



A Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa®) Report

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China's and Russia's Approach to Regional and Global Competition

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What is ViTTa?

NSI's Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa) provides rapid response to critical information needs by pulsing a global network of subject matter experts (SMEs) to generate a wide range of expert insight. For the Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) Future of Global Competition and Conflict project, ViTTa was used to address 12 key questions provided by the project's Joint Staff sponsors. The ViTTa team received written response submissions from 65 subject matter experts from academia, government, military, and industry. This report consists of:

1. A summary overview of the expert contributor response to the ViTTa question of focus.
2. The full corpus of expert contributor responses received for the ViTTa question of focus.
3. Biographies of expert contributors.

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Table of Contents

What is ViTTa?	II
Question of Focus	1
Subject Matter Expert Contributors	1
Summary Overview	1
China's Approach to Regional and Global Competition	1
Russia's Approach to Regional and Global Competition	3
Subject Matter Expert Contributions	4
Dean Cheng	4
David C. Gompert	4
Dr. Edward N. Luttwak	5
Dr. Sean McFate	7
Dr. Lukas Milevski	8
Dr. Derek M. Scissors	10
Yun Sun	11
Nicolas Véron	11
Valentin Weber	12
Ali Wyne	13
Lieutenant Colonel Maciej Zaborowski	14
Subject Matter Expert Biographies	15
Dean Cheng	15
David C. Gompert	15
Dr. Edward N. Luttwak	16
Dr. Sean McFate	16
Dr. Lukas Milevski	17
Dr. Derek M. Scissors	17
Yun Sun	18
Nicolas Véron	18
Valentin Weber	18
Ali Wyne	19
Lieutenant Colonel Maciej Zaborowski	19
Author Biography	20
George Popp	20

Question of Focus

[Q8] How do China and Russia approach global, not just regional, arenas for competition?

Subject Matter Expert Contributors

Dean Cheng (Heritage Foundation), **David C. Gompert** (US Naval Academy), **Dr. Edward N. Luttwak** (CSIS), **Dr. Sean McFate** (National Defense University), **Dr. Lukas Milevski** (Leiden University), **Dr. Derek M. Scissors** (American Enterprise Institute), **Yun Sun** (Stimson Center), **Nicolas Véron** (Bruegel and Peterson Institute for International Economics), **Valentin Weber** (University of Oxford), **Ali Wyne** (RAND Corporation), **Lieutenant Colonel Maciej Zaborowski** (US Central Command)

Summary Overview

This summary overview reflects on the insightful responses of eleven Future of Global Competition and Conflict Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa) expert contributors. While this summary presents an overview of the key expert contributor insights, the summary alone cannot fully convey the fine detail of the expert contributor responses provided, each of which is worth reading in its entirety. For this report, the expert contributors consider how China and Russia approach regional and global competition.

China's Approach to Regional and Global Competition

China engages in competitive activities at both the regional and global level. Whether or not the Chinese differentiate between their approaches to regional and global competition, however, is less clear. Most contributors suggest that the Chinese do, in fact, make this differentiation. These contributors generally align with the assessment of Yun Sun of the Stimson Center, that "China's approach to regional competition is much more intense than its approach to global competition." Other contributors, however, suggest that the Chinese may not make such a differentiation. These contributors generally align with the assessment of Dean Cheng of the Heritage Foundation, that the Chinese have a "broad strategy and set of goals" that are applied across the globe, regardless of region. Nevertheless, contributors detail China's approach to competition at both regional and global levels, as discussed below.

At the regional level, contributors describe Chinese interests and activities as being aggressive and confrontational. Contributors offer several explanations for the confrontational nature of China's competitive activity in its surrounding regions. David Gompert of the US Naval Academy, for example, describes China's strategic interests as centering around taking back territory it had once lost and re-establishing itself as East Asia's preeminent power. These interests are inherently confrontational and, as Gompert explains, drive China to pursue activities focused on "push[ing] US forces far from Chinese shores" (e.g., challenging the United States over sovereignty and territorial disputes, encircling alliances, and the presence of strike capabilities in the region). Sun similarly highlights the importance of "proximity to the Chinese homeland" in understanding

China's approach to competition. Sun explains that the Chinese are more aggressive and "hegemonic," and less willing to negotiate or concede, on issues and disputes in their backyard than on similar issues and disputes in regions far away. Finally, Dr. Sean McFate of the National Defense University details China's approach to gaining a competitive advantage in its surrounding regions, particularly in the South China Sea, by exploiting the United States' "paradigm of warfare" (i.e., thinking of "war" and "peace" as separate dichotomies). McFate highlights what he describes as China's incrementalist strategy in the region: provoke or allow a situation to escalate "right to the brink" of serious conflict before pulling back while still in possession of what has been captured or created up to that point, then wait and eventually repeat the process. This approach to regional competition, McFate argues, is how "China is winning the South China Sea incrementally, one island at a time." Ultimately, contributors generally agree that, at the regional level, China is a "daunting challenger...in the world's most vital region."¹

At the global level, contributors generally align in describing China's interests as being similarly aggressive and competitive to that of its regional interests. Contributors diverge, however, in their assessments of whether China's competitive activities at the global level are equally confrontational to its competitive activities at the regional level. Some contributors suggest that China is equally confrontational in global arenas. Cheng, for example, argues that China views global arenas such as international seas, cyberspace, and outer space as "absolutely vital to its future" and, therefore, "will fight to dominate these areas, not only militarily but also in terms of governance, norms-setting, etc." Dr. Edward Luttwak of CSIS agrees, asserting that China strives to dominate all competitive arenas, both regionally and globally, and will work "to become number one in everything and everywhere."

Other contributors, however, suggest that China's approach to competition is less confrontational at the global level. Gompert, for example, believes that China perceives cooperation with the US and its allies to be more in its interest than confrontation on global issues (e.g., energy, climate, terrorism, economic development). Gompert argues that China is implementing a strategy in which it "cooperates globally while competing regionally," thus allowing it to "choose its fights and allocate its resources selectively and strategically." Nicolas Véron of Bruegel offers a similar assessment, describing China as a "peer, not a rogue" at the global level. Véron argues that China has demonstrated indications that it feels some sense of responsibility for ensuring the stability and sustainability of the global order, particularly in economic spheres, despite its unwillingness to accept a general principle of US hegemony. Dr. Derek Scissors of the American Enterprise Institute agrees, asserting that "China sees a comprehensive global challenge to the US as infeasible to the point of being harmful with respect to its other objectives." Scissors highlights China's continued reliance on the dollar as "the most important example of China's approach to global competition." "It is impossible to be a genuine global economic challenger, at least, to the US while remaining tethered monetarily," Scissors argues. Finally, echoing the assessments of Gompert, Véron, and Scissors, Ali Wyne of the RAND Corporation concludes that "the evidence thus far does not suggest that China endeavors to replace the United States as the underwriter of a global order, though its objectives may grow more grandiose in due course."

¹ See contribution from Gompert.

