

# Taiwan and the CCP's "Public Opinion Warfare"

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## **Abstract**

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has created a "Three Warfares" strategy. The core concept of the Three Warfares is public opinion warfare because of its powerful cognitive effect. The CCP's Three Warfares constitute the most serious challenge facing democratic societies today. A comparison of the CCP's Three Warfares against Taiwan with those against other countries is particularly revealing. It is commonly thought that the CCP's comprehensive and flexible influence operations are sharper than Russia's. In addition to strengthening crisis management capabilities and communication channels, the Taiwanese government must also work with regional and global liberal democracies to establish a common defense mechanism to counter the CCP's public opinion warfare.

**Keywords:** Three Warfares, Public Opinion Warfare, Fake News, Sharp Power, Cyber-security

## **I .What are the "Three Warfares"?**

In 2003, the Chinese Communist Party approved the concept of the Three Warfares – non-traditional methods aimed at advance aggressive political claims and weaken the resolve of the enemy. The concept is detailed in the "Political Work Guidelines of the People's Liberation Army(PLA)," composed of public opinion warfare (also known as 'media warfare' or 'public opinion'), psychological warfare, and legal warfare.

As Michael Raska has succinctly observes,

*The concept is based on three mutually reinforcing strategies: (1) the coordinated use of strategic psychological operations; (2) overt and covert media manipulation; and (3) legal warfare designed to manipulate strategies, defense policies, and perceptions of target audiences abroad.<sup>1</sup>*

The core concept of the Three Warfares is perhaps public opinion warfare because of its powerful “cognitive effect,” the manipulation of opinion to change ideas and behaviors. The CCP takes advantage of the media, and especially internet, to manipulate information, news and knowledge for coercive purposes.

The CCP’s public opinion warfare are a combination of cyber and electronic warfare; psychological warfare; the manipulation of public opinion. As James A. Lewis says, its attributes lend themselves easily to coercion, including relative anonymity, a degree of deniability, the powerful cognitive effects information technologies can produce, and its global reach. This is a new kind of conflict whose core is information and the cognitive effect it produces.<sup>2</sup>

Media warfare can be defined as a constant ongoing activity aimed at influencing and conditioning perceptions. It is conducted through television programs, newspaper articles, books, films, and the Internet, as well as through monitoring and censorship of social media networks and blogs.<sup>3</sup>

While military force still remains necessary for a rising power, Laura Jackson argues that the Western, and especially American, concept of war emphasize the kinetic and the tangible—infrastructure, arms, and personnel—whereas China is asking

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1. Michael Raska, “China and the ‘Three Warfares,’” *The Diplomat*, December 18, 2015, <<https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/hybrid-warfare-with-chinese-characteristics-2/>>.

2. James A. Lewis, “Cognitive Effect and State Conflict in Cyberspace,” September 26, 2018, *CSIS*, <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/cognitive-effect-and-state-conflict-cyberspace>>.

3. Laura Jackson, “The Three Warfares—China’s New Way of War,” July 2016, p. 5, *Legatum institute*, <<https://www.integrityinitiative.net/sites/default/files/articles/pdf/2016-07/china-three-warfares.pdf>>.

fundamental questions: "What is war?" And, in today's world: "Is winning without fighting possible?"<sup>4</sup>

## What are the Three WARFARES? Media Warfare 舆论战争

- **Media Warfare 舆论战争** *yulun zhanzheng* "is aimed at influencing domestic and international public opinion to build support for China's military actions and dissuade an adversary from pursuing actions contrary to China's interests." DOD Definition
- **Tools:** films, television, books, the internet, Chinese news outlets abroad
- **Methods:** Allow semblance of Chinese debate, while using those voices as reasons to avoid compromise. Present Chinese case abroad, prevent outside views from coming in.
- **Actors:** CCTV, Xinhua, social media, overseas Chinese.

### Figure 1. What are the Three Warfares

Source: Jace Eames, "What are the Three Warfares," April 15, 2019, Accessed, *The Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability*, <<https://slideplayer.com/slide/3746806/13/images/8/What+are+the+Three+WARFARES+Media+Warfare.jpg>>.

