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**Building Partnerships Against
Chinese Revisionism:
A “Latticework Strategy”
for the Indo-Pacific**

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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Executive Summary

This paper explores how America can build the international partnerships needed to protect the freedom and autonomy of the countries of the Indo-Pacific, urging a “latticework” strategy of creating cross-cutting networks of ties in the region rather than seeking – at least initially – to create a formal, multilateral collective security organization for the Indo-Pacific along the lines of what NATO provides in Europe.

It is not clear that NATO-style security multilateralism is yet viable for the Indo-Pacific. The failure of the region’s last attempt at such institution-building, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), highlights the degree to which military alliances rely upon geopolitical “likemindedness” for their effectiveness. This is true even of NATO, whose famous Article V collective security guarantee does not actually formally require signatories to go to war on each other’s behalf. In truth, alliances rely more upon shared values and vision than they do upon specific treaty provisions. Where partners share such commitments, as with NATO, an alliance can thrive for decades. Where they do not – as with SEATO – one will not.

Though this prism, it far from clear that enough of a “demand signal” yet exists for NATO-style collective security in the Indo-Pacific. It is not merely that many regional states that increasingly fear China and seek closer relationships with America are nonetheless reluctant to “choose sides” against Beijing in the overt way that outright military alliance would imply. It is also the case that some of them have difficulties with each other that would make formalizing a NATO-style defensive architecture challenging. Furthermore, some countries also carry the political and psychological baggage of decades of anti-colonial activism and national self-identification against the former imperial powers of the developed West, which

makes the idea of a military alliance with countries such as the United States and Great Britain more problematic. For all these reasons, one should not expect a full-blown NATO-style alliance network anytime soon.

Yet precisely because effective cooperation against shared security threats is more a question of vision, values, and collective commitment than of formal legalities, it may be that a NATO-style mechanism in the Indo-Pacific isn't actually necessary, provided that the United States builds collaborative and mutually-supportive security relationships by other means. In theory, a "latticework" of relationships—on a bilateral basis or involving subsets of countries in the region, not merely between United States and regional states but also between such regional states themselves—could do the work of such community-building nearly as well as a formal multilateral structure. Building such a latticework should clearly be the near-term objective of U.S. regional security policy, and indeed has already begun with the U.S.-India-Japan-Australia Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the new Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) agreement.

It should thus be the focus of U.S. regional foreign and security policy to build a cross-cutting latticework that will help weave the Indo-Pacific into a stronger cooperative fabric of security cooperation against Chinese threats. Among other things, this agenda should include a strong emphasis upon security sector capacity-building, which should be stepped up immediately. Remembering that effective cooperation against shared security threats is less about formal legalities than about building and leveraging shared vision, values, and collaborative habits, the United States must work to build effective connective tissue across the Indo-Pacific through diverse, overlapping, cross-cutting bilateral and small-scale multilateral networks of security engagement and capacity-building support.

It is also essential to remember that this challenge involves far more than simply military power, and the United States must also use such approaches to address a broader range of issues. Fortunately, there is great potential for a “latticework strategy” in this regard as well.

The U.S. approach should start from an understanding of what it is that China is seeking to accomplish. Fundamentally, China seeks to replace the present international system with one that centers around itself. The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) strategic vision is built on three pillars. First, it is fueled by theorizing about “Comprehensive National Power” (CNP), which – far from being just a military metric – combines a range of political, economic, cultural, and other factors.

Second, this Chinese geopolitical theory rests upon the assumption that the most powerful player in the world-system will tend not just to dominate it by weight or force, but also (and more importantly) to dominate it politically, morally, and psychologically. In this view, the dominant power sets the normative frameworks and plays the leading role in establishing the operational rule sets for the system. As seen from Beijing, the international system periodically reorients itself around, and to the lasting advantage of, the power with the dominant CNP. China seeks to be that power.

Third, the Chinese approach to geopolitics rests upon a sense of national or civilizational grievance, grounded in Chinese nationalism and carefully nurtured for generations by the CCP’s propaganda apparatus. This sense of grievance is derived from the pain and shock of the affront that China’s encounter with Western and Japanese power administered to the Middle Kingdom’s soaring historical sense of self-regard. Righting this perceived wrong, and returning China to the position it feels itself to deserve at the center of the international system, has been the central

theme of Chinese nationalism, politics, and policy for generations.

To fulfil its geopolitical destiny by returning to its natural status in the world and righting the supposed wrongs inflicted upon it during a “Century of Humiliation,” it is felt that China needs to boost its CNP. When it is able to build its CNP sufficiently, in turn, China will naturally displace the United States and become the hub of a new international order. In that new order, Beijing will set the rules and shape the values. In that new system, China will be the highest-status, indispensable actor, and will be seen as the model and standard for others to follow.

U.S. strategy needs itself to be informed by how Chinese strategists see this working. Through the prism of “Comprehensive National Power,” the elements of policy through which China hopes to achieve its goals stretch across—and combine, in reciprocally-supporting ways—every imaginable facet of national power. With Chinese strategists ascribing U.S. hegemony and global dominance in the post-Cold War era to its combination of global military power, economic weight, a strong U.S. dollar that serves as the world’s principal trading and reserve currency, technological preeminence, and global media that advanced American values, Beijing wants all such attributes for itself in the future.

The elements of national power deemed critical to Beijing’s success certainly include the expansion of Chinese economic power, as well as its Science and Technology (S&T) capabilities. Technology policy is thus seen as “the main battlefield of the national economy”—that is, the means through which China will become “an economic superpower” and “a world S&T innovation superpower” by 2050. China’s plan for “national rejuvenation” also includes the acquisition of first-rank military capabilities with global reach, for China is “determined not to be left behind in the next “revolution in military affairs” (RMA),

which Chinese officials believe to be already underway” and to be driven by advancements in science and technology. Beijing expects the leader of the next RMA to overawe and dominate the world other powers just as Britain and the United States—leaders of the previous RMAs—are felt to have done to China. And China intends to be that RMA leader.

The Party’s plan for “national rejuvenation” also prominently emphasizes global propaganda and messaging, the purpose of which is to achieve “discourse control” for China by “grabbing the microphone” in order to “spread the ‘China voice’ to every corner of the world.” In turn, it is declared, such Chinese discourse control will “prominently alter the international political structure and cultural landscape.” Because in China’s conception of history the dominant player in the international system will necessarily play the dominant role in shaping discourse, and because China is itself now moving to “take center stage,” it also follows that Beijing has both to seize control of global discourse and to maintain that grip—which is why China is now increasingly working to censor speech worldwide that is disfavored by Party officials.

Another facet of the CCP’s program of building China’s CNP involves creating a web of China-centered regional institutions and relationships through a process of regional economic and diplomatic integration—a project for constructing the Sinocentric system that the CCP hopes will someday supplant the U.S.-led global order that emerged during the 20th Century. Ultimately, however, this integrative project, with all of its implicit hub-and-spoke hierarchy of dependency relationships, is not intended to be merely something for the Indo-Pacific. Chinese officials and documents frequently refer to China’s imagined future “community of shared destiny” in terms that make clear that this vision is a global one.

Understanding this CCP strategic narrative—and the myriad elements that planners in Beijing consider to be necessary for their success in bringing about “national rejuvenation”—is critical to understanding how the democratic sovereign peoples of the rest of the world may be able to build alliance relationships that problematize and perhaps even derail this CCP strategy.

Just as a “latticework” of bilateral and smaller-scale security ties can at least partly substitute for the larger-scale multilateral legalities of a NATO-style organization in the Indo-Pacific, so also a “latticework” approach to weaving webs of economic, trade, political, technological, cultural, academic, and other relationships among the democracies can play a powerful complementary role in building “connective tissue” among our Indo-Pacific partners in ways that help undermine Beijing’s agenda of building a new global order around itself and CCP authoritarianism. China’s strategy rests not just upon military power but upon a “theory of victory” that requires Beijing to pull the states of the Indo-Pacific together into new relationships that are as Sinocentric as they are U.S.-exclusionary. In this sense, every bilateral or multilateral relationship between regional states that does not include China—much less every one that actually does involve American participation—is perforce a defeat for the CCP and a victory for the free democracies.

Taking a cue from the degree to which even the most formal of military alliances ultimately rest upon no more (and no less) a foundation than their participants’ shared sense of community, common values, and collective threat, it should be a key piece of the United States’ agenda to build a “latticework” of ever-thicker China-exclusive cross-cutting relationships, of all sorts, across the Indo-Pacific.