Russia's Approach to Regional and Global Competition

Russia also engages in competitive activities across both regional and global arenas, albeit to a lesser extent than that of China due, in part, to its inherent economic and military constraints. Contributors describe Russia as approaching regional and global competition with an array of ambitious and adversarial interests. These include, as Gompert details, “whipping up and riding waves of nationalism at home, responding to Russians’ preference for central authority, taking back former Soviet lands where ethnic Russians reside, sowing dissension within and among Western polities, and blaming the United States for disrespecting Russia and adding to its woes,” to name a few. Moreover, at the global level, Russia appears to be best classified as a “rogue, not a peer,” as it “does not appear to act as if it feels any responsibility for the stability and sustainability of the global order.”²

Russia's, however, is constrained by economic and military limitations that limit the types of activities that it can take in pursuit of its competitive interests and against its leading competitors. Therefore, contributors explain, Russia pursues its competitive interests using an “asymmetric” approach to regional and global competition.³ Russia uses asymmetric activities that are adversarial, but below the conventional threshold of warranting significant response from the international community, to advance its competitive interests (and counter the interests of its competitors) without escalating to the level of conventional conflict, where it would be at a distinct disadvantage against the United States.⁴ Contributors detail several Russian activities that illustrate its asymmetric strategy at both the regional and global levels, including: 1) conducting cyber and information operations against Western networks and through social media, 2) using unconventional, paramilitary forces (e.g., “little green men”) to extend Russian influence, 3) modernizing and brandishing nuclear forces to offset US and NATO superiority, 4) using energy exports to manipulate the policies of recipient states, and 5) exploiting instability in other regions in which its competitors are pursuing interests (e.g., the Middle East and Latin America).⁵

Contributors highlight cyberspace and the information space as particularly central arenas to Russia's asymmetric strategy and approach to global competition. Cyber and information operations, as Valentin Weber of the University of Oxford explains, allow Russia to overcome some of its inherent limitations and constraints in more conventional arenas and enables Russia to compete with and undermine Western adversaries at the global level, and “be recognized as a global power.” Ultimately, however, contributors generally agree with Gompert's conclusion that, while Russia may present a greater threat to US interests in the short-term given its willingness to take risks and disregard for the current global order, “with a fundamentally poor economy, Russia will find it difficult to support a belligerent external strategy, especially if and as the US compels it to pay a high price for that strategy” over the long-term.

² See contribution from Véron.

³ See contributions from Gompert and Milevski in particular.

⁴ See contributions from Gompert, McFate, and Milevski.

⁵ See contributions from Gompert, Weber, and Zaborowski.

Subject Matter Expert Contributions

Dean Cheng

Senior Research Fellow, Asian Studies Center, Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy
(Heritage Foundation)
13 March 2019

If “global arenas” refers to global areas such as the international seas, cyber space, or outer space, China sees these as absolutely vital areas for the PRC’s future. They WILL fight to dominate these areas, not only militarily but also in terms of governance, norms-setting, etc. But I’m not sure that the Chinese differentiate between global and regional competition, in the sense that they have a broad strategy and set of goals, and then apply those goals to various regions. MEANS will vary, but strategic goals probably do not by much.

Broad goals:

- Keep CCP in power
- Defend Chinese territorial integrity, national sovereignty (including pressuring those who recognize Taiwan)
- Maintain PRC economic growth (including access to resources, markets)

David C. Gompert

Distinguished Visiting Professor (US Naval Academy)
Adjunct Professor (Virginia Union University)
Senior Fellow (RAND Corporation)
15 February 2019

The goals of Russia’s leaders are driven by their political need for patriotism and laced with nostalgia: whipping up and riding waves of nationalism at home; responding to Russians’ preference for central authority; taking back former-Soviet lands where ethnic Russians reside; sowing dissension within and among Western polities; and blaming the United States for disrespecting Russia and adding to its woes. Russia’s current threats and actions harm U.S. interests, allies, and sovereignty in ways that need not be detailed here. But what stands out is that this behavior is vintage asymmetric strategy, reflecting Russia’s economic and military limitations.⁶ In particular, Russia is:

- modernizing and brandishing nuclear forces to offset U.S. and NATO GPF superiority
- using para-military (“little green”) units to extend Russian influence
- continuing to use pipe-lined natural gas to manipulate the policies of recipient states
- exploiting instability in the Middle East and to a lesser degree Latin America
- conducting cyber-war against Western networks and through social media

Even as it pursues these methods, Russia must and will do all it can to avoid armed conflict with the United States and its allies. This presents the United States with a compound problem: countering Russia’s asymmetric strategy while retaining conventional military preponderance. It can do so not only by maintaining superior forces but also by conducting enough nuclear and missile-defense modernization to cause Russia to shovel more and more scarce resources into nuclear forces; selling LNG to Russia’s natural-gas customers; retaliating for cyber-attacks against networks of value to the Kremlin; healing NATO divisions and buttressing NATO

⁶ Russia can sustain only one-tenth what the U.S. spends on defense (~\$700B), one-third what China spends (~\$200B), and one-third what non-U.S. NATO spends (~\$200B). Though its forces could seize a small patch of NATO territory (e.g., Northeastern Estonia), they would eventually be defeated by superior NATO forces.

deterrence. Through such U.S. responses, which are affordable, the disconnect between Russia's conduct and its resources will grow, leading Russia to draw back its strategy or fail.

China's strategic goals can be stated even more simply: to take back territory, including seas, that were stripped from China when it was weak; and to reestablish itself as East Asia's preeminent power. In contrast to Russia, China must and can follow a more traditional great-power strategy, mainly relying on conventional military forces to push U.S. forces far from Chinese shores – not by emulating U.S. capabilities but by developing means to find, target, and strike them.⁷ It is important to note that trends in military technology favor A2AD over force-projection and presence, and that China spends at least as much as the U.S. does on capabilities and operations *in its region*. It is not clear that the U.S. has a winning counter-strategy, as of yet.

It is also notable that China finds cooperation with the U.S. and its partners to be more in its interest than confrontational on *global* issues (energy, climate, terrorism, finance, economic development). China's beef with the U.S. is mainly about *regional* disputes, encircling U.S. alliances, and the presence of U.S. strike power. By cooperating globally while competing regionally, China can “choose its fights” and allocate its resources selectively and strategically. Given China's stated interest and strategy, it is wrong to regard and react to it as a wannabe global contestant rather than as the daunting challenger it is in the world's most vital region.

In sum, Russia presents greater dangers to U.S. interests in the short term but, with a fundamentally poor economy, Russia will find it difficult to support a belligerent external strategy, especially if and as the U.S. compels it to pay a high price for that strategy. China has a sustainable external strategy, which is focused mainly on recovering its losses and its preeminence in East Asia. Though its global aspirations are not necessarily problematic, the importance of the region make China the biggest great-power challenge over the next decade.

Dr. Edward N. Luttwak

Senior Associate (CSIS)
14 February 2019

Neither China nor Russia are normal countries. They are empires, and empires are different. Roughly 97% of the difficulties that the US has experienced since venturing abroad in 1898 are caused by the fact that it is a normal country that engages in imperial ventures (with the best of intentions) while its citizens lack the needed imperial mentality—namely: a powerful conviction that they are entitled to rule lesser nations, and to punish the disobedient who are not properly grateful for the imperial benevolence they receive.

The Russians are an imperial people. They listen to Putin's song:

- “others eat better, others dress more elegantly. But you Russians bravely hold the largest empire in the whole of human history, that our heroic ancestors conquered piece by piece over the centuries, by winning many wars, and by pacifying conquered nations and tribes... My foolish predecessor lost parts of our empire. I will not lose any more, and will try to retrieve what I can. So we spit on the sanctions –we will not give up for pasta and pizza or fancy shoes.”

The Chinese too are an imperial people. Even when they were abjectly poor (I was first there in 1976 when eating enough rice and cabbage was considered abundance) they were calmly confident in their superiority over the smelly nomads to the north, the backward Tibetans, the childish Americans, and the Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese whose cultures were essentially Chinese, but for their local peasant folklore.

Once the Chinese embarked on economic growth from 1977, they worked very hard, saved 50% and not 5%, to invest in more growth, and said not a word about lost territories or any power ambitions.