Writing in the *Diplomat*, Michael Raska points out that "At the operational level, the Three Warfares [is] the responsibility for the PLA's General Political Department's Liaison Department (GPD/LD)." Originally, the target for CCP's Three Warfares campaigns has been Taiwan, "with the GPD/LD activities and operations attempting to exploit political, cultural, and social factions inside Taiwan, undermining trust" between different political-social groups, delegitimizing Taiwan's authorities, and "subverting Taiwan's public perceptions to 'reunite' Taiwan on Beijing's terms."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Laura Jackson, "The Three Warfares—China's New Way of War," p. 5.

5. Michael Raska, "China and the 'Three Warfares.'"

As Former CIA analyst Peter Mattis says, “[t]he Three Warfares are not just a feature of the PLA doing what the militaries do to prepare the battlefield; they are expressions of the CCP’s intentions and day-to-day operations.” For Mattis, “[a]ll of these fall under the broader umbrella of political warfare, which has been a part of the PLA’s lexicon going back decades.” He suggests that “[c]reating political power is precisely what the Three Warfares are intended to do,” warning that “focusing on the ‘Three Warfares’ as a proxy for China’s information operations distracts analysts from the much larger organizational and operational infrastructure that exists under the CCP and the State Council.”<sup>6</sup>

The PLA in a few cases did not participate or was responsible for public opinion warfare and legal warfare. Thus, the CCP takes the power of the whole country (or a whole-of-government approach) to achieve its goal. The CCP’s Central Committee’s Propaganda Department is the media control center which is responsible for all propaganda work. The China Ministry of Foreign Affairs is mainly responsible for legal warfare.

As Lee says, “China has demonstrated an assertive foreign policy, not only in employing various types of economic and military leverage but also in conducting the Three Warfares.”<sup>7</sup> As quoted above, Mattis says, “[f]or many western analysts, the Three Warfares concept has become a proxy for understanding Beijing’s influence operations, or explaining Chinese ‘hybrid warfare.’”<sup>8</sup> which, according to Australia’s *ABC*, involves “influencing the international and domestic perception of the CCP while advancing its national interest and aiming to compromise its opponents’ ability to respond.”<sup>9</sup>

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6. Peter Mattis, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ In Perspective,” January 30, 2018, *War On the Rocks*, <<https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/chinas-three-warfares-perspective/>>.

7. Sangkuk Lee, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’: Origins, Applications, and Organizations,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, April 2014, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 198-221.

8. Peter Mattis, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ In Perspective.”

9. Tasha Wibawa, “China’s national security and the ‘three warfares’: How Beijing decides who or what to target,” *ABC News*, February 26, 2019, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-26/chinas-three-warfares-how-does-beijing-decide-who-or-what-to/10825448>>.

Sergio Miracola argues that: "after Russia's annexation of Crimea, a new military jargon appeared on the strategic studies scene: hybrid warfare. It has been used since then as a theoretical framework to depict a new way of conducting warfare. Hybrid warfare distinguishes itself for the simple fact that it envisages the multiple, simultaneous use of different types of operational systems, which range from the conventional to the unconventional spectrum."<sup>10</sup>

However, the role of the PLA in hybrid warfare and their influence is not widely understood. For instance, we know the PLA has established an internet army, but the CCP's internet penetration into foreign countries does not look like the PLA acted alone. What is clear is that the CCP views hybrid warfare as playing a major role in the country's ambitions.

China's perceived national security threats come from all directions. On April 15, 2014, during the first session of the National Security Council, President Xi Jinping called for an overall national security outlook (or holistic security concept) that specified 11 fields: political security, territorial security, military security, economic security, cultural security, social security, science and technological security, information security, ecological security, financial security and nuclear security. This suggests that the Chinese authorities identified the sources of security threats from 11 fields and that the CCP's Three Warfares are spread across these 11 fields.

As Laura Jackson indicates, the Three Warfares has three key target audiences:<sup>11</sup>

*First, China's own domestic public is targeted in order to consolidate the Party's legitimacy to rule, to deflect criticism of many of the nation's ailments away from the CCP's policy choices. [...]*

*Secondly, global publics are targeted in order to consolidate support for China worldwide, by promoting the Chinese story and the nation's image. [...]*

*Thirdly, China's targeting of the key audience is rival claimants within*

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10. Sergio Miracola, "Chinese Hybrid Warfare," December 21, 2018, *ISPI*, <<https://www.ispionline.it/en/publicazione/chinese-hybrid-warfare-21853>>.