Introduction

At a time in which the developed democracies of the West surprised many observers—and perhaps even themselves—by displaying an impressive degree of unity and resolution in imposing sweeping economic and political sanctions on Russia in response to Vladimir Putin’s brutal attempt to invade and subjugate the country of Ukraine, there is no gainsaying the importance of international partnerships and collective action in facilitating effective responses to security challenges. Yet it is also obvious that the Kremlin was *not* deterred from invading, though one can hope that the NATO firmness and unity the invasion of Ukraine has helped to encourage will help make future Russian aggression less likely.

One way or the other, however, the Ukraine crisis has moved the question of security partnerships against authoritarian aggression into the foreground of international security policy, not least in the Indo-Pacific.¹

¹ The Ukraine crisis – in which, at the time of writing, the Ukrainian armed forces seem to be performing remarkably well against the odds, see, e.g., “As Russia’s Military Stumbles, its Adversaries Take Note,” *DNYUZ* (March 7, 2022), available at <https://dnyuz.com/2022/03/07/as-russias-military-stumbles-its-adversaries-take-note/>; see also Eric Schmitt, Helene Cooper, & Julian E. Barnes, “How Ukraine’s Military Has Resisted So Far,” *New York Times* (March 3, 2022), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/03/us/politics/russia-ukraine-military.html>, leaving the Russian army with its reputation for brutality undiminished but its reputation for competence and effectiveness in tatters – may also suggest lessons about the limitations of force in subduing democratic polities disinclined to be conquered by regional hegemony. In particular, the challenges faced by the Russian expeditionary force in the face of sophisticated Ukrainian small-unit, guerrilla, and popular mobilization tactics, for instance, as well as the willingness of key developed Western democracies to funnel effective arms and other assistance to Ukraine as it combats Kremlin forces, may suggest worrisome lessons for China as it contemplates a potential invasion of Taiwan. Cf. Christopher Ford, “A People’s War Against the

Not surprisingly, these events have led many to wonder what implications Putin's European war might have for longstanding U.S. hopes of deterring a Chinese invasion of Taiwan,² and, more broadly, whether it will be possible for America to rally its friends and partners to prevent Beijing from winning hegemony in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

This paper will not discuss the specific military challenges of defending Taiwan, though they are addressed elsewhere.³ The pages that follow, however, will explore how America can build the partnerships needed to protect the freedom and autonomy of the countries of the Indo-Pacific. What sort of relationships are needed in order to preserve the free and open international order that has for

People's Republic," *The SCIF* blog (October 5-11, 2021), available at <https://www.newparadigmsforum.com/a-people-s-war-against-the-people-s-republic-deterring-an-invasion-of-taiwan-in-three-parts>.

² See, e.g., Lily Kuo, Vic Chiang, & Pei-Lin Wu, "Taiwan's leaders try to calm fears over Ukraine invasion, but citizens worry their island will be next," *Washington Post* (March 4, 2022), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/04/taiwan-ukraine-russia-war-china/>; Rhoda Kwan & Jennifer Jett, "China is not about to invade Taiwan, experts say, but both are watching Ukraine," *NBC News* (March 1, 2022), available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-taiwan-ukraine-rcna17964>. The Ukraine war, of course, also comes only months after the United States' abandonment of its allies in Afghanistan to the Taliban, which led the Chinese newspaper *Global Times* – owned and controlled by the Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece organ *People's Daily* – to crow that Afghanistan offered a "lesson" for the people of Taiwan, and that it was "just a matter of time" until Washington abandoned Taipei as well. "Afghan abandonment a lesson for Taiwan's DPP: Global Times editorial," *Global Times* (August 16, 2021), available at <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1231636.shtml>; "Why the US will abandon island of Taiwan eventually: Global Times editorial," *Global Times* (August 18, 2021), available at <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1231877.shtml>.

³ See Christopher Ford, "Defending Taiwan: Defense and Deterrence," National Institute for Public Policy *Occasional Papers*, vol. 2, no. 2 (February 2022), available at <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Vol.-2-No.-2-Ford.pdf>.

decades provided security and prosperity to all the nations and peoples of the region? What partnerships can provide the strongest counterpoint to Beijing's geopolitical revisionism and authoritarianism?

Military Alliances

To begin with, it is clear that U.S. military alliances should continue to have an important role in providing security for democratic states in the Indo-Pacific. Mutual defense treaties have, of course, long been central to the U.S. relationships with Japan and South Korea on a bilateral basis. For one thing, the U.S.-Japan "Treaty on Mutual Cooperation and Security"⁴ and the U.S.-South Korea "Mutual Defense Treaty"⁵ provide foundations for continuing the longstanding U.S. military presence in those two countries, and undergird Washington's close bilateral defense and security relationship with each government.

Yet with the weight and sophistication of Chinese military power growing at an alarming rate, both in the Indo-Pacific and in its potential for truly global power projection,⁶ it is perhaps natural that questions should arise about whether the region would benefit from further multilateral security structures—perhaps even institutions

⁴ Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States of America and Japan (January 19, 1960) [hereinafter "U.S.-Japan Treaty"], available at <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

⁵ Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea (October 1, 1953) [hereinafter "U.S.-South Korea Treaty"], available at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kor001.asp.

⁶ See generally U.S. Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021: Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Defense Department, 2021) [hereinafter "DoD China Report"], available at <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

analogous to those of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Then-Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun noted to an audience in India in 2020, for instance, that the “Indo-Pacific region is actually lacking in strong multilateral structures. They don’t have anything of the fortitude of NATO or the European Union. ... [T]here is certainly an invitation there at some point to formalize a structure like this.”⁷ And, indeed, were it actually possible to construct a robust form of collective security for the Indo-Pacific along the lines of what NATO provides in Europe, that would certainly help provide a strong bulwark against Chinese aggression.

Nevertheless, it is not clear that such security multilateralism is viable for the Indo-Pacific, at least not yet. It is worth remembering, in this regard, that such an effort *was* made once before. In 1954, the United States, Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand came together to form the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), a direct analogue to NATO which had been formed just a few years earlier, and which was similarly designed to help regional countries resist Communist threats.

SEATO, however, is today remembered as a failure. Despite its ostensible focus upon “Southeast Asia,” it contained only two countries actually located in that region—the Philippines and Thailand—and it lacked institutional mechanisms for intelligence sharing or military coordination. More importantly, its members lacked a clear view of, and approach to, the very threats the organization supposedly existed to combat, with SEATO internally divided essentially from the outset about what (if anything) should be done about regional Communist guerrilla

⁷ Quoted by Joshua Alley, “Does the Indo-Pacific Need and Alliance Like NATO?” *National Interest* (October 17, 2020), available at <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/does-indo-pacific-need-alliance-nato-170896>.

insurgencies and over the growing U.S. role in Vietnam. By the early 1970s, members were beginning to pull out, and the organization collapsed, being formally disbanded in 1977.⁸ As one modern observer harshly appraises it:

As a vehicle for collective defense, SEATO was a poor substitute [for NATO]. It [did not] provide[] for true common security, with no joint military command, no standing armed forces, and had only a vague and ineffective commitment against a ‘common danger.’⁹

The fact that NATO-style collective security failed then, of course, does not necessarily mean that it would fail again, nor that such mechanisms have no role in the future of an Indo-Pacific that is increasingly threatened by Chinese power and aggression. Nevertheless, the SEATO example highlights the degree to which military alliances are institutions that rely upon geopolitical “likemindedness” for their effectiveness.

In this respect, for instance, it is often forgotten that NATO—long taken as the archetype of an effective military pact, and once described as “the most successful Alliance in the history of the world”¹⁰—is built around a treaty that does *not* actually *require* its signatories to defend each other. In effect, the famous Article V collective security guarantee in the North Atlantic Treaty provides no more than that in

⁸ See generally U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954,” (undated), available at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>.

⁹ John J. Tierney, Jr., “Reviving SEATO,” *Institute for World Politics* (August 25, 2020), available at <https://www.iwp.edu/articles/2020/08/25/reviving-seato/>.