But Chinese leaders misread the great recession in 2009, thought that the childish Americans had fallen by the wayside, dropped the “peaceful rise” mask & suddenly demanded --very loudly-- bits of Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and an

⁷ See War with China: Thinking Through the Unthinkable, Gompert et al, RAND Arroyo Center, 2016.

entire province from India. During the Obama years they were very pleasantly surprised at the non-reaction to their destruction of vast coral reefs to build military bases, but misjudged their neighbors, who started coalescing and rearming, slowly but steadily. The Australians lead the way (2008) warning everyone that it was either resist or accept Chinese dominance. The Japanese joined in 2012, and the Americans in 2017 –the Vietnamese had been there all along.

With Xi Jinping a new element has been added, because he is autistic when it comes to that strange world, non-China. He is also an infant in the realm of strategy, as exemplified by his reduction of the army to greatly increase the Navy above all, as if China is not a land power, with many neighbors that could make trouble—if rewarded well enough.

Poor innocent XJP thinks that building ships to increase strength at sea automatically generates maritime power. But the latter derives not from having warships but from the ability to sustain good political relations with insular, peninsular, coastal nations and other maritime nations.

Such relations might feed back into sea-strength, by offering sheltering ports, shore supplies, repair facilities, airfield access, ground-based air and sea surveillance, and whatever else a friendly power can provide to visiting naval forces—which is a great deal. But sea-strength does not feed back into maritime power. On the contrary, to build a bigger navy can *reduce* maritime power, if the country doing it is viewed as threatening by the affected insular, peninsular and coastal powers, whose leaders will react by being watchful rather than welcoming—except to its maritime rivals.

All that is perfectly straightforward, yet apparently much too complicated for poor Xi Jinping and his minions, who fail to see the fatal contradiction between building up the Chinese navy, and loudly asserting inflated maritime claims against Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Sultanate of Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Naturally those countries have reacted by welcoming American and –increasingly–Japanese naval visits, as well as anything that India and Australia send their way, while offering less and less access to Chinese forces.

As a result, the Chinese naval build-up *is reducing* Chinese maritime power which in turn reduces Chinese naval strength –yes, that is a bit confusing linguistically but fortunately it is very simple in practice:

- for example, because it has several times been attacked by the Chinese Navy and threatened yet more often, Vietnam invites Japanese as well as American and Indian naval forces into its own bases, and most importantly submarines from which they can very comfortably intercept Chinese submarines trying to get out discreetly from the major Yulin base in Hainan island, just down the road from Haiphong, just up the road from Cam Ranh Bay. That diminishes the operational value of Yulin-based submarines, just as US naval power out of the major San Diego base would be diminished if the Chinese navy could comfortably operate out of Ensenada bay in nearby Mexico.

The bottom line: the Chinese are naively expansionist. But the counter-China coalition they have created since 2008 better keep reacting, because nothing else will stop the Chinese drive to become number one in everything and everywhere (thereby restoring the correct world order as they see it, after the tumble of the industrial revolution). Only the population decline now expected will slow the imperial drive.

The Russians are not naïve and much less expansionist. Aside from keeping their Mediterranean garden on the Levantine coast of Syria, all they want is to recover the historic Russian-ruled lands: Belarus, the Ukraine of course, and the northern tip of Kazakhstan, erroneously carved from Siberia by careless Bolshevik bureaucrats in the 1930s. (They do not want the Baltics...)

Only a large-scale European/US aid to the Ukraine & a big military build-up could dissuade the Russians from biting at Ukraine every day, till they follow the Georgians in electing a president properly respectful of Moscow.

Dr. Sean McFate⁸

Professor (National Defense University)

7 March 2019

You mentioned mercenaries and privately funded warfare, but what other kinetic and non-kinetic tactics are and will be used by competing powers domestically and abroad to undercut US interests over the coming decade?

Dr. McFate: It is important to think about old rules of war versus new rules of war. For example, Russia has always sought to disunite Europe and NATO and the EU. In the old rules of war, utility of force was supreme, so what Russia would do is have huge military exercises at the East-West border of Germany, (150,000 troops with aircraft—an invasion force) and they would tell NATO, "Don't worry. It is just a military exercise." And, of course, that would threaten NATO and would have ripple effects, which would please Moscow. Today, war is moving from Clausewitz to Sun Tzu. An example of a present-day scenario for how Russia acts to disunite Europe may start with it deliberately bombing civilian centers in Syria. This creates a tidal wave of refugees that hits the EU and causes Brexit and a rise of right-wing national politics. This, combined with information warfare, is disuniting Europe. Russia has weaponized refugees. That is one example. Another example is that, under the old rules of warfare, if Russia wanted to conquer something, it would use tanks or troops or other conventional means to take over territory in Hungary or Czechoslovakia. Today, what Russia does, in Ukraine or Crimea for example, is it uses weapons that give Russia maximum plausible deniability.

Warfare in the future is going underground. It is becoming epistemological, telling truths from lies determines winners and losers. In the global information age, plausible deniability is more powerful than firepower. Russia today uses means like Spetsnaz, mercenaries and proxy militia (e.g., the Wagner Group or the Donbas Battalion), and a lot of propaganda. And while the West was still trying to figure out what exactly was going on in Crimea, Russia had already created a ghost occupation that was a fait accompli by the time Western policymakers were prepared to do something. So, that is an example of the new rules of war, where information and non-kinetic weapons are more powerful than blitzkriegs.

In which regions should the US expect significant challenges to its interests over the coming decade? And what form will these challenges take in those regions?

Dr. McFate: We would benefit from developing a grand strategy that helps to define what our national interests are. I am not optimistic in this political environment that this is going to happen any time soon. One of the things that grand strategy should do clearly is outline perpetual national interests because America has no permanent allies or permanent enemies, it just has permanent national interests. Where those things are is a matter of discussion. I do not think the Middle East is as important as people think it is, and whether the threat of Iran is really an existential threat to the US is up for debate. US policy toward Africa has always been focused on African solutions for African problems, which is really code for containment.

If we think about China and how it is fighting, China has its Three Warfares strategy. The Three Warfares strategy focuses on influence, lawfare, and economic instruments. Notably, military is absent. The US needs to figure out how to fight this Three Warfare strategy. When it comes to influence, China has made significant strides. When was the last time you saw a Hollywood movie that had a Chinese villain? China has bought Hollywood and green-lights every movie, so we do not really see things like Chinese villains. China is also building its own version of Hollywood domestically. Ultimately, China is using information operations to write its own narrative around the world. China is using lawfare the same way. This is evident by its actions in the South China Sea, which is an area where the US has struggled to compete because the US is still focused on the old rules of war (i.e., kinetic force and deterrence). Deterrence does not work like it used to. The US can put carrier groups in the South China Sea, but it will not stop China. The way that China is winning in the South China Sea is by doing strategic aikido (i.e., using the enemy as a way to get to the enemy). China is playing up the US' paradigm of warfare where the US thinks of war and peace as being separate dichotomies. This is a false dichotomy—there is not war *or* peace, there is war *and* peace. What China does, therefore, is it goes right to the brink of war in the South China Sea, right to the point where the US might respond, and then stops but gets to keep what it has already captured or created. And this is how China is winning the South China Sea incrementally, one island at a time, and will eventually erode our alliance system there. So, China is

⁸ Dr. McFate's contribution consists of excerpts from a longer interview session. For access to the full interview session, please contact George Popp (gpopp@nsiteam.com).

basically operating in the space between war and peace in our paradigm of warfare and exploiting that paradigm against us. There are ways to combat China there, to push it out of the South China Sea, but they are not at all traditional.