11. Laura Jackson, "The Three Warfares—China's New Way of War," pp. 7-8.

*the South China Sea. This audience is now so important for the Party and its official media that it merits separate analysis.*

For the past few years, China has restored coral reefs to military facilities by building artificial islands in the South China Sea. As a form of public opinion warfare, China's multi-billion dollar media campaign push attempts to shape and influence foreign views.<sup>12</sup>

According to Doug Livermore, as the South China Sea rhetoric continues to increase in rancor. The Three Warfares of psychological operations, media manipulation, and leveraging of legal processes provide appropriate measures with which the CCP can protect its core interests while exercising what it perceives to be effective escalation control.<sup>13</sup>

Given that China has embarked on a new way of war, it is vital to consider who China sees itself at war with. As Michael Cole says, it also draws attention to the challenges democratic societies face as they seek to respond to China's influence operations, which in many cases are not illegal but are nevertheless asymmetrical war and have a corrosive effect on the democratic functioning of our institutions.<sup>14</sup>

CCP's three warfares constitute the most serious challenge facing the democratic societies today. A comparison of the CCP's three warfares against Taiwan with those to the world is particularly revealing. It is commonly thought that CCP's comprehensive and flexible influence operations are sharper than Russia's. This paper will show that China's three warfares in global security represents a continuing challenge for Taiwan as other countries, and concludes with recommendations on how to respond to an

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12. Tasha Wibawa, "China's national security and the 'three warfares': How Beijing decides who or what to target."

13. Doug Livermore, "China's 'Three Warfares' In Theory and Practice in the South China Sea," March 25, 2018, *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, <<http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2018/03/25/chinas-three-warfares-in-theory-and-practice-in-the-south-china-sea/>>.

14. J. Michael Cole, "The Hard Edge Of Sharp Power: Understanding China's Influence Operations Abroad," October 2018, p. 9, *Macdonald-Laurier Institute*, <[https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/20181022\\_MLI\\_China's\\_Influence\\_\(Cole\)\\_PAPER\\_WebreadyF.pdf](https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/20181022_MLI_China's_Influence_(Cole)_PAPER_WebreadyF.pdf)>.

undue influence of an authoritarian regime that is now exporting its model to Taiwan and the world.

## II. CCP's Three Warfares against Taiwan

The CCP has a long history of using propaganda and disinformation against Taiwan. Starting in the Chinese Civil War, propaganda and disinformation are used by the CCP as tools for political and psychological warfare.

From the 1950s to the 1990s, both Taiwan Strait regimes were engaged in a fierce propaganda war through high-powered broadcast, air balloons and kites. Various slogans, leaflets, flags, food and relief supplies are sent to the other side. This equipment and promotional materials are expensive. Now propaganda war has a new tool box and disinformation techniques. The internet can promote unlimited digital access including social networks, mobile communications, online media, digital video and digital broadcast. The propaganda toolbox is powerfully subversive. And its transmission costs are cheaper than ever.

In 2017, media reported that "Taiwan's National Security Bureau revealed that a significant volume of disinformation that had circulated on Taiwan social media networks came from 'content farms' with China's Communist Party."<sup>15</sup> This was confirmed in 2018 by the Investigative Bureau of Taiwan's Ministry of Justice.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the disinformation made by "content farms" manipulated by CCP have been widely spread on Taiwan social networks, mobile phone newsletter, online media, digital video and digital broadcast. Taiwan was severely attacked by a sophisticated propaganda operation against its government.

In Ying Yu Lin's view, "as in Russia's combined use of fake and real moves at once in its operations in the Crimea campaign in 2014, a similar situation might occur

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15. "Lin I-fan, "The China Fake News Election Threat," *The News Lens*, November 24, 2018, <<https://international.thenewslens.com/article/108847>>.

16. Chien Li-chung, Chung Li-hua, & Jonathan Chin, "China using fake news to divide Taiwan," *Taipei Times*, September 16, 2018, <<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2018/09/16/2003700513>>.

in Taiwan. [...] With its progress in technology, China has moved beyond its past internet blockade tactics to actively initiating public opinion warfare on the basis of technological advantages in many areas.”<sup>17</sup>

In the words of Michael Cole, “China has intensified its disinformation activities (‘fake news’) targeting Taiwan as part of a multifaceted attempt to coerce, confuse, and corrode Taiwanese society.”<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 2. The New Digital War for Three Warfares**

Source: J. Michael Cole, “The Impact of China’s Disinformation Operations Against Taiwan.”