¹⁰ Lieutenant General Frederick B. Hodges, U.S. Army, interview by Robin Fehrenbach, *Atlantik-Brücke* (undated), available at <https://www.atlantik-bruecke.org/en/interview-hodges-2/>.

the event one member is attacked, the others will do what they individually feel to be necessary in response:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.¹¹

To point out this structural voluntarism is not to denigrate the effectiveness of the NATO Alliance. Quite the contrary: NATO is in a sense *all the more* impressive as a political community – and one that *does* routinely act and bear burdens together in innumerable and very significant concrete ways in common defense – given that there is not, formally speaking, any legal requirement for its members to do so. (Much the same could also be said about the extra-legal strength and resilience of U.S. bilateral alliance relationships with Japan, South Korea, and Australia,¹²

¹¹ North Atlantic Treaty (April 4, 1949), at Art. V, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

¹² Cf. U.S.-Japan Treaty, *supra*, at Art. V (“Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes.”); U.S.-South Korea Treaty, *supra*, at Art. III (“Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties in territories now under their respective administrative control, or hereafter recognized by one of the Parties as lawfully brought under the administrative control

though perhaps rather less about that with the Philippines.¹³)

The point here is merely that *alliances rely more upon shared values and vision* than they do upon specific treaty provisions. Where partners share such commitments, as with NATO, an alliance can thrive for decades. Where they do not – as with SEATO, Article IV of which was similar to NATO’s Article V¹⁴ – one will not.

of the other, would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.”); Security Treaty Between the United States, Australia, and New Zealand (ANZUS) (September 1, 1951), at Art. IV (“Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.”), available at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu002.asp.

¹³ Cf. Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines (August 30, 1951), at Art. IV (“Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes.”), available at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/phil001.asp. The U.S.-Philippines relationship has been notably more volatile than the others. See, e.g., Jim Gomez, “US, Philippines assessing defense treaty, China wary,” *Associated Press* (September 30, 2021), available at <https://apnews.com/article/china-asia-united-states-philippines-manila-a9b1ca68f23d994afda55d2652393428>; “Duterte restores Philippines’ key military agreement with US,” *Al Jazeera* (July 30, 2021), available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/30/duterte-fully-restores-troop-pact-with-united-states>; Karen Lema, Martin Petty, & Phil Stewart, “Duterte terminates Philippines troop pact, U.S. calls move ‘unfortunate,’” *Reuters* (February 11, 2020), available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-usa-defence/duterte-terminates-philippines-troop-pact-u-s-calls-move-unfortunate-idUSKBN2050E9>.

¹⁴ Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Pact) (September 8, 1954), at Art. IV(1) (providing, *inter alia*, that “[e]ach Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the Parties or against any State or territory which the Parties by

Though this prism, while an appreciation for the magnitude and immediacy of Chinese military threats certainly *is* growing in the Indo-Pacific—and is indeed making possible a growing breadth and depth of regional security cooperation—it is far from clear that enough of a “demand signal” yet exists for NATO-style collective security or for a future “Indo-Pacific Treaty Organization” (IPTO)¹⁵ to succeed. It is not merely that many regional states that increasingly fear China and seek closer relationships with America are nonetheless reluctant to “choose sides” against Beijing in the overt way that outright military alliance would imply.¹⁶

It is also the case that some of them have difficulties *with each other* that would make formalizing a NATO-style defensive architecture challenging. Anti-Japanese sentiment remains a powerful element of South Korean nationalism,¹⁷ for instance, and has sometimes made it

unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.”), available at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu003.asp.

¹⁵ Some observers concerned about Chinese regional threats have indeed called for the establishment of such an organization. See, e.g., Lianchao Han & Bradley Thayer, “The Need for an Indo-Pacific Treaty Organization is Critical,” *The Hill* (September 30, 2021), available at <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/574204-the-need-for-an-indo-pacific-treaty-organization-is-critical>.

¹⁶ See generally, e.g., “Asian countries fear China but many won’t side with America,” *The Economist* (June 8, 2019), available at <https://www.economist.com/asia/2019/06/06/asian-countries-fear-china-but-many-wont-side-with-america>.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Gi-Wook Shin, “On Korean Nationalism and its Role in the Escalating Japan-South Korea Friction,” Stanford Korea Program News blog (September 5, 2019), available at <https://apar.cfsi.stanford.edu/korea/news/korean-nationalism-and-its-role-escalating-japan-south-korea-friction>; Tae-Jun Kang, “One South Korean Province Wants to Tag Japanese Firms as ‘War Criminals,’” *The Diplomat* (March 22, 2019), available at

difficult for Seoul and Tokyo even to do common-sense things like share intelligence about North Korea or China.¹⁸ While the various countries that surround the South China Sea all resent Beijing's claims and fear China's militarized self-aggrandizement there, many of them also have territorial claims *against each other*.¹⁹ (It makes it more difficult for alliance partners to promise to defend each other's territorial integrity against China if *they themselves* dispute the precise contours of the territories in question.)

Furthermore, some countries, such as India, also carry the political and psychological baggage of decades of anti-colonial activism and national self-identification *against* the former imperial powers of the developed West,²⁰ which makes the idea of a military alliance *with* countries such as the United States and Great Britain more problematic. Thankfully, India's traditional anti-Western political culture does not rule out closer ties²¹ — or even a “strategic

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/one-south-korean-province-wants-to-tag-japanese-firms-as-war-criminals/>.

¹⁸ Compare Sasha Ingber, “South Korea To Scrap Military Intelligence-Sharing Agreement With Japan,” *NPR* (August 22, 2019), available at <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/22/753348880/south-korea-to-scrap-military-intelligence-sharing-agreement-with-japan>; *with* Motoko Rich & Edward Wong, “Under U.S. Pressure, South Korea Stays in Intelligence Pact With Japan,” *New York Times* (November 22, 2019), available at

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/world/asia/japan-south-korea-intelligence.html>.

¹⁹ See generally, e.g., Ben Dolven, Susan V. Lawrence, & Ronald O'Rourke, “China Primer: South China Sea Disputes,” Congressional Research Service Report IF 10607 (February 2, 2021), at 1 (describing competing claims in South China Sea), available at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10607>.

²⁰ See, e.g., Richard M. Fontera, “Anti-Colonialism as a Basic Indian Foreign Policy,” *Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 2 (June 1960), at 421-32.

²¹ Raja Mohan, “India Gives Up Its Anti-Colonial Obsessions and Embraces Europe,” *Foreign Policy* (May 18, 2021), available at

partnership” with the United States²² –but barring a significant escalation in Chinese threats, formal alliances still seem problematic. For all these reasons, we should not expect much by way of a full-blown NATO-style alliance network to be possible anytime soon.

Yet precisely because effective cooperation against shared security threats *is* more a question of vision, values, and collective commitment than of formal legalities, it may be that a NATO-style mechanism in the Indo-Pacific isn’t actually necessary, *provided that* the United States builds collaborative and mutually-supportive security relationships by other means. In theory, a “latticework” of relationships –on a bilateral basis or involving subsets of countries in the region, not merely between United States and regional states but also between such regional states themselves –could do the work of such community-building nearly as well as a formal multilateral structure. Building such a latticework should clearly be the near-term objective of U.S. regional security policy.

Progress in this regard, in fact, has already begun. The United States, Australia, India, and Japan, for instance, have been stepping up their informal cooperation in the region

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/18/india-china-narendra-modi-johnson-britain-europe-eu-anti-colonialism-strategy-geopolitics/>.

²² See, e.g., U.S. Department of State, “The United States and India: Deepening our Strategic Partnership,” Fact Sheet (July 27, 2021) (“The United States and India have a strong strategic partnership founded on shared values and a commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The United States supports India’s emergence as a leading global power and vital partner in efforts to ensure that the Indo-Pacific is a region of peace, stability, and growing prosperity and economic inclusion.”), available at <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-india-deepening-our-strategic-partnership/>; Indian Ministry of External Affairs, “Brief on India-U.S. Relations” (June 2017) (“India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a “global strategic partnership”, based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues.”), available at https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_US_brief.pdf.

through the format of their Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (a.k.a. “the Quad”).²³ U.S. President Joe Biden, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison held their first “Quad Leaders Summit” in September 2021, at which they pledged support for “the free, open, rules-based order, rooted in international law and undaunted by coercion, to bolster security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.”²⁴

The groundbreaking Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) agreement of 2021, moreover, aims to “sustain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region” by improving the “interoperability, commonality, and mutual benefit” of AUKUS partners in order “to protect our shared values and promote security and prosperity” there.²⁵ Under its auspices, Australia is to acquire eight nuclear-powered attack submarines²⁶ and develop “cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies,” and “additional undersea capabilities” in partnership with the British and Americans.²⁷

The English-speaking democracies of the “Five Eyes” relationship—the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand—have also built a deep collaborative culture over their decades of intelligence sharing and

²³ See Sheila Smith, “The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: What to Know,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (May 27, 2021), available at <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-indo-pacific-what-know>.

