House. "National Security Strategy of the United States of America." (2017). NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.
- The World Bank. "The World Bank in China." (2022). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview>.
- Turner, Olivia and Nicola Nymalm. "Morality and Progress: IR Narratives on International Revisionism and the Status Quo." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 4 (2019): 407-428. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1623173>.
- USA Facts. "Which countries own the most US debt?" (2023). <https://usafacts.org/articles/which-countries-own-the-most-us-debt/>.
- Walker, Cristopher. "What Is 'Sharp Power'?" *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (2018): pp. 9–23. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2018.0041>.
- Ward, Steven. *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers: Obstructed Ambitions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Way, Lucan A. "The Rebirth of the Liberal World Order?" *Journal of Democracy* 33, no. 2 (2022): pp. 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2022.0014>.
- Weitz, Richard. "Assessing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises - Past Progress and Future Trends." *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2021). <https://www.csis.org/analysis/assessing-chinese-russian-military-exercises-past-progress-and-future-trends>.
- Wohlforth, William C. "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War." *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): pp. 28–57. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887109000021>.

Yee, Isaac, Ivana Kottasova, and Simone McCarthy. "Belarus and China Conduct Joint Military Exercises Right Next to NATO and EU's Border." *CNN* (2024).  
<https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/08/europe/china-belarus-military-exercises-poland-intl/index.html>.

Zhang, Jiakun J., and Spencer Shanks. "Measuring Chinese Economic Sanctions 1949–2020: Introducing the China TIES Dataset." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2024).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/07388942241248274>.

Zhang, Ketian. "Explaining Chinese Military Coercion in Sino-Indian Border Disputes." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 32, no. 141 (2022): pp. 399–416.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2090081>.

Zhang, Keitan. "Cautious Bully: Reputation, Resolve, and Beijing's Use of Coercion in the South China Sea." *International Security* 44, no. 1 (2019): pp. 117–159.  
[https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00354](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00354).