According to a *Bloomberg* report: in 2016, FireEye has seen Chinese hackers target Taiwanese NGOs and its education, telecoms and government sectors. “They see Taiwanese society as part of Chinese society so they really cover all segments,” said Read, the firm’s head of cyber espionage analysis. Sixty percent of organizations

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17. Lin Ying Yu, “China’s Hybrid Warfare and Taiwan: How China could use ‘fake news’ and digital warfare in its preparations for engagement with Taiwan,” *The Diplomat*, January 13, 2018, <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/chinas-hybrid-warfare-and-taiwan/>>.

18. J. Michael Cole, “The Impact of China’s Disinformation Operations Against Taiwan,” *Prospects & Perspectives*, 2018 No. 21, October 1, 2018, *Prospect Foundation*, <<https://www.pf.org.tw/article-pfch-2049-6365>>.



observed in Taiwan were targeted with advanced cyber attacks in the second half of the previous year — greater than anywhere else in the world.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, Taiwan suffered 20 million to 40 million cyber attacks from China each month in 2017. Servers in civil, military and research departments have been targeted, including hospital systems hacked to steal personal health information and any private data.

CCP may be increasingly testing Taiwan's cyber techniques before using them attack other countries. The tests seek to invade or disable government computer systems including Taiwan's Foreign and Health Welfare Ministries.

Moreover, the CCP is using online content farms to create fake news to spread disinformation trying to influence beliefs in freedom, divide society and undermine democracy. It has often created false issues or news to discredit the government or stir public discontent from non-Taiwanese users but speaking the same language.

Premier Su Tseng-chang warned that "China is paying people from all classes of Taiwanese society and utilizing the Internet to manufacture disinformation and fake news, which create divisions and demoralization that aid Beijing's ambitions of annexing Taiwan."<sup>20</sup>

Taiwan is still a very young democracy after the lifting of martial law in 1987. The CCP views the island as a part of China, while Taiwanese have different views on the national status and relations with the PRC. Despite the sovereignty dispute, national identity split, political party confrontation (or blue-green confrontation) make Taiwan a more vulnerable and fragile nation to disinformation operation from China.

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19. John Follain, Adela Lin, & Samson Ellis, "China Ramps Up Cyberattacks on Taiwan," *Bloomberg*, September 20, 2018, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-19/chinese-cyber-spies-target-taiwan-s-leader-before-elections>>.

20. Weng Yu-huang, Hsu Cho-hsun, & Jonathan Chin, "Do not be China's tools, premier says," *Taipei Times*, April 7, 2019, <<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2019/04/07/2003712959>>.

As J. Michael Cole claims, China has sought to achieve three principal objectives through disinformation: <sup>21</sup>

*(1) As part of psychological warfare operations, to shape the narrative by tarnishing the image of the Tsai Ing-wen administration, undermining belief in and support for democracy, increasing social tensions, exacerbating negative perceptions of Taiwan's future;*

*(2) To create a world in which the objective truth itself is under assault, where all the information that is beamed at consumers is suspect or serves to reinforce preconceived ideas among certain segments of the population;*

*(3) To wear down the Taiwanese government by forcing it to respond to and debunk every piece of disinformation aimed at it.*

Simply put, the aim of CCP's public opinion Warfare for Taiwan is to realize the ambition of Xi Jinping's China Dream to annex or conquer Taiwan (the so-called "China Dream of national unity"). The CCP, then, has national reasons to desire to capture Taiwan. After many years of lessons, the CCP has changed its strategy, which is that "purchase Taiwan better than attack Taiwan; deceive Taiwan better than purchase Taiwan."

As Russell Hsiao indicates, "In general, propaganda and disinformation exploits the openness of democratic institutions and can undermine the people's ability as citizens to think and act effectively and collectively."<sup>22</sup> The CCP's ultimate goal is to eliminate the Republic of China, to transform Taiwanese identity and loyalty to People's Republic of China.

And worst of all, like US vice-president Mike Pence mention what China did to American, the same China has initiated an unprecedented effort to influence Taiwan's public opinion, the 2018 elections, and the environment leading into the 2020 presidential elections.<sup>23</sup> Based on AI matching patterns, sophistication and

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21. J. Michael Cole, "The Impact of China's Disinformation Operations Against Taiwan."