²⁴ Joint Statement from Quad Leaders (September 24, 2021), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/joint-statement-from-quad-leaders/>.

²⁵ The White House, “Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS” (September 15, 2021), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>.

²⁶ See “Enter AUKUS,” *The Economist* (September 25, 2021), at 17, 17-18.

²⁷ Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS, *supra*.

cooperative collection, which has been reported to include a division of labor for coverage of major portions of the world, including the Indo-Pacific.²⁸ As one recent history of that relationship describes things, the Five Eyes partnership now goes far deeper than just the technicalities and procedures of sharing information, having over the years led to the development of a “Five Eyes Enduring Culture” of “abiding professional loyalty” and sense of shared mission: “the Five Eyes have defined the strength of the values and commitment that underpin the essence of each nation’s sense of democracy and freedom in a very uncertain world.”²⁹

The Five Eyes partnership is perhaps an unusually successful example of building thick connective tissue across national boundaries to help meet common threats – and an example, moreover, that has been able to take advantage of the commonalities of language, culture, history, and senses of shared kinship that exist within the so-called “Anglosphere” in ways that may not be replicable across the diverse nations of the Indo-Pacific. Nevertheless, Five Eyes illustrates the broader point that it *is* possible to build habits of extremely effective security-focused collaboration through networks of formal and informal cooperation. Inspired by this example, it should be the focus of U.S. regional foreign and security policy to build a cross-cutting latticework of separate and distinct but mutually-supporting relationships that over time can help

²⁸ See J. Vitor Tossini, “The Five Eyes – The Intelligence Alliance of the Anglosphere,” *UKDJ* (April 14, 2020) (“alleging, in relevant part, that “Britain monitors ... Hong Kong,” Canada and the United States both monitor China, “Australia is responsible for South and East Asia[,] and New Zealand for the South Pacific and Southeast Asia””), available at <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/the-five-eyes-the-intelligence-alliance-of-the-anglosphere/>.

²⁹ Anthony R. Wells, *Between Five Eyes: 50 Years of Intelligence Sharing* (Oxford: Casemate Publishers, 2020), at 202.

weave the Indo-Pacific into a stronger cooperative fabric of security cooperation against Chinese threats.

This agenda should include a strong emphasis upon security sector capacity-building. Such capacity building will be essential not merely in helping regional countries build autonomous national capabilities that will make them more resistant to Chinese coercion and more able to defend themselves against threats from the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It will also be essential in making regional forces more *interoperable* – augmenting their ability to work together, and with the United States, if they need to do so in some future crisis.

It has long been a U.S. priority to ensure that its friends and partners have the military technology and capabilities they need to defend themselves, but this has taken on a special urgency as the comparatively benign post-Cold War security environment has given way to an era of uglier great-power competitiveness.³⁰ With the White House's issuance of National Security Presidential Memorandum 10 in 2018, for instance, extra emphasis was placed upon “bolster[ing] the security of the United States and our allies and partners, including by defending against external coercion, countering terrorism, and providing capabilities in support of shared security objectives.”³¹

³⁰ See, e.g., *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2017), at 2-3 (“China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. ... These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades – policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners.”), available at <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

³¹ National Security Presidential Memorandum-10 (April 19, 2018), at § 2(a) (declaring it the first objective of U.S. arms transfer policy), available at <https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nspm/nspm-10.pdf>.

Under the resulting new U.S. conventional arms transfer (CAT) policy, arms transfers, military training, and other capacity-building programs are key policy instruments for “enhancing partner capabilities in ways that support U.S. competitive strategy and interfere with our adversaries’ strategies”³² by “improv[ing] and support[ing] our partners’ capabilities to directly counter PRC and Russian malign influence and aggression.”³³ The United States in recent years has started to tailor its arms sales to Taiwan to provide capabilities intended to make that island “indigestible” to the PLA and thus support a strategy of “denial” that will hopefully deter Chinese aggression.³⁴ In doing so, Washington has been willing to relax some traditional export control restrictions in order to facilitate helping its partners meet their security needs.³⁵ So, too, should the countries of the developed West support their Indo-Pacific partners in building the region’s military

³² Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, “Security Assistance and U.S. Competitive Strategy: Improving our Game,” *Arms Control and International Security Papers*, vol. 1, no. 3 (April 21, 2020), at 2 (emphasis deleted), available at <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/ce29b4c3/files/uploaded/ACIS%20Paper%203%20-%20Security%20Assistance%20and%20Strategy.pdf>.

³³ Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, “Competitive Strategy vis-à-vis China and Russia: A View from the ‘T Suite,’” *Arms Control and International Security Papers*, vol. 1, no. 6 (May 11, 2020), at 5, available at https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/ce29b4c3/files/uploaded/ACIS%20Paper%206%20-%20T_%20Strategy.pdf.

³⁴ See, e.g., Ford, “Defending Taiwan,” *supra*, at 22-24; see also generally Elbridge A. Colby, *The Strategy of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

³⁵ See, e.g., Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, “The New U.S. Policy on UAS Exports: Responsibly Implementing the MTCR’s ‘Presumption of Denial,’” *Arms Control and International Security Papers*, vol. 1, no. 13 (July 24, 2020), at 4-6, available at <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/ce29b4c3/files/uploaded/ACIS%20Paper%2013%20-%20MTCR%20Policy%20Reform.pdf>

capacities and resilience in the face of authoritarian geopolitical revisionism.

This is progress that need not await some future moment in which the PLA's threat to the region has become *so* terrifying that Indo-Pacific nations would set aside their current qualms about NATO-style collective security. Remembering that effective cooperation against shared security threats is less about formal legalities than about building and leveraging shared vision, values, and collaborative habits, there is much that we can do to build effective connective tissue across the Indo-Pacific through diverse, overlapping, cross-cutting bilateral and small-scale multilateral networks of security engagement and capacitybuilding support.

Beyond Military Power

It is also essential to remember that this challenge involves far more than simply military power, and the United States would be remiss if it does not attempt also to address a broader range of issues. Fortunately, there is great potential for a "latticework strategy" in this regard as well.

International Relations with Chinese Characteristics

In this respect, the U.S. approach should start from an understanding of what it is that China is seeking to accomplish. To be clear, Beijing is most certainly *not* simply trying to confront Taiwan and the other states of the Indo-Pacific with overwhelming military power. Nor is it simply trying to "win without fighting" in ways arguably consistent with stereotypes of ancient Chinese military

wisdom,³⁶ nor is its approach based entirely upon PLA “three warfares” doctrine of waging “psychological warfare, public opinion warfare, and legal warfare”³⁷ so as to “induc[e] the collapse of the opponent’s psychology and will.”³⁸ China’s approach surely *is* influenced by such military thinking, but strictly speaking, Beijing’s ultimate objective is not a military one at all.

Fundamentally, China seeks to replace the present international system with one that centers around itself. It seeks, in other words, to dominate the world order. To be sure, it can sound almost like comic book villainy to state things so starkly, but there is nonetheless a sustained and coherent—if perhaps flawed—intellectual framework and geopolitical theory behind the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) sweeping global ambition.

Concepts of Comprehensive National Power

This CCP construct has several sources. First, it is fueled in part by theorizing about “Comprehensive National Power” (CNP) that took root in Party leadership circles in the mid-1980s. First associated with Deng Xiaoping’s advisor Huan

³⁶ See, e.g., Sunzi, “The Art of War,” in *Sunzi: The Art of War & Sun Bin: The Art of War* (Lin Wusun, trans.) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2011), at 29 (contending that “to fight a hundred battles and win each and every one of them is not the wisest thing to do. To break the enemy’s resistance without fighting is. Thus, the best policy in war is to thwart the enemy’s strategy. The second best is to disrupt his alliances through diplomatic means. The third best is to attack his army in the field.”)

³⁷ DoD China Report, *supra*, at 65.

³⁸ Dean Cheng, *Cyber Dragon: Inside China’s Information Warfare and Cyber Operations* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2017), at 40-42 & 45 & 48-50.