That seems to get at the Chinese approach to non-kinetic activity in gray zone competition environments, below that level of armed conflict.

Dr. McFate: Yes, but I take issue with the whole idea of “gray zone.” We use “gray zone” as a placeholder. The problem, in my opinion, is that we have this idea of war or peace, and then we just say that the things that are in between those two things are “gray zone.” But a better model for this is the Cold War, which was really a competition. In my book (*The New Rules of War: Victory in the Age of Durable Disorder*), I discuss things that we have already done before and then update them for the 21st century. If we want to get China out of the South China Sea, the things that we should consider doing, which may not be acceptable, would not be deploying F-35s and carriers into the South China Sea, but rather things like supporting weaker insurgency in the western regions, passively supporting rivals to Xi Jinping to get him nervous as an autocrat, and trying to use information operations to depict Beijing as corrupt in its domestic political market and as an empire in international affairs. We should get allies on board early, particularly those who see what is happening and/or fear what may happen. We need to start doing these things now, but this is not a front of warfare that we have fought in decades, so we need to reinvigorate this type of strategic thinking.

Are there any final points about the future of global competition and conflict that you would like to highlight or emphasize?

Dr. McFate: Yes, a big one is: Why does everybody assume that a fight with Russia and China will be conventional? Why is that the case? I do not believe that is the case at all. In fact, I think we are already at competition. I do not know what word is appropriate for the competition, but we are already dealing with that right now with Russia and China and we need to get to beyond our current paradigm. We are a paradigm prisoner right now. We need to shift the paradigm and move on. Because war has moved on and we have not. Some of the best weapons today do not fire bullets. So, what do we need to do to get there? I do not think we need more F-35s or more forward carrier groups. I think we need other things. And we need to abandon this idea that great power competition will be conventional.

Additionally, I think we have been operating under several tropes that are strategic assumptions of both political science and strategy thinkers, such as command-driven economies will always fail, that internet will liberate everybody, etc. All of this stuff is, in retrospect, kind of childishly naive. War is getting sneakier, and we have to get sneaky with it. The challenge for us as a democracy is how do we do this without losing our soul? And this is an old problem going back to Thucydides—as Athens prolonged the war it became more autocratic. So, this is a central challenge we face.

Dr. Lukas Milevski

Assistant Professor (Leiden University)

2 March 2019

This two-part discussion considers, first, strategic asymmetries facing US military power in theater, and second, geopolitical asymmetries undermining US interests and the ability to express and support those interests on the world stage. Both parts are viewed over time, from the past then projecting into the future.

Strategy relies on the generation of asymmetries for advantage to achieve the desired consequences.⁹ One can interpret statecraft similarly, albeit in a more peaceful and broader arena. The purpose of asymmetry is to minimize the ability of the opposing party to act usefully to its own advantage in the given environment.

The United States has done an excellent job since the 1980s of generating basic military asymmetry which has yet to meet any truly peer competitor. This is still true today despite concerns regarding the rise of current relatively peer, and future fully peer, competitors such as Russia and China. Regardless of their true status, these competitors cannot assume parity—their only prudent

⁹ Lukas Milevski. “Asymmetry is Strategy, Strategy is Asymmetry”, *Joint Force Quarterly* 75 (October 2014), 77-83.

assumption is to believe that US military advantage endures and to prepare against that standard. It is widely recognized that US military advantage rests on a relatively narrow basis of predominantly information technology systems, which govern functions within individual weapon systems plus facilitate links between and among weapon systems, necessary to exploit their full range of technical and tactical potential. These IT systems together constitute, if not necessarily weakness, then certainly an aggregation of critical nodes whose disruption or destruction would disproportionately affect US military power.

To counter US military asymmetry, competitors must generate their own asymmetries which the US has already had, could yet have, and over time certainly will have trouble facing. This process has been in play since the 1990s, as the Gulf War and interventions in the prolonged collapse of Yugoslavia shook both Russian and Chinese military observers. Many existing counter-asymmetries already target US information dominance. These counter-asymmetries are not necessarily weapon systems, although some can be (e.g. Russian electronic warfare systems). Asymmetry can also be generated through new organization or new tactics—guerrilla warfare has been a consistent asymmetry plaguing the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq over nearly two decades despite the United States' technical advantages in gathering and employing information. Asymmetries, including those based on organization and tactics rather than weapon systems, have allowed strategic actors which are not at all rivals, let alone peer rivals, to stymie US strategy and policy for years on end.

Fortunately, it is possible to follow, despite the veil of linguistic barriers, censorship, and perhaps outright propaganda and disinformation, the development of weapon systems meant to provide potential competitors with general or niche asymmetric advantages over the United States. Such research, development, and procurement decisions take years to mature and come to completion. It is possible to watch priorities change as defense budgets, particularly in Russia under the impact of sanctions and other forces, feel the pressure. Nonetheless the budgetary emphasis remains on weapon systems aimed at providing asymmetric counters to, if not asymmetric advantages against, US capabilities. Russia in 2018 made budgetary decisions in favor of modernizing existing weapon systems over procuring next generation systems such as the T-14 Armata or Su-57. Under financial pressure, Russia is providing relatively small investment in forces approximately symmetrical to US capabilities—although one should not underrate those symmetrical forces, as Russia still may have more battle-ready tanks than all of NATO combined and more MLRS than either the US or China, for example. Nonetheless, Russia is still funding asymmetrical capabilities such as electronic warfare, air defense, and a variety of missiles.

It is more difficult to track, much less assess, organizations and tactics for their potential to contribute to asymmetry generation. However, the US is now in the somewhat privileged position, previously occupied over decades by its competitors, of watching them, particularly Russia, employ not just some of these systems, but also the organizations and tactics required to use them effectively, on campaign in the Donbas or in Syria. Military exercises are another valuable source of intelligence on potential organizations or tactics for achieving asymmetry.

Asymmetry in competitor statecraft to undercut US interests is a far broader question and more relevant to China, whose economic might far exceeds Russia's.

China in particular follows culturally specific notions of statecraft and strategy which emphasize what may be translated as “the propensity of things,” the idea that conditions should be constantly shaped so that the eventual engagement, whether a battle or contest between non-military forms of power, is an easy victory because the context would not allow any other outcome.¹⁰ This does not imply that there is a central plan to undermine the United States globally by threatening or using every potential military and non-military instrument, but rather that China is willing to do so to shape the environment to its general advantage, presumably most often to the general disadvantage of the United States, now or in the future, when interests clash. Gambits such as building artificial islands or harassing non-Chinese ships in the South China Sea are examples of trying to shape the environment, as are the many Chinese loans provided to African countries. Whether or not such disparate environments ever become theaters of active competition, let alone conflict or war, is immaterial to the Chinese—they are perfectly happy implicitly to dominate regions without ever having to fight for them.

The Russian approach is more openly aggressive, founded upon both exacerbating existing divisions and, whenever possible, creating

¹⁰ François Jullien. *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*. Janet Lloyd, trans. (New York: Zone Books 1995), chapters 1 and 2 are of particular interest here.

new divisions within and among their rivals. These divisions may be political, racial, social, etc. and primarily achieved not just through disinformation in the literal sense of providing false information, but also by misrepresentation of who is providing that information or contributing to a particular public debate. For example, the Russian firm Internet Research Agency sought to suppress the black vote in the United States during the 2016 presidential elections by creating active social media accounts posturing as part of this community and encouraging electoral boycott, among other tactics to lessen the political impact of the black vote.¹¹ The Russians also meddle in European politics, from bankrolling far-right parties in western Europe and Russian parties in the Baltic states to encouraging Brexit. Further still, Russian money encourages and spreads corruption in Western institutions, including political and financial institutions.