22. Russell Hsiao, "CCP Propaganda against Taiwan Enters the Social Age," *China Brief*, Vol. 18, Issue 7, April 24, 2018, *The Jamestown Foundation*, <<https://jamestown.org/program/ccp-propaganda-against-taiwan-enters-the-social-age/>>.

other characteristics it's likely that the majority of the cyber attacks come from groups supported by China.<sup>24</sup> This all-out strategy targets the Taiwanese government, Taiwanese society, and the democratic institutions and practices that underpin the nation today.<sup>25</sup>

The CCP will make use of all network tools and disinformation techniques to interfere in Taiwan's 2020 presidential election, to try to turn Taiwanese voting orientations to the candidate that the CCP favors.

As *Taiwan News* notes, this "makes cyber-security Taiwan's most pressing national security issue. [...] As such, one would expect the Taiwanese government to be treating cyber-security with the utmost seriousness."<sup>26</sup>

*Bloomberg* reported that, "President Tsai Ing-wen urged governments around the world to beware of Chinese efforts to influence global public opinion by spreading disinformation via the Internet."<sup>27</sup> President Tsai Ing-wen said that "information security is national security," reminding us that Taiwan's national security faces the most significant new challenges.

### III. CCP's Three Warfares to the World

As a NATO report points out: the manipulation of public opinion regarding social media during critical moments of political life has emerged as a pressing policy concern. Since 2016, at least 43 countries around the globe have proposed or implemented regulations specifically designed to tackle different aspects of influence campaigns,

23. "Remarks by Vice President Pence on the Administration's Policy Toward China," October 4, 2018, *White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-administrations-policy-toward-china/>>.

24. "U.S. will team up with allies to tackle cyber attacks: Bolton," *Focus Taiwan*, September 21, 2018, <<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201809210012.aspx>>.

25. J. Michael Cole, "The Impact of China's Disinformation Operations Against Taiwan."

26. "Taiwan needs to take cyber-security seriously at the highest level," *Taiwan News*, February 24, 2019, <<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3644195>>.

27. "China ramps up cyber-attack on Taiwan," *Bloomberg*, September 20, 2018, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-19/chinese-cyber-spies-target-taiwan-s-leader-before-elections>>.

including both real and perceived threats of fake news, social media abuse, and election interference.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, Sergio Miracola notes, China is becoming a crucial actor in deploying hybrid warfare capabilities. The domains where Beijing's role is becoming central are: Chinese maritime actions in the South China Sea; Chinese diplomacy; and finally, Beijing's cyber warfare doctrine.<sup>29</sup>

Since Xi Jinping has been in power, he has taken aggressive and assertive diplomatic approach in the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait. Beijing's attempts at expanding its military presence have prompted East Asia nations to reinforce their armed defense ability for a possible confrontation. East Asia has fallen into a typical security dilemma.

On Wikipedia, we find that, the term "sharp power" was coined in November 2017 by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and published in an article in *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, to describe aggressive and subversive policies employed by authoritarian governments as a projection of state power in democratic countries, policies that cannot be described as either hard power or soft power.<sup>30</sup>

However, as the Brookings Institute notes, "the term 'sharp power' as applied to China refers to its well-funded, systematic campaign to shape public opinion and perceptions around the world."<sup>31</sup>

Wikipedia adds that sharp power can include attempts by one country to manipulate and manage information about itself in the news media and educational systems of

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28. Samantha Bradshaw, Lisa-Maria Neudert, & Philip N. Howard, "Government Responses to Malicious Use of Social Media," November 2018, *NATO StratCom COE*, <<https://www.stratcomcoe.org/government-responses-malicious-use-social-media>>.

29. Sergio Miracola, "Chinese Hybrid Warfare."

30. Wikipedia, "Sharp power," April 15, 2019, Accessed, *Wikipedia*, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharp\\_power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharp_power)>.

31. "A conversation about China's sharp power and Taiwan," *The Brookings Institution*, September 11, 2018, <<https://www.brookings.edu/events/a-conversation-about-chinas-sharp-power-and-taiwan/>>.

another country, for the purpose of misleading or dividing public opinion in a target country, or for masking or diverting attention away from negative information about itself.<sup>32</sup>

So sharp power can be defined as a combination of public opinion warfare, cultural output, value reconstruction and agents of influence which promote self-censorship.