Xiang,³⁹ CNP theory drew in part upon Soviet “correlation of forces” thinking⁴⁰—albeit with the admixture of concepts said to have been drawn from ancient Chinese military strategy⁴¹ as well as elements of Confucian philosophy⁴²—and claimed to be able to “calculate a country’s aggregated national power in a scientific, objective, and, indeed, mathematical way.”⁴³

As the term “comprehensive” implies, moreover, far from being just a military metric, CNP is felt to represent the combination of a range of political, economic, cultural, and other factors. It is not merely that these factors *sum* to a nation’s overall power, but also that “the various political, economic, media, and cultural aspects of national power are not separable,” and instead “are felt to ‘strengthen in step’ with each other” such that “advances in one area strengthen overall power and help facilitate advances in other areas.”⁴⁴

Hegemony Theory

Second, this Chinese geopolitical theory rests also upon the assumption that the most powerful player in the world-system—viewed, of course, in aggregated terms, in a “comprehensive” way—will tend not just to dominate it by

³⁹ Christopher Ford, *China Looks at the West: Identity, Global Ambitions, and the Future of Sino-American Relations* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), at 141-42.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Julian Lider, “The Correlation of World Forces: The Soviet Concept,” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1980), at 151-71.

⁴¹ See, e.g., Sun Bin, *The Art of Warfare* (D.C. Lau & Roger T. Ames, trans.) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), at ch.16, 135-36 (recounting story of how when King Wei of Qi asked Sun Bin how to strengthen the military, the Master replied that the most important step is “to make the state prosperous”).

⁴² Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 143 & 175.

⁴³ *Id.* at 141-42 (emphasis deleted).

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 143, 175, & 464.

weight or force, but also (and more importantly) to dominate it politically, morally, and psychologically. In this view, the dominant power sets the normative frameworks and plays the leading role in establishing the operational rule sets for the system.

Some of this thinking has its roots in ancient Chinese political theory, which is notably hierarchical and monist in its orientation, traditionally assumes that legitimate authority will tend to arrange itself in concentric circles around the virtuous paragon,⁴⁵ and is as uncomfortable with the idea of genuinely coequal sovereignties on earth as with there being “two suns in the heavens.”⁴⁶

The notion of an irresistible, virtue-driven dynamic of progressive imperial accretion is central to the traditional Confucian conception of world order. Sovereigns cannot, ultimately, exist alongside each other, coequal in legitimacy: one of them is necessarily the more virtuous, and his state will, thus, in time dominate the other, either simply swallowing it up or subjecting it to *de facto* vassalage.⁴⁷

This monist thinking is coupled with historical observations and interpretive memories drawn from China’s own experience as a civilization-state that for

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Christopher Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China’s History and Modern Foreign Relations* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), at 34, 43, 55, & 235, 245-46, 251, 273-78, & 336-37; see also Ford, *China Looks at the West, supra*, at 86-88.

⁴⁶ The phrasing comes from the ancient philosopher Mencius. See Mencius, *Translation, Commentary, and Notes* (Robert Eno, trans.) (May 2016), § 5A.4, at 105 (quoting Confucius [a.k.a. Kongzi] that “There are not two suns in the heavens, and the people do not have two kings.”), available at https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/23423/Mencius_%28Eno-2016%29.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y.

⁴⁷ Ford, *The Mind of Empire, supra*, at 37.

centuries dominated its region, viewing itself as axiomatically superior to its barbarian neighbors in every meaningful way, but which then ran headlong into the realities of Western power at a time when the West—then in the full flower of its military, economic, technological, intellectual, and political strength and self-confidence after and as a result of the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment—was in the process of building a new international order around itself and the Western model of modernity. In the philosophy of history as seen in Beijing, the international system periodically reorients itself around, and to the lasting advantage of, the power with the dominant CNP.

As outlined by Xi Jinping himself and in the CCP journal *Study Times*,⁴⁸ successive rounds of disruptive technologies have reshaped the world for centuries. Great Britain replaced early modern Spanish hegemony with its own imperium because of the advantages of capitalist production and the technological advances of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions it led, thereby “establish[ing] an empire on which the sun never set.” The United States then “seized the dominant power” from Britain in the 20th Century, first through its own rise to industrial-era preeminence and then by leading the digital revolution.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Study Times* (*Xuexi shibao*) is a newspaper published the CCP’s Central Party School. See, e.g., Frank N. Pieke, “The Communist Party and social management in China,” *China Information*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2012), at 149, 162 n.23, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239770964_The_Communist_Party_and_social_management_in_China; Paul Joscha Kohlenberg, “The Use of “Comrade” as a Political Instrument in the Chinese Communist Party, from Mao to Xi,” *The China Journal*, no. 77 (January 2017), at n.9, available at <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/688519>.

⁴⁹ Rush Doshi, *The Long Game: China’s Grand Strategy to Displace American Order* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2021), 286-87.

Nevertheless, although—as Chinese officials point out—“[i]nternational politics and the economic system have been dominated by Western powers since the First Industrial Revolution,”⁵⁰ the 21st Century future is viewed as being up for grabs. The prize of establishing and running the *future* international system will, Chinese authors believe, belong to whomever can seize pole position in the “Fourth Industrial Revolution.”⁵¹

Through this conceptual prism, world history is thus seen as a succession of hegemonic normative systems. In this view, the dominant player effectively determines rules for the world-system, which are built on the philosophical foundations of that power’s own socio-political “operating system,” and under which that dominant player is accorded preeminent status-deference as the exemplary polity upon which all others are expected to model themselves. The 21st Century stakes, therefore, could hardly be higher. The central question for the future, however, is: *Who will it be?*⁵²

Grievance Ideology

Third, the Chinese approach to geopolitics rests upon a sense of national or civilizational grievance, grounded in Chinese nationalism and carefully nurtured for generations by the CCP’s propaganda apparatus. This sense of grievance is derived from the pain and shock of the affront

⁵⁰ State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, “China and the World in the New Era” (September 27, 2019) [hereinafter “SCIO, ‘China and the World in the New Era’”], at 28, available at https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201909/27/content_WS5d8d80f9c6d0bcf8c4c142ef.html.

⁵¹ Doshi, *supra*, at 271, 278, & 286-87.

⁵² Ford, *The Mind of Empire, supra*, at 79-80 (describing ancient Chinese conception of world politics as being akin to a game of “King of the Hill”).

that China's encounter with Western and Japanese power – kicking off what is remembered as a “Century of Humiliation”⁵³ – administered to the Middle Kingdom's historical sense of soaring self-regard.⁵⁴ Righting this perceived wrong, and returning China to the position it feels itself to deserve at the center of the international system, has been the central theme of Chinese nationalism, politics, and policy for generations.

This has given rise to what this author has elsewhere termed China's “Great *Telos* of Return” (or GTR), “an exquisitely deep longing for and a pervasive commitment to China's rejuvenation through some combination of internal transformation and self-assertion”⁵⁵ that revolves around China reclaiming for itself the dominant position in the international system. The GTR is:

The idea that, after all its humiliations at Western and Japanese hands since the mid-nineteenth century, it is China's destiny to return to the position of global status and power that its history and civilizational excellence ensure that it *deserves* and has a *right* to enjoy. ... [T]he idea of China's return has been something of a pole star for Chinese politics and policy for many decades: a means of organizing and prioritizing issues and policies according to the degree to which they

⁵³ See generally, e.g., Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Christopher Ford, “Past as Prism: China and the Shock of Plural Sovereignty,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 47 (Winter Quarter 2007), at 14.

⁵⁵ Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 91.

contribute to the great mission of the country's national rejuvenation.⁵⁶

This idea, in fact, is the core theme animating Chinese nationalist thinking and politics all the way back to Sun Yat-sen: “the search for something that could restore China to its former greatness and would help it achieve the goal of ‘national rejuvenation.’”⁵⁷ As Xi Jinping himself put it to the 19th Party Congress, “[n]ational rejuvenation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people since modern times began,” and “[o]ver the past 96 years, to accomplish the historic mission of national rejuvenation ... our Party has never forgotten its founding mission, nor wavered in its pursuit.”⁵⁸

An All-Encompassing Strategy

If one accepts Lawrence Freedman's depiction of strategy as a “special sort of narrative” that provides a “compelling account[] of how to turn a developing situation into a desirable outcome,”⁵⁹ the CCP's strategic vision flows directly from this three-legged foundation in hegemony theory, grievance ideology, and a “comprehensive”

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 421; see also, e.g., Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, “Why Chinese Technology Transfer Threats Matter,” remarks at the U.S. Naval Academy (October 24, 2018), available at <https://www.newparadigmsforum.com/p2279>.