The main common feature of both the Chinese and Russian cases is ambiguity over who is acting, for what purposes, etc. It is not readily apparent that the Chinese are deliberately undermining US interests in a region, perhaps because they are only expanding their own interests, which shape the environment to give Beijing levers that make that environment inimical to US interests if necessary. Similarly, it is not readily apparent that it is Russia which is causing, not just exacerbating, the many divisions which exist in the United States, if indeed most of its targeted tensions already exist independently of Russian interference.

The Chinese will exploit any potential environmental leverage and the Russians any potential weakness. Both types of non-military pressure, shaping the environment versus openly undermining, aim to inhibit the American (or other) political decision-making required to contest either Chinese influence or Russian actions. The ideal is to prevent a US response altogether by taking aim at the political level of decision-making, which is the prime mover for any strategy to contest China or Russia.

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18 February 2019

The CCP's primary goal is preservation of its rule. Even the cult of personality created by Xi does not change this. There are a number of related, secondary priorities. They feature protection of vital and potentially unstable global economic relationships and achievement of political primacy in East Asia. At this time, China sees a comprehensive global challenge to the US as infeasible to the point of being harmful with respect to its other objectives. Global competition is a tool to protect the Party and advance toward secondary objectives, not a bid for leadership.

By far the most important example of China's approach to global "competition" is its continued reliance on the dollar. While Beijing sought inclusion in the IMF's reserve currency group, the yuan has remained wedged between 6 and 7 to the dollar for a decade.¹² The PRC chases the stability of a (loose) dollar peg as if it were a much smaller economy. Challenging the US for reserve currency status, a possibility harped on by some, would require permitting money to flow freely out of the country. This terrifies the leadership.¹³ And it is impossible to be a genuine global economic challenger, at least, to the US while remaining tethered monetarily.

One step down, the Indo-Pacific is still much too large to be assessed as a whole, still less with other regions such as sub-Saharan Africa. On the fringe, central Asia and South America are important to the PRC as replacement commodities supply lines if access is lost to major producers. South Asia and the Indian Ocean are a notch higher in the hierarchy. For this reason, Pakistan is the largest recipient of Chinese construction services and Bangladesh is in the top 10.¹⁴

East Asia south of Taiwan is another step higher. It is worth noting that the Asian economic center of gravity will continue to shift south as Northeast Asia, including China, continues to age. An economic breakthrough in India or the high-population ASEAN countries – Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines – would make those regions progressively more important. However, none is in sight at the

¹¹ See Jason Parham. "Targeting Black Americans, Russia's IRA Exploited Racial Wounds", *Wired.com*, 17 December 2018, <https://www.wired.com/story/russia-ira-target-black-americans/>, accessed 18 February 2019.

¹² <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DEXCHUS/>

¹³ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314097816_Assessing_China's_recent_capital_outflows_policy_challenges_and_implications

¹⁴ <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/China-Tracker-January-2019.pdf>

moment.¹⁵ This leaves Japan, the Korean peninsula, the Russian Federation, Taiwan, and the East China Sea as by far the most important area of the world for the PRC politically and economically (including the core role played by ports in coastal provinces).

The US should prepare for Northeast Asian economic decline.¹⁶ If South Asia or Southeast Asia rises as a replacement economic engine, Sino-American competition for market access will be sharpened, for example in the area of standards. More likely, the large economies will merely do well. In this case, South and Southeast Asia will remain neither sources of critical imports nor China's top markets. The emphasis in Beijing will be on energy shipping and the associated political influence needed in the Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and possibly Indonesia.

The PRC's view of central Asia and South America extends in most ways to sub-Saharan Africa. The chief interest is commodities extraction, featuring energy but also metals (and food in South America). Political-security actions are largely in support of this. The US has no such interest and little reason to respond to China on these grounds. Long-term successful local development could also bring growing demand for goods and services and the capacity to support low-cost production and export. These might eventually become valuable to the US and a symbolic free trade agreement, endorsed in principle by the administration, would be worthwhile.¹⁷

Yun Sun

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11 March 2019

China's approach to regional competition is much more intense than its approach to global competition. Because of its proximity to the Chinese homeland, the Asian region is more likely to cause strong reaction from China and lead to a higher level of hegemonic intention/behaviors from the Chinese actors. In other words, the Chinese feel less room for negotiation and concessions on issues in the region compared to same issues in other regions. For example, China has much less interest in refuting US FONOPs in Africa than in the South China Sea.

Economic and financial statecraft is also a key component to China's approach to global competition.

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There is no compelling reason to bundle China and Russia together in this question. A recent paper from the Rand Corporation pithily summarized the contrast by observing that "Russia is a rogue, not a peer [to the United States]; China is a peer, not a rogue."¹⁸ Russia does not appear to act as if it feels any responsibility for the stability and sustainability of the global order, while China displays many indications of such a sense of responsibility even as it appears unwilling to accept a general principle of US hegemony. In the economic sphere, China is plausibly committed to a rules-based global order. In fact, its official pronouncements in the last two years have been generally more aligned with that vision than those from the United States.

¹⁵ <http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/India-Chooses-Economic-Mediocrity.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/rethinking-the-asian-century>

¹⁷ <https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2018/july/statement-ustr-robert-lighthizer-0>

¹⁸ <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE310.html>

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Russia

Russia has and will be seeking to consolidate its sphere of influence around its immediate borders. In this way Russia's approach has been mostly limited to being regional. Cyberspace, however, gives Russia the possibility to act globally and be recognized as a global power in this domain. Few would dispute that Russia is one of the top 5 countries in regard to cyber capabilities.

At the same time Russia sees cyberspace as an area where it can undermine the Western alliance. It has been working towards weakening the alliance from within and create divisions predominantly through information operations.

China

China, as opposed to Russia, has sought to expand its sphere of influence beyond its recent historic reach via the Belt and Road Initiative. This change has been primarily led by economic expansion and the securing of resources. More recently, the strategy has been to transform the "economic" into the "military." This was the case in the South China Sea where China converted islands it supposedly used for economic reasons into military hubs. In Djibouti too, China transformed its economic leverage towards the heavily indebted country into the construction of a military base on its shores. This allows China to extend its influence into the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and Africa more broadly. By doing so it opens new strategic frontiers that might become strategic points of friction with the United States.

Similarly, as with Russia, China sees cyberspace as another means to engage globally. China's intent is not as much to undermine US and its allies openly but rather covertly, through economic espionage and the subversion of internet infrastructure.

Russia and China's global approaches and points of friction with the US

Are both countries' ambitions at crossroads with vital US interests? While Russian engagements across its borders are concerning, they will not change the distribution of power in the long run. However, Russian undermining of US alliances and partnerships is a greater worry, since this like-minded community of countries is the primary vehicle for the US to mitigate unpredictable shocks that will eventually occur across the globe.

The Belt and Road Initiative's threat to US security interests is still relatively low. Both the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road as well as the Silk Road Economic Belt are bound with regional powers that can potentially counterbalance Chinese influence – e.g. India along the former and Russia along the latter.

In regard to both Russia and China, the US's aim should be to maintain and deepen the current set of alliances and partnerships it has established with countries. These should not be transactional in nature and rather ought to be built on trust and common values that come with frequent interaction and socialization into a network. The web of alliances and partnerships ought to be underpinned by a long-term strategic narrative.