Disinformation as one aspect of a larger Chinese sharp power strategy has been referred to as political warfare or influence operations. J. Michael Cole observes that “[d]espite the disparate nature of many of the organizations and individuals involved in China’s political warfare activities, the general direction and tone is set by the CCP itself.”<sup>33</sup>

Abhijit Singh notes that Indian strategists have focused on “China’s moves in the Western Pacific” and the Indian Ocean.<sup>34</sup> Indian strategists who are involved with China in the Doklam crisis believe China has now fully operated this concept and is applying it to the Doklam crisis.<sup>35</sup> Singh has asserted that, China is known to have actively used Three Warfares strategy to weaken its adversaries in regions constituting what it perceives to be its “core interests.” While a wide range of tools have been deployed, the attacks have remained mostly confined to Taiwan and South-East Asian states involved in the territorial disputes in the South China Sea.<sup>36</sup>

32. Wikipedia, “Sharp power.”

33. J. Michael Cole, “The Hard Edge Of Sharp Power: Understanding China’s Influence Operations Abroad,” p. 11.

34. Abhijit Singh, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ and India,” *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, October/December 2013, pp. 27-46, *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, <[https://idsa.in/system/files/jds\\_7\\_4\\_AbhijitSingh.pdf](https://idsa.in/system/files/jds_7_4_AbhijitSingh.pdf)>.

35. Prasad Nichenametla, “China standoff stalls Indo-Nepal plan to remeasure Everest height,” *TNN*, August 13, 2017, <[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/60040844.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/60040844.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)>.

36. Abhijit Singh, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ and India,” pp. 27-46.

## Doklam standoff: China playing out its 'Three Warfares' strategy against India



### Figure 3. Is China Playing out Its 'Three Warfares' Strategy against India?

Source: Indrani Bagchi, "Doklam standoff: China playing out its 'Three Warfares' strategy against India," *India Times*, August 13, 2017, <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/china-playing-out-its-three-warfares-strategy-against-india/articleshow/60036197.cms>>.

Moreover, the Indian media noticed that "the Three Warfares strategy goes beyond mere propaganda wars and misinformation campaigns. Expanding conventional war dynamics into the political domain, the Three Warfares appear aimed at undermining India's organizational foundations and target military morale" (see Figure 4). This is an example of highest form of Three Warfares.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike other researchers in the world, Indian strategists and media prefer to use "the Three Warfares" to describe China's national strategy as an important method to transform perceptions and belief of India on a higher level. It looks like it puts "sharp power" or "hybrid warfare" under "the Three Warfares" and emphasizes its psychological and spiritual threats. Indian strategists call it a "battle for the mind".

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<sup>37</sup> Lt Gen S. L. Narasimhan, "Battle For The Mind-China's Psychological Operations," *Defence Aviation Post*, December 5, 2016, <<https://defenceaviationpost.com/battle-mind-chinas->



**Figure 4. Battle For The Mind- China's Psychological Operations**

Source: Lt Gen S. L. Narasimhan, "Battle For The Mind-China's Psychological Operations."

The CCP's "Three Warfares" to the world has a fierce side and a kind side. As a complement to its rapidly aggressive military presence, the CCP attaches great importance to the opinions of the international community and often cleverly find the way to improve China's image. Using the most popular method, the Economist in 2017 reported that, China is spending billions to make the world love it. It spends some \$10bn a year on the project, according to David Shambaugh of George Washington University—one of the most extravagant programmes of state-sponsored image-building the world has ever seen. Shambaugh reckons that America spent less than \$670m on its "public diplomacy" in 2014.<sup>38</sup>

#### IV. How Do We Respond?

The challenge is how to protect Taiwan's democracy and civil society, and even the value of democratic freedom throughout the world.

The Member of European Parliament (MEP) released "Cybersecurity, What Think Tanks are Thinking" note. It said Russia and other countries had earlier been accused

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psychological-operations/>.

<sup>38</sup>."China is spending billions to make the world love it," *The Economist*, March 23, 2017, <<https://www.economist.com/china/2017/03/23/china-is-spending-billions-to-make-the-world-love-it>>.

of cyber-espionage, proliferation of fake news, and misuse of social media in some election campaigns.<sup>39</sup> This note offers links to 37 reports and commentaries (at least four of these papers are directly related to China) from major international think-tanks and research institutes on cyber-security and related issues. All of these papers contribute to our understanding of the CCP's public opinion warfare and how we should respond.