⁵⁷ Doshi, *supra*, at 27 & 29.

⁵⁸ Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, remarks to the 19th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party” (October 18, 2017) [hereinafter “Xi Jinping, ‘Secure a Decisive Victory’”], *Xinhua News Agency* (November 4 2017), available at https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm.

⁵⁹ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), at xiii-xv.

conceptualization of power. To fulfil its geopolitical destiny by returning to its natural status in the world and righting the wrongs inflicted upon it by the Century of Humiliation, it is felt, China needs to boost its CNP.

When it is able to build its CNP sufficiently, in turn, China will naturally displace the United States and become the hub of a *new* international order. In that new order, *Beijing* will set the rules and shape the values, one in which China will be the highest-status, indispensable actor, and be seen as the model and standard for others to follow.⁶⁰ In this vision, China aims to reach the summit of what might be called an “Anglo-Sinic Hegemony Model” – that is, to seize a new position of system-shaping influence and status-centrality analogous to what China feels itself to have enjoyed in the ancient world, that Britain enjoyed globally in the 19th Century, and to which the United States succeeded in the 20th Century – and thereby win vindication for the sense of grievance and wounded pride it has nursed since the Opium War.⁶¹

In a recent book, Rush Doshi has ably described the details and the basic means by which China hopes to bring this about. In Doshi’s characterization – on the basis of assessments of growing Chinese power and perceptions of U.S. decline, particularly in the wake of the 2009 global financial crisis – Beijing has moved from a more cautious approach devoted to acquiring tools with which to blunt U.S. power, through a period of greater self-assertion

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 144, 423-34, & 441-48.

⁶¹ This author has speculated, for instance, that China may aspire to some modernized and globalized version of the status-centrality enjoyed by the Emperor during the late years of China’s own Zhou Dynasty. During that era, the imperial center did not directly *rule* or *control* the variegated proto-states around its periphery, but these other powers nonetheless all tipped their figurative hats to the Emperor, as it were, acknowledging the ritual and symbolic primacy of the Son of Heaven. See Ford, *The Mind of Empire*, *supra*, at 274-78; Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 441-48.

dedicated to building a new international order around itself, and now into a period of working aggressively to expand that order.⁶² This is a conclusion with which this author agrees, having traced debates over what has been called China's "Taoist nationalism"⁶³ from the earliest formulation of Deng Xiaoping's *taoguang yanghui* epigram urging his fellow countrymen to "bide our time and hide our capabilities," to the erosion and then abandonment of such strategic caution under Hu Jintao and then Xi Jinping.⁶⁴ This progression toward self-assertion is echoed, moreover, in Xi Jinping's self-evident pride that today "the mindset of the Chinese people has changed, from passivity to taking the initiative."⁶⁵

For present purposes, the key insight to bear in mind here is Freedman's strategic narrative of Sinocentric power and policy ambition: the intended geopolitical destination that Chinese strategists have in their minds, and the "comprehensive" range of ways in which they envision that China's advance will help bring the world to that point. The CCP believes the future pattern of the world to be very much in play, and U.S. strategy needs itself to be informed by *how* Chinese strategists see this working.

Though CCP propagandists frequently go to great rhetorical lengths to make China's sweeping ambition seem non-threatening to other countries,⁶⁶ the world-historical

⁶² Doshi, *supra*, at 4, 65, 159-68, 176, 186, & 211.

⁶³ This term apparently originates with the scholar Wang Fuchun. See Simon Shen, *Redefining Nationalism in Modern China: Sino-American Relations and the Emergence of Chinese Public Opinion in the 21st Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.), at 47-48.

⁶⁴ See Ford, *China Looks at the West, supra*, at 344-60, 391-411 & 454.

⁶⁵ Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory," *supra*.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., "China's Xi wants 'win-win cooperation' with US," *BBC News* (September 25, 2015), available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-34355581>; SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 13 & 26 ("With the rapid increase of China's comprehensive national strength and international

grandiosity of this vision has become strikingly clear. As Xi Jinping proclaimed in 2018—using emotionally evocative phrasings similar to those used when Chinese writers describe the geopolitical upheavals resulting from the Industrial Revolution— “[t]he world is facing great changes unseen in a century ... which brings great opportunities for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”⁶⁷ According to the CCP’s 14th Five-Year Plan, “the entire strategic situation of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” hangs upon this “once-in-a-century shift in the world situation.”⁶⁸

Through the prism of “Comprehensive National Power,” the elements of policy through which China hopes to achieve its goals stretch across—and combine, in reciprocally-supporting ways—every imaginable facet of national power. With Chinese strategists ascribing U.S.

influence, some people worry that China will fulfill the outdated expectation that a country will invariably seek hegemony when it grows strong, so they have created what they call the ‘China threat’ theory. ... Rather than a threat or challenge, China’s development is an opportunity for the world. ... It is true that in the past, countries that grew strong have sought hegemony, but this is not a historical law. ... China will never pursue hegemony or expansion, nor will it seek to create spheres of influence, no matter how international situation changes, how China develops itself.”)

⁶⁷ Doshi, *supra*, at 271.

⁶⁸ National People’s Congress, *Outline of the People’s Republic of China 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives for 2035* (published by *Xinhua News Agency*, March 12, 2021) [hereinafter “14th Five-Year Plan”], at 4, available at https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/t0284_14th_Five_Year_Plan_EN.pdf [Chinese source <https://perma.cc/73AK-BUW2>]; see also, e.g., Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra* (“changes in the global governance system and the international order are speeding up”); SCIO, “China and the World in the New Era,” *supra*, at 1-2 (declaring that “[t]oday’s world is undergoing a level of profound change that has not been seen in a hundred years” and noting “the fall-to-rise turnaround of the Chinese nation in 170 years.”).

hegemony and global dominance in the post-Cold War era to its combination of global military power, economic weight, a strong U.S. dollar that serves as the world's principal trading and reserve currency, technological preeminence, and an "outsoken media" that advanced American values,⁶⁹ Beijing wants all such attributes for itself in the future.

Economic Power and Technology

The elements of national power deemed critical to Beijing's success certainly include the expansion of Chinese economic power, as well as its Science and Technology (S&T) capabilities. The pursuit of "wealth and power," after all, has been seen as central to China's return to greatness and a priority for national policy ever since the late years of the Qing Dynasty.⁷⁰ Today, according to the CCP, "[d]evelopment is the foundation and key to solving all of China's problems,"⁷¹ and "China places economic development at the center of its national rejuvenation."⁷²

Through this lens, technology policy is seen as "the main battlefield of the national economy" – that is, the means through which China will become "an economic superpower" and "a world S&T innovation superpower" by 2050. Achieving such economic and technological might is expected to create "a situation in which China is ... 'taking the lead,'" in the world and thus "achieving the Chinese

⁶⁹ Doshi, *supra*, at 105-06 (quoting account given in memoirs of Wang Yusheng, China's first ambassador to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum).

⁷⁰ Doshi, *supra*, at 28 (quoting Qing official and reformer Wei Yuan).

⁷¹ 14th Five-Year Plan, *supra*, at 8.

⁷² SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 39.

dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”⁷³
According to Xi Jinping:

The Party has united and led all the Chinese people in a tireless struggle, propelling China into a leading position in terms of economic and technological strength, defense capabilities, and composite national strength. China’s international standing has risen as never before. ...

We should aim for the frontiers of science and technology, strengthen basic research, and make major breakthroughs in pioneering basic research and groundbreaking and original innovations. We will strengthen basic research in applied sciences, launch major national science and technology projects, and prioritize innovation in key generic technologies, cutting-edge frontier technologies, modern engineering technologies, and disruptive technologies. These efforts will provide powerful support for building China’s strength in science and technology⁷⁴

Military Capabilities

It is also the case that economic and technological power are not seen as being fundamentally distinct from military power, for indeed they powerfully complement each other—as China learned to its detriment in the 19th Century.

⁷³ CPC Central Committee and the State Council, *Outline of the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy* (published by Xinhua News Agency, May 19, 2016), at 4-5 & 7, available at <https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/outline-of-the-national-innovation-driven-development-strategy/> [Chinese source: http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-05/19/c_1118898033.htm].