This plethora of US global networks is currently the strongest set of alliances and partnerships any country has established. If it is well kept up, there are few dangers for it to be seriously challenged anywhere. The US should continue to strengthen their alliances and partners to enable them to maintain their own vital interests that may be at crossroads with larger powers in the region. This will allow the US to buckpass more often and allocate resources to areas of competition it sees as most vital. The US in turn should focus its attention on countries along the Belt and Road Initiative that are heavily indebted to China and hence more likely to give China the opportunity to expand militarily.

Ali Wyne¹⁹

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8 March 2019

China's Long-Term Strategic Objectives

In his October 2017 address before the Chinese Communist Party's 19th Party Congress, President Xi expressed confidence that China would move "closer to center stage" this century—with good cause: in a feat that seemed inconceivable amid post-Cold War Western triumphalism, it has managed to attain the world's second-largest gross domestic product, become the largest trading country, and register numerous other economic accomplishments, all while growing further authoritarian.²⁰ In America's ongoing immersion in the Middle East's convulsions, the global financial crisis of 2008-09, and increasing political toxicity in Washington, meanwhile, it sees a superpower that is strategically adrift and internally divided.

As a great power's strength increases, so, too, it stands to reason, would its conviction that once distant hopes could prove to be reachable goals. Esteemed Sinologists, however, continue to debate the scale of those aspirations. Georgetown University's Oriana Skylar Mastro concludes that China aims to become the Asia-Pacific region's "unchallenged political, economic, and military hegemon."²¹ Princeton University's Aaron Friedberg goes further, concluding that China may undertake to "match, [perhaps even] overtake, the United States in terms of overall power and influence."²² The Hudson Institute's Michael Pillsbury is even more unequivocal, assessing that China "seeks to remake the global hierarchy, with itself as leader."²³ The more strenuously China disavows the pretension to global preeminence, the more vigorously, and naturally, some U.S. observers counter that it does, in fact, maintain that objective—especially as its aggregate national power grows apace: why feel compelled to disclaim with growing vigor and frequency, after all, a supposition that is self-evidently unwarranted?

Despite that reasonable skepticism, the evidence thus far does not suggest that China endeavors to replace the United States as the underwriter of a global order, though its objectives may grow more grandiose in due course. If its leaders assume that the passage of time will inexorably restore a Sinocentric hierarchy, and that they merely need to exhibit patience while weathering the fury of a declining superpower, they are likely to be disappointed. Growing external instability, a grim demographic outlook, a paucity of true partners and allies, deepening security cooperation between its neighbors, and intensifying efforts by the West to limit the reach of its technologies are just a few of the obstacles that are likely to constrain its trajectory. And then, of course, there is the growing velocity of contemporary geopolitics, which, while not obviating the importance of planning, cautions against wedding oneself too rigidly to the sorts of five-year plans in which China takes such pride.²⁴ It is important for the United States to appreciate that China's leaders are neither peerless strategic savants nor amateur tactical improvisers; they will likely stumble and adapt, as seen with their recalibration of the BRI's course. Washington stands to be more competitive over the long run if it invests anew in its unique competitive strengths than if it endeavors to replicate China's movements.²⁵

¹⁹ The views expressed in this submission are solely those of Mr. Wyne; they do not reflect those of the RAND Corporation or any of its other employees.

²⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/10/19/move-over-america-china-now-presents-itself-as-the-model-blazing-a-new-trail-for-the-world/>

²¹ <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/china-plan-rule-asia>

²² <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2018.1470755>

²³ Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, reprint ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016): p. 236

²⁴ For these reasons, among others, it is unclear that China will overtake the United States as the world's foremost power, even as the margin of the latter's preeminence will likely continue to decline; I elaborate in "Questioning the Presumption of a U.S.-China Power Transition," *Diplomat* (January 8, 2019).

²⁵ James Dobbins and I make this point in "The U.S. can't 'out-China' China," *Hill* (December 30, 2018).

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11 March 2019

Chinese ambitions of having a 'great power' status focus on surpassing the US and becoming the leading global power. China's 'Great Rejuvenation' is much more than just a plan to provide connectivity and improve the economy and wealth of the Chinese people. Rather, it should be considered as the largest ever, global, man-invented project which creates conditions to surpass potential adversaries in any possible domain, through mostly economic and political means (but who can guarantee that once having the economic dominance in place, future Chinese leadership would not consider use of military power to do thy bidding?). President Xi Jinping's ideas of restoration of Chinese greatness and re-making China into the 'Country of the Middle' should breed deep and multivector oriented thinking and concerns among the US and Western world.

In pursuit of global goals, China became one of the largest global investors (in some cases even the largest) and one of the largest importers of natural resources. What makes Chinese offers attractive, especially to smaller and weaker countries/economies, is the fact that China usually offers a lot, but asks for little in return initially.

While not preferring military confrontation and actually avoiding it at the moment, China chose diplomacy, economy and information as the main arenas of their actions. Chinese diplomatic successes could be highlighted by growing number of countries abandoning Chinese adversaries (i.e. diminished international support to Taiwan) and shifting to support Beijing's narratives. To secure its economic position and actions, China tries to create a new global financial system, as an alternative to the existing World Banking System. At the same time, China is more than eager to pursue with their debt trap scenarios, offering huge resources or investments to smaller and weaker states. The cost is a loss of sovereignty of territories important to Chinese global plans.

Unlike China, Russia has a different perception on what it means to be a great power. Russian ambitions do not aim at establishing a physical presence all around the globe. Instead, the Kremlin perceives its status of great power as a set of capacities/abilities to influence a situation, influence developments, or as an ability to make things happen or not happen, preferably wherever and whenever Moscow wills so. From this perspective, Russian hard power assets are meant to demonstrate overwhelming magnitude of military capabilities (regardless whether real or fake ones), establish A2AD and provide projection of power good enough to execute aggressive Russian actions.

Russia's policies and strategies are, therefore, focused on countering the US and NATO's presence and supremacy. Moscow's primary focus remains on Europe and Europe's neighborhood at the moment, and only to some extent in other places where Russian goals could be achieved with relatively little efforts and resources.

However, new, potentially threatening developments from a US perspective have occurred over the last several years. Russia and China, traditionally opposed to each other (rifts between the two countries peaked in 1969, during war in Ussuria, and never truly settled since then), have seemingly entered into a 'honeymoon' relationship, or so called 'marriage of convenience' recently. China, benefiting throughout the decades from the US support and sponsorship, has silently but persistently worked hard on establishing broad economic capabilities, finally announcing the will to surpass the US by 2049. Chinese investments have spread around the globe rapidly, with an intent to establish new 'Silk Roads' across the land and sea and re-make China into the Country of the Middle. On the other hand, Russian leadership needs money and offers an abundance of natural energy resources, which pre-sets the stage for Russia-China relations. In this duo, China may offer the money, which is much needed in Moscow, and at the same time Russia may in return allow some more bold Chinese actions pushing the Belt and Road Initiative through areas contested in the past. Russia might even consider joining some of these Chinese projects. This relationship seems to continue deepening as China and Russia are being cornered by U.S. policies (e.g., sanctions, economic conflicts, military presence, etc.) and, therefore, share a common adversary – the US. Consequences of a merge of Russian resources and Chinese emerging economy and technology should be very attentively monitored, analyzed and assessed. Furthermore, strategies to counter Chinese grand long-term strategies, as well as Russian 'fait accompli' strategies, need to be searched for immediately.