In accordance with Laura Jackson's suggestion, this article follows four points.<sup>40</sup>

*1. China relies heavily on the West's free press to transmit the effects of its propaganda campaign to a broader international audience, with international newspapers affording the same legitimacy to state-directed propaganda as to factual, non-partisan reporting. [...]*

*2. Western media news outlets should broadcast directly from the democratic free country. [...]*

*3. Global attention should be focused on China's challenge to international laws. [...]*

*4. China's attempts to change the facts on the ground (and in the air) by establishing new global value and order must be challenged.*

The measures to counter China's Three Warfares that Laura Jackson suggests mainly focus on public education, the responsibility of journalists, and the international regime. Especially "Western powers must send a clear message: no one nation can unilaterally rewrite international or customary laws."<sup>41</sup> In short, in countering China's Three Warfares, civil society and government must work together and coordinate and cooperate with the international community.

J. Michael Cole made a series of recommendations, suggesting that, if adopted, should help democratic societies to better address the challenge created by the CCP's

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<sup>39</sup> Marcin Grajewski, "Cybersecurity, What Think Tanks are Thinking," October 26, 2018, *European Parliamentary Research Service*, <[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)628301](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2018)628301)>.

<sup>40</sup> Laura Jackson, "The Three Warfares—China's New Way of War," pp. 12-13.

<sup>41</sup> Laura Jackson, "The Three Warfares—China's New Way of War," p. 13.



political warfare. Some of the solutions have already been implemented by countries that have become more aware of this threat. With China becoming a fact of life in our societies, universities and think tanks must first develop more rigorous curricula and research programs to ensure that we have sufficiently high-caliber expertise to address the challenges that arise from this new relationship.<sup>42</sup>

This might also be said to apply to Taiwan. From the perspective of specific laws and policies in mid-March 2018, a European Commission group published its final report on misinformation, drawing upon the input of experts from around the world who gathered to help the European Union figure out what to do about misinformation. Poynter has created a guide (see Figure 5) to existing attempts worldwide to legislate against what can broadly be referred to as online misinformation.<sup>43</sup>

It is an overdue development that are liberal democracies taking steps to establish a proper information verification mechanism that protects people and societies from the CCP's influencing attack, considering how bad media control policy has long fed the war of freedom of speech. It is also important to bear in mind that we must protect democracy and freedom by means of democracy and the rule of law. Liberal democracies can rely on the shared values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights, to demonstrate that the response taken by the government to counter the CCP's influencing efforts are effective, transparent, defensive and proportionate.

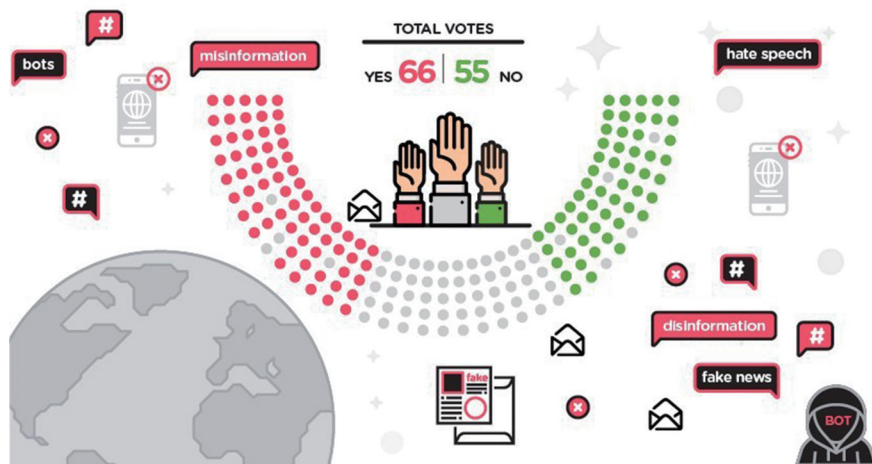
Discussions about public opinion warfare has led to a focus on media literacy more broadly, the values of liberty and the desire not to copy China's illiberalism. Liberal democracies can rely on the shared values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights and the commitment to freedom of speech. As Yascha Mounk has written, "the only viable approach to curbing the demand for such ideas is to dispel prejudices and educate citizens about the importance of liberal democratic institutions."<sup>44</sup>

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42. J. Michael Cole, "The Hard Edge Of Sharp Power: Understanding China's Influence Operations Abroad," pp. 4-22.