⁷⁴ Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra*.

[A]t the Third Plenum of the 12th National People's Congress in 2015, Xi Jinping was quite clear about this. There, he described the 'new round of scientific and technological industry revolution and the new revolution in military affairs' as being not merely intertwined with, but as being *the same as* 'the struggle for national security and development dominance' in 'the competition between development concepts.'⁷⁵

China's national rejuvenation, therefore, necessarily also includes the acquisition of first-rank military capabilities with global reach.

... [C]utting-edge military technology—in the form of ironclad British warships in the Opium War—is seen as having been at the forefront of inflicting this humiliation upon China. Accordingly, as modern Chinese strategists see it, military technology has always been the key to global primacy, with successive 'revolutions in military affairs' (RMA) having helped drive and enforce geopolitical shifts. Those gunboats of 1842, for instance, were possible because Britain led the Industrial Revolution, giving London its storied empire upon which the sun never set. In the 20th Century, the United States became the world's central power, driven by our technological dynamism and solidifying our status with the aircraft, submarines, missiles, and nuclear weapons of a new RMA that made Britain's famous battleships obsolete. Indeed, we are felt to have cemented an even more dominant position after the end of the Cold War through another

⁷⁵ Ford, "Why Chinese Technology Transfer Threats Matter," *supra*.

RMA grounded in our information technology revolution.

Simply put, it is the objective of [Chinese industrial policy] to ensure that it will be the PRC that rides the wave to geopolitical centrality for the next RMA. Xi has decreed that China must develop military capabilities superior to any other military in the world by 2049, and ... [i]f there is to be a mid-21st Century analogue to Britain's imperialist gunboats, the CCP intends them to be *Chinese* assets.⁷⁶

China is "determined not to be left behind in the *next* RMA, which Chinese officials believe to be already underway" and to be being driven by advancements in science and technology:

Simply put, China aims to *lead* the next RMA, and to reap the geopolitical benefits accordingly, by exploiting cutting-edge civilian technology—much as industrial production and steam power allowed for Europe when the Qing met its match in the 19th Century, as mechanization did for the great powers of the mid- 20th Century, and as communications technology facilitated the net-centric warfighting exhibited by the United States after the end of the Cold War. This is the CCP's blueprint for China's global 'return' to military preeminence.⁷⁷

As Xi himself has phrased it, China will "adapt to the trend of a new global military revolution and to national

⁷⁶ Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford, "The PRC's 'Military-Civil Fusion' Strategy is a Global Security Threat," U.S. Department of State, *DipNote* blog (March 16, 2020) (emphasis added), available at <https://www.newparadigmsforum.com/p2510>.

⁷⁷ Ford, "Why Chinese Technology Transfer Threats Matter," *supra*.

security needs” and “upgrade our military capabilities.” It will create “world-class forces” that can “fight and win,” and which will become “a mighty force that enables us to realize the Chinese Dream.”⁷⁸

Propaganda and Global “Discourse Control”

The Party’s plan for “national rejuvenation” also prominently emphasizes global propaganda and messaging, the purpose of which is to achieve “discourse control” for China by “grabbing the microphone” in order to “spread the ‘China voice’ to every corner of the world.” In turn, it is declared, such Chinese discourse control will “prominently alter the international political structure and cultural landscape.”⁷⁹ For this reason, the CCP’s 14th Five Year Plan makes it official policy to “tell the Chinese story well, spread the voice of China,” ensure that “the influence of Chinese culture will rise further,” and “construct a global communications system in [the] Chinese language.”⁸⁰

This effort to reclaim worldwide “discourse hegemony” from the West⁸¹ draws upon Confucian “rectification of names” theories in which political order is in part *constituted* (and is thus to some extent controllable) by regulating how one *describes* it. It is also a notably bold vision, for in this conception, *everyone else’s* narrative about China is

⁷⁸ Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra*. In this process, “technology is the core combat capability.”

⁷⁹ Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 449-55 (quoting Junhao Hong, “From the World’s Largest Propaganda Machine to a Multipurposed Global News Agency: Factors in and Implications of Xinhua’s Transformation since 1978,” *Political Communication*, vol. 28, no.3 (November 2011), at 377, 391.

⁸⁰ 14th Five-Year Plan, *supra*, at 8-9 & 86.

⁸¹ Doshi, *supra*, at 322.

inescapably *China's* business, which Beijing has both a right and a duty to regulate.⁸²

There is thus also a strong element of Chinese exceptionalism in Beijing's global propaganda campaign and its effort to export self-censorship of speech disfavored by the CCP. Despite years of rhetorical support by Chinese diplomats for the idea that countries should not "interfere" in other countries' affairs, there is apparently felt to be no hypocrisy in trying to control how everyone else speaks and thinks about China, since modern Chinese leaders appear to share with ancient Confucians the idea that one's rights and responsibilities differ depending upon where one stands in the social hierarchy of powers.⁸³ Because in China's conception of history the dominant player in the international system will necessarily play the dominant role in shaping discourse, and because China is itself now moving to "take center stage,"⁸⁴ it follows that Beijing has both to seize control of global discourse and to *maintain* that grip.

⁸² Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 455-60; see also Christopher Ford, "Sinocentrism for the Information Age: Comments on the 4th Xiangshan Forum," *New Paradigms Forum* website (January 13, 2013), available at <https://www.newparadigmsforum.com/p1498>.

⁸³ SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 33 ("Major countries should fulfill their responsibilities commensurate with their status."), 40 (stating that China must have an army "commensurate with China's international status"), & 46 (describing China having a special role as a "major and responsible country"); see also Ben Lowsen, "China's Diplomacy Has a Monster in its Closet," *The Diplomat* (October 13, 2018) (quoting an outburst at ASEAN delegates by then-Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi that "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact."), available at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/chinas-diplomacy-has-a-monster-in-its-closet/>.

⁸⁴ Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory," *supra* (describing China as "moving closer to center stage").

Sinocentric Integration

Another facet of the CCP's program of building China's CNP involves creating a web of China-centered regional institutions and relationships through a process of regional economic and diplomatic integration that Rush Doshi terms Beijing's strategy of "peripheral diplomacy" – a project for constructing the Sinocentric system that the CCP hopes will someday supplant the U.S.-led global order that emerged during the 20th Century.⁸⁵ It is thus Party policy to "gather strength for turning China and its neighbors into a community of shared future."⁸⁶ In this presumably unintentional echo of Imperial Japan's own infamous "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,"⁸⁷

China sees its neighboring countries as the foundation of its development and prosperity. It gives top priority to neighborhood diplomacy in foreign relations, and takes promoting regional peace, stability and development as its bounden duty.⁸⁸

China, it is proclaimed, will "ensure that more people embrace the spirit of an Asia-Pacific family and the idea of a community of shared future."⁸⁹

Ultimately, however, this integrative project – with all of its implicit hub-and-spoke hierarchy of dependency relationships – is not intended to be merely something for the Indo-Pacific. Chinese officials and documents, in fact, frequently refer to the "community of shared destiny" in

⁸⁵ See Doshi, *supra*, at 169-72, 182, 209, 211, 227, & 240.

⁸⁶ SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 45.

⁸⁷ Cf. Jeremy A. Yellen *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

⁸⁸ SCIO, "China and the World in the New Era," *supra*, at 44.

⁸⁹ *Id.* at 47.

terms that make clear that this vision is a global one. The CCP Party-State, it is said:

offers a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence; and it offers Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind.⁹⁰

The objective is to “build a *global* community of shared future.”⁹¹

In this context, moreover, China has come increasingly to promote its own developmental model and politico-economic operating system as the “China solution” – “a new option for other countries and nations.”⁹² Just as under Hu Jintao, CCP officials began to speak of their desire to build a “harmonious world” modeled upon the nature and dynamics of the “harmonious society” they promised to create in China,⁹³ so now do Party leaders under Xi Jinping talk of “a community of common destiny *for humanity*”⁹⁴ and a China-led “new type of international relations” that produces “a community with a shared future for mankind.”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra*.

⁹¹ SCIO, “China and the World in the New Era,” *supra*, at 48 (emphasis added).

⁹² Doshi, *supra*, at 284.

⁹³ Ford, *China Looks at the West*, *supra*, at 428-40.

⁹⁴ 14th Five-Year Plan, *supra*, at 3.