Subject Matter Expert Biographies

Dean Cheng

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Dean Cheng brings detailed knowledge of China's military and space capabilities to bear as The Heritage Foundation's research fellow on Chinese political and security affairs. He specializes in China's military and foreign policy, in particular its relationship with the rest of Asia and with the United States. Cheng has written extensively on China's military doctrine, technological implications of its space program and "dual use" issues associated with the communist nation's industrial and scientific infrastructure. He previously worked for 13 years as a senior analyst, first with Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), the Fortune 500 specialist in defense and homeland security, and then with the China Studies division of the Center for Naval Analyses, the federally funded research institute. Before entering the private sector, Cheng studied China's defense-industrial complex for a congressional agency, the Office of Technology Assessment, as an analyst in the International Security and Space Program. Cheng has appeared on public affairs shows such as *John McLaughlin's One on One* and programs on National Public Radio, CNN International, BBC World Service and International Television News (ITN). He has been interviewed by or provided commentary for publications such as *Time* magazine, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg News*, *Jane's Defense Weekly*, South Korea's *Chosun Ilbo* and Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*. Cheng has spoken at the National Space Symposium, National Defense University, the Air Force Academy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Eisenhower Center for Space and Defense Studies. Cheng earned a bachelor's degree in politics from Princeton University in 1986 and studied for a doctorate at MIT.

David C. Gompert

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The Honorable David C. Gompert is currently Distinguished Visiting Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, Adjunct Professor at Virginia Union University, and Senior Fellow at RAND. Mr. Gompert was Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence from 2009 to 2010. During 2010, he served as Acting Director of National Intelligence, in which capacity he oversaw the U.S. Intelligence Community and acted as the President's chief intelligence advisor. Prior to his most recent government service, Mr. Gompert was a Senior Fellow at the RAND Corporation, from 2004 to 2009. Before that he was Distinguished Research Professor at the Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University. From 2003 to 2004, Mr. Gompert served as the Senior Advisor for National Security and Defense, Coalition Provisional Authority, Iraq. He has taught at RAND Graduate School, U.S. Naval Academy, the National Defense University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Union University. Mr. Gompert served as President of RAND Europe from 2000 to 2003, during which period he was on the RAND Europe Executive Board and Chairman of RAND Europe-UK. He was Vice President of RAND and Director of the National Defense Research Institute from 1993 to 2000. From 1990 to 1993, Mr. Gompert was Special Assistant to President George H. W. Bush and Senior Director for Europe on the National Security Council staff. He has held numerous positions at the State Department, including Deputy to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1982-83), Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe (1981-82), Deputy Director of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (1977-81), and Special Assistant to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1973-75). Mr. Gompert worked in the private sector from 1983-1990. At Unisys (1989-90), he was President of the Systems Management Group. At AT&T (1983-89), he was Vice President, Civil Sales and Programs, and Director of International Market Planning. Mr. Gompert has published on international affairs, national security and information technology. His books (authored or co-authored) include *War with China: Thinking through the Unthinkable*, *Blinders*,

Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn; Sea Power and American Interests in the Western Pacific; The Paradox of Power: Sino-American Strategic Restraint in an Age of Vulnerability; Underkill: Capabilities for Military Operations amid Populations; War by Other Means: Building Capabilities for Counterinsurgency; BattleWise: Achieving Time-Information Superiority in Networked Warfare; Nuclear Weapons and World Politics (ed.); America and Europe: A Partnership for a new Era (ed.); Right Makes Might: Freedom and Power in the Information Age; Mind the Gap: A Transatlantic Revolution in Military Affairs. Mr. Gompert is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Advisory Board of the Naval Academy Center for Cyber Security Studies and chairman of the board of Bobcats Sports League. He has served on numerous for-profit and not-for-profit boards. Mr. Gompert holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the U. S. Naval Academy and a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University. He and his wife Cynthia live in Virginia and New Hampshire.

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Edward N. Luttwak is Senior Associate, Center for Strategic and International Studies of Washington DC., Chairman of AP Fleet, (aircraft leasing), Dublin, Ireland, and is active as a consultant to governments and international enterprises. He founded and heads a conservation ranch in the Amazon. Has served/serves as a consultant to the US National Security Council, the White House Chief of Staff, the US Department of Defense, US Department of State, US Army, US Air Force, and several allied governments. At present he is working as a contractor for the Office of the Secretary of Defense OSD/NA. Has taught at Johns Hopkins and Georgetown Has been an invited lecturer at universities and higher military schools in the US, UK, China, Israel, Japan the Russian Federation and other countries. His book *The Rise of China versus the Logic of Strategy* (Harvard University Press, 2012), reflects an engagement with Chinese affairs that dates back to an extensive visit in 1976. His previous books, which include *Strategy: the Logic of War and Peace* and *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* have also been published in 23 foreign languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, Korean and Russian. C.V. Born in Arad, Transylvania in 1942, attended schools in Sicily and England, then the London School of Economics (B.Sc.Econ) and Johns Hopkins University (Ph.D.). LLD Honoris Causa University of Bath (UK). Worked for some years in London and Jerusalem before moving to Washington DC. Speaks several languages.

Dr. Sean McFate

Professor (National Defense University)



Dr. Sean McFate is an author, novelist and foreign policy expert. He is a professor of strategy at the National Defense University and Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Washington, DC. Additionally, he is an Advisor to Oxford University's Centre for Technology and Global Affairs. A specialist in national security strategy, McFate was a think tank scholar at the RAND Corporation, Atlantic Council, Bipartisan Policy Center, and New America Foundation. Recently, he was a visiting Scholar at Oxford University's Changing Character of War Program, where he conducted research on future war. McFate's career began as a paratrooper and officer in the U.S. Army's storied 82nd Airborne Division. He served under Stan McChrystal and David Petraeus, and graduated from elite training programs, such as Jungle Warfare School in Panama. He was also a Jump Master. McFate then became a private military contractor. Among his many experiences, he dealt with warlords, raised armies for U.S. interest, rode with armed groups in the Sahara, conducted strategic reconnaissance for oil companies, transacted arms deals in Eastern Europe, and helped prevent an impending genocide in the Rwanda region. In the world of international business, McFate was a Vice President at TD International, a boutique political risk consulting firm with offices in Washington, Houston, Singapore and Zurich. Additionally, he was a manager at DynCorp International, a consultant at BearingPoint (now Deloitte Consulting) and an associate at Booz Allen Hamilton. McFate's newest book is *The New Rules of War: Victory in the Age of Durable Disorder* (William Morrow). Admiral Jim Stavridis (retired), the former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, said: "Stunning. Sean McFate is a new Sun Tzu." McFate also authored *The*

Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order (Oxford University Press) which explains how the privatization of war is changing warfare. The Economist called it a “fascinating and disturbing book.” McFate also write fiction based on his military experiences. He co-authored the novels *Shadow War* and *Deep Black* (William Morrow), part of the Tom Locke series. *New York Times* #1 bestselling author Mark Greaney said: “I was blown away.... simply one of the most entertaining and intriguing books I’ve read in quite some time.” A coveted speaker, McFate has appeared before the British House of Commons, top universities and popular audience venues. He has written for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*, *Foreign Policy*, *Politico*, *Daily Beast*, *CNBC*, *Vice Magazine*, *Aeon*, *War on the Rocks*, *Military Review* and *African Affairs*. He has appeared on CNN's *Amanpour*, MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, *Fox and Friends*, NPR, BBC, *Economist*, Vice/HBO, The Discovery Channel, and American Heroes Channel. As a scholar, he has authored eight book chapters in edited academic volumes and published a monograph for the U.S. Army War College on how to raise foreign armies. McFate holds a BA from Brown University, MPP from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and a Ph.D. in international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He lives in Washington, DC.