⁹⁵ China’s opportunistic and propagandistic use of foreign-born but ethnically Chinese athletes during the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, see, e.g., Amy Qin, “The Olympians Caught Up in the U.S.-China Rivalry,” *New York Times* (February 17, 2022), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/world/asia/olympics-china-american-athletes.html>, also seems to suggest that the Party-State believes it has a special claim upon the loyalty – and an ability to make demands upon – any person of Chinese descent anywhere in the world. This is no coincidence, however, for such seems in fact to be Xi Jinping’s

China's proposal to build a global community of shared future aims to solve the practical issues facing the world today and realize the peaceful and sustainable development of humanity ... offering a new option to the international community. ... The idea of building a global community of shared future draws from the essence of traditional Chinese culture and the achievements of human society, and reflects the interdependence among all countries and the close interconnection of all humanity. ... All countries should reach consensus that transcends ethnicity, beliefs, culture, and location⁹⁶

Building Counter-Networks

So what does this excursion through the CCP's grand strategy and geopolitical vision have to do with U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific? A great deal, actually. Understanding China's strategic narrative – and the myriad elements that planners in Beijing consider to be necessary for their success in the world-historical project of bringing about “national rejuvenation” – is critical to understanding how the democratic sovereign peoples of the rest of the world may be able to build alliance relationships that problematize and perhaps even derail this CCP strategy.

view. See, e.g., Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory,” *supra* (“We will maintain extensive contacts with *overseas Chinese nationals*, returned Chinese and their relatives[,] and *unite them so that they can join our endeavors to revitalize the Chinese nation*. ... We must ... strengthen the great unity of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and the great unity of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home *and abroad*.”) (emphasis added).

⁹⁶ SCIO, “China and the World in the New Era,” *supra*, at 31-32.

Earlier in this paper, it was suggested that a “latticework” of bilateral and smaller-scale ties—including both outright military alliances and a range of other military and security-related capacity-building relationships—can at least partly substitute for the larger-scale multilateral legalities of a NATO-style organization in the Indo-Pacific. The key lesson for U.S. regional strategy suggested by this examination of China’s broader global vision and ambition takes this a step further, in suggesting that a “latticework” approach to weaving webs of economic, trade, political, technological, cultural, academic, and other relationships among the democracies can play a powerful complementary role in building “connective tissue” among our Indo-Pacific partners in ways that will, *by definition*, necessarily serve to undermine Beijing’s agenda of building a new global order around itself and CCP authoritarianism.

The point to remember here is the degree that China’s strategy rests not just upon military power but upon a “theory of victory,” as it were, that requires Beijing to pull the states of the Indo-Pacific together into a new regional economic, diplomatic, security, cultural, and political fabric that is as Sinocentric as it is U.S.-exclusionary. Through this prism, and across the entire sprawling reach of what counts in Beijing’s calculation of “Comprehensive National Power,” every bilateral or multilateral relationship between regional states that does *not* include China—much less every one that actually *does* involve American participation—is perforce a defeat for the CCP and a victory for the free democracies.

A hint at this can perhaps be seen in the fascinating anecdote Rush Doshi tells of the desperate fight waged in 1993 by Wang Yusheng—China’s first ambassador to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum—against diplomatic phrasing that would describe APEC as aiming

to build a “community” in the region.⁹⁷ In Doshi’s description, it is a critical part of China’s overall strategy to join (but to hamper) the effectiveness of regional organizations institutions that *include* the United States, as well as to *build and encourage* China-inclusive ones that can help create a new regional order that is, *de facto* if not *de jure*, centered upon Beijing.⁹⁸

Through this CCP prism, APEC—which includes not just the United States but also U.S. military allies in the form of the developed democracies of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea⁹⁹—was tolerable only to the degree that it remains no more than a pan-Asian “discussion forum” and “fail[s] to deliver” on broader promises of collective regional progress.¹⁰⁰ Apparently, however, the idea of expressly devoting APEC to building a greater sense of regional “community” was much more problematic, eliciting from Ambassador Wang a sort of guerrilla war against formally using such phrasing in APEC documents. (Quite the opposite, of course, could be said about China’s interest in institutions such as the “ASEAN Plus Three” concept (APT) which Chinese diplomats assiduously promoted precisely *because* it represented potential movement toward a vision of regional

⁹⁷ Doshi, *supra*, at 101-02 & 115.

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 104-33.

⁹⁹ See APEC website, <https://www.apec.org/About-Us/About-APEC/Member-Economies> (visited March 8, 2022).

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Edward J. Lincoln & Kenneth Flamm, “Time to Reinvent APEC,” *Brookings Institution* (November 1, 1997), available at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/time-to-reinvent-apec/>; see also Doshi, *supra*, at 112 (arguing that “[a]s a partial consequence [of China’s involvement], APEC has been ineffective in promoting trade liberalization and generally irrelevant during the Asia Financial Crisis and the 2008 Global Financial Crisis”).

“community,” but excluded the United States and centered itself around China.¹⁰¹)

Like a type of geopolitical Rorschach Test, this minor but telling story of a Chinese diplomatic offensive against the word “community” in APEC discussions in 1993 suggests a broader lesson for counter-authoritarian relationship-building in the Indo-Pacific. That lesson? This struggle is not just about military power, and the CCP’s grand strategy can be countered, bit by bit, in innumerable ways *to the degree that* the democracies of the region build stronger, cross-cutting, *and China-exclusive* ties amongst themselves. Taking our cue from the degree to which even the most formal of military alliances ultimately rest upon no more (and no less) a foundation than their participants’ shared sense of community, common values, and collective threat, it should thus be a key piece of the U.S. agenda to encourage the emergence of a “latticework” of ever-thicker China-exclusive cross-cutting relationships, of all sorts, across the Indo-Pacific.

Beijing has signaled to the world that it fears any sense of “community” in the region that it cannot dominate and control. In fact, cross-cutting ties exclusively among and between the democracies do indeed cut powerfully against the CCP’s “theory of victory” that requires construction of the Sinocentric “community of shared future” that Chinese strategists deem essential to—and indeed all but synonymous with—their country’s “national rejuvenation.” As the United States works to ensure the fundamental (and bipartisan) American foreign policy priority of safeguarding “the free and open international order”¹⁰² in

¹⁰¹ See Doshi, *supra*, at 123 (citing Wu Xinbo, “Chinese Perspectives on Building and East Asian Community,” in *Asia’s New Multilateralism: Cooperation, Competition, and the Search for Community* (Michael Green & Bates Gill, ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), at 55, 60).

¹⁰² U.S. Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States* (2018), at 1, available at

the Indo-Pacific,¹⁰³ therefore, it should thus be America's job—and that of U.S. friends and partners—to build more of a shared sense of *non-Sinocentric* "community," and with more partners, than ever before.

Some of this ambition can already be seen in the ambitions of the China-exclusive "Quad" relationship, a partnership between prosperous developed democracies for the benefit of the Indo-Pacific region that is particularly important insofar as no single non-Chinese government seems likely to be able to provide the magnitude of funding that Beijing provides to initiatives such as its "Belt and Road Initiative."¹⁰⁴ The Quad partners announced the launch in 2021, for instance, of a new

Quad infrastructure partnership. As a Quad, we will meet regularly to coordinate our efforts, map the region's infrastructure needs, and coordinate on regional needs and opportunities. We will cooperate to provide technical assistance, empowering regional partners with evaluative tools, and will promote sustainable infrastructure development.¹⁰⁵

<https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

¹⁰³ U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific," remarks at Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta (December 14, 2021), available at <https://www.state.gov/a-free-and-open-indo-pacific/>.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g., Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Global Trade, Investment and Finance Landscape" (2018), at 3 (noting that "[t]he world has a large infrastructure gap" and that "BRI investment projects are estimated to add over USD 1 trillion of outward funding for foreign infrastructure over the 10 year period from 2017"), available at <https://www.oecd.org/finance/Chinas-Belt-and-Road-Initiative-in-the-global-trade-investment-and-finance-landscape.pdf>.

¹⁰⁵ Joint Statement from Quad Leaders, *supra*.

This is the kind of thinking of which the United States needs more, and which the United States needs to back with actual financial, commercial, diplomatic, political, cultural, humanitarian, and other commitments. If the United States can do this, and if others follow the U.S. lead, then it may be possible to turn the CCP's "theory of victory" into what may yet turn out to be, in the grandest conceptual terms, a *praxis* of defeat.

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