Dr. Lukas Milevski

Assistant Professor (Leiden University)



Lukas Milevski teaches strategy, grand strategy and war-related topics as a tenured Assistant Professor, Program in International Relations, Institute of History at Leiden University (Netherlands). His core competence is strategic theory, studied under Colin S. Gray, and his research interests include all aspects of military strategy in concept, history, and contemporary analysis, for education and policy support. Currently also a Foreign Policy Research Institute Baltic Sea Fellow, Milevski has partnered with Oxford University's Changing Character of War Programme for a Sasakawa Peace Foundation project on NATO intra-alliance diplomacy for deterrence, as a Smith Richardson Strategy and Policy Fellow on Baltic defense, and as a Visiting Research Fellow on Anglo-American grand strategy. Milevski has spoken at the US National Defense University, Naval War College, and Military Academy; UK Defence Academy; Military Academy of Lithuania; as well as many academic and professional venues. Major publications include *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought* (OUP, 2016), *The West's East: Contemporary Baltic Defense in Strategic Perspective* (OUP, 2018), and *Grand Strategy is Attrition: The Logic of Integrating Various Forms of Power in Conflict* (US Army War College Press, 2019), plus over 40 journal articles in peer and non-peer reviewed sources. The national defence colleges or national universities of the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and the Baltic, as well as private institutions such as King's College London/War Studies include his works in their syllabi. Besides his direct interest in his subject, Milevski aspires to leave the field of strategy in a stronger position than when he entered it.

Dr. Derek M. Scissors

Resident Scholar (American Enterprise Institute)



Derek M. Scissors is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he focuses on the Chinese and Indian economies and on US economic relations with Asia. He is concurrently chief economist of the China Beige Book. Dr. Scissors is the author of the China Global Investment Tracker. In late 2008, he authored a series of papers that chronicled the end of pro-market Chinese reform and predicted economic stagnation in China as a result. He has also written multiple papers on the best course for Indian economic development. Before joining AEI, Dr. Scissors was a senior research fellow in the Asian Studies Center at the Heritage Foundation and an adjunct professor of economics at George Washington University. He has worked for London-based Intelligence Research Ltd., taught economics at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, and served as an action officer in international economics and energy for the US Department of Defense. Dr. Scissors has a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan, a master's degree from the University of Chicago, and a doctorate from Stanford University.

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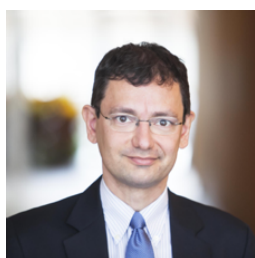
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Yun Sun is co-Director of the East Asia Program and Director of the China Program at the Stimson Center. Her expertise is in Chinese foreign policy, U.S.-China relations and China's relations with neighboring countries and authoritarian regimes. From 2011 to early 2014, she was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, jointly appointed by the Foreign Policy Program and the Global Development Program, where she focused on Chinese national security decision-making processes and China-Africa relations. From 2008 to 2011, Yun was the China Analyst for the International Crisis Group based in Beijing, specializing on China's foreign policy towards conflict countries and the developing world. Prior to ICG, she worked on U.S.-Asia relations in Washington, DC for five years. Yun earned her master's degree in international policy and practice from George Washington University, as well as an MA in Asia Pacific studies and a BA in international relations from Foreign Affairs College in Beijing.

Nicolas Véron

Senior Fellow (Bruegel and Peterson Institute for International Economics)



Nicolas Véron cofounded Bruegel in Brussels in 2002-05, joined the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington DC in 2009, and is currently employed on equal terms by both organizations as a Senior Fellow. His research is primarily about financial systems and financial services policies. He frequently briefs senior economic policy officials in Europe, the United States and Asia, and has testified at parliamentary hearings in the US Senate, European Parliament, and in several European member states. A graduate of France's Ecole Polytechnique and Ecole des Mines, his earlier experience includes senior positions in the French government and private sector in the 1990s and early 2000s. He is also an independent board member of the global derivatives trade repository arm of DTCC, a financial infrastructure company that operates on a non-profit basis. In September 2012, Bloomberg Markets included Véron in its yearly global "50 Most Influential" list with reference to his early advocacy of European banking union, a topic on which he has worked and published near-continuously since 2007.

Valentin Weber

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Valentin Weber is a DPhil Candidate in Cyber Security at the Centre for Doctoral Training in Cyber Security and a Research Affiliate with the Centre for Technology and Global Affairs, University of Oxford. Previously, he was an Open Technology Fund Senior Fellow in Information Controls at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University. He also worked for think tanks, embassies and international organizations in Paris, London, and Sarajevo.

Ali Wyne

Policy Analyst (RAND Corporation)



Ali Wyne is a Washington, DC-based policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, and a nonresident fellow at the Modern War Institute. He serves as rapporteur for a U.S. National Intelligence Council working group that analyzes trends in world order. Wyne served as a junior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace from 2008 to 2009 and as a research assistant at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs from 2009 to 2012. From January to July 2013 he worked on a team that prepared Samantha Power for her confirmation hearing to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. From 2014 to 2015 he served on RAND's adjunct staff, working with the late Richard Solomon on RAND's *Strategic Rethink* series. Wyne received dual degrees in management science and political science from MIT (2008) and earned his Masters in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School (2017). While at the Kennedy School he served on a Hillary for America working group on U.S. policy toward Asia. Wyne is a coauthor of *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (2013) and a contributing author to *Power Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Mapping a Multipolar World?* (2017) and the *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (2008). Wyne is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a David Rockefeller fellow with the Trilateral Commission, and a security fellow with the Truman National Security Project.

Lieutenant Colonel Maciej Zaborowski

Analyst, Combined Strategic Analysis Group, CCJ-5 (US Central Command)



Lt Col Maciej Zaborowski is a Polish Air Force officer, currently assigned at Combined Strategic Analysis Group (CSAG), CCJ-5, US Central Command. He serves there as analyst and a member of international sort of 'think tank' structure, unique to USCENTCOM. Lt Col Maciej Zaborowski entered military in 1993 (Military University of Technology, Warsaw; 5-year Master of Science in aviation course, commissioned officer in 1997). He began his professional carrier as a member of 36th Special Air Transportation Regiment (maintenance engineer positions, also JAK-40 and Tupolew 154M flying crew member). Prior to his current assignment, Lt Col Zaborowski served at number of positions in the Polish Ministry of National Defense and the General Command of the Polish Armed Forces as an analyst, defense planner and strategic planner. He also served at the NATO Supreme Allied Command Transformation Headquarters (Norfolk, Virginia, 2008-2011) as Curriculum Design Officer and Concept Developer, and in European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (Field Office Zugdidi, 2013-2014). He is a graduate of National Defense University postgraduate studies, with focus on leadership and negotiations. He is also a graduate of George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany (Program of Advanced Security Studies). His current efforts focus on Great Power Competition, with highlight on Central Asia, Russia, Kazakhstan and China.

Author Biography

George Popp

Senior Analyst (NSI, Inc.)



George Popp is a Senior Analyst at NSI, Inc. where he conducts research and analysis on a broad range of multidisciplinary analysis projects that focus on understanding the political, economic, and social dynamics of emerging conflict situations and environments throughout the world. The bulk of George's work has been in support of NSI's government initiatives, particularly leading and contributing to human behavior analytics efforts completed for the Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) program on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in support of direct requests from US Combatant Commanders to the Department of Defense. George has also supported NSI's commercial initiatives, conducting business intelligence analyses for clients in the video game industry. George's degree is in Economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.