43. Daniel Funke & Daniela Flamini, "A guide to anti-misinformation actions around the world," May 2018, *The Poynter Institute*, <<https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/anti-misinformation-actions/>>.

As Insa Ewert notes, “The EU’s Strategy on China rightly emphasizes pragmatism in its relationship with China. This also entails taking Chinese initiatives seriously and finding entry points to engage within them.”<sup>45</sup> China and other countries had been accused of cyber-espionage, proliferation of fake news, and trying to hack into high tech companies in Europe. As a result, the European Commission issued the Fact Sheet said that the increase of China’s technological presence in the EU poses serious security threats that require urgent action to be taken at EU level. MEPs are also set to adopt the *EU Cybersecurity Act*, on March 2019. This will strengthen Europe’s cybersecurity, by setting up a European Cybersecurity Certificates scheme for products, processes and services.<sup>46</sup>



**Figure 5. A Guide to Anti-misinformation Actions around the World**

Source: Daniel Funke & Daniela Flamini, “A guide to anti-misinformation actions around the world.”

44. Yascha Mounk, “Germany’s risky law for stopping hate speech on Facebook and Twitter,” *The New Republic*, April 3, 2018, <<https://newrepublic.com/article/147364/verboten-germany-law-stopping-hate-speech-facebook-twitter>>.

45. Insa Ewert, “How To Fight China’s Sharp Power,” *ChinaFile*, August 20, 2018, <<http://www.chinafile.com/conversation/how-fight-chinas-sharp-power>>.

46. European Commission - Fact Sheet, “Questions and Answers – Commission recommends common EU approach to the security of 5G networks,” March 26, 2019, *European Parliament*, <[http://europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/media/ep-news/ep-news-2019/march2019/week11\\_plenary.html](http://europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/media/ep-news/ep-news-2019/march2019/week11_plenary.html)>.

The White has released a new cybersecurity strategy on September 20, 2018, "outlining the steps the federal government is taking to advance an open, secure, interoperable, and reliable cyberspace."<sup>47</sup> John Bolton, national security adviser to United States President Donald Trump, "promised to cooperate with allies, including Taiwan, to tackle cyber attacks from adversary countries,"<sup>48</sup> as one news report put it.

One blogger notes that "[g]eopolitical concerns between the West and China are being accelerated and pushed to the fore as the era of 5G network upgrades approach, as well as by ongoing tensions between the U.S. and China over trade."<sup>49</sup> It is also clear that Taiwan has to have an approach to this challenge. Indeed, many cases demonstrate Taiwan's vulnerability to disinformation generated in China. Understanding how to defend freedom of expression and safeguard Taiwanese people from being manipulated by systemic disinformation attacks has become a crucial item in the public agenda.<sup>50</sup>

On November 16, 2018, *Taiwan Today* reported that "President Tsai Ing-wen inaugurated the National Communications and Cyber Security Center (see Figure 6), describing the facility as a milestone in government efforts to safeguard the country's information infrastructure."<sup>51</sup>

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47. U.S. Department of State, "Release of the 2018 National Cyber Strategy," *U.S. Department of State*, September 20, 2018, <<https://translations.state.gov/2018/09/20/release-of-the-2018-national-cyber-strategy/>>.

48. Chiang Chin-yeh & Flor Wang, "U.S. will team up with allies to tackle cyber attacks: Bolton," *Focus Taiwan*, September 21, 2018, <<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201809210012.aspx>>.

49. Natasha Lomas, "Europe is prepared to rule over 5G cybersecurity," *TechCrunch*, February 25, 2019, <<https://techcrunch.com/2019/02/25/europe-is-prepared-to-rule-over-5g-cybersecurity/>>.

50. Lin I-fan, "Made-in-China fake news overwhelms Taiwan," *Global Voices*, December 14, 2018, <<https://www.stopfake.org/en/made-in-china-fake-news-overwhelms-taiwan/>>.

51. "Tsai inaugurates National Communications and Cyber Security Center in Taipei," *Taiwan Today*, November 16, 2018, <<https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2,6,10,15,18&post=145563>>.



**Figure 6. President Tsai Ing-wen is Inaugurating the National Communications and Cyber Security Center**

Source: “Tsai inaugurates National Communications and Cyber Security Center in Taipei.”

In the past few years, China’s various coercive approaches toward Taiwan have been serious and intensive. Taiwan’s policy toward China has shifted to defense and protection since Tsai Ing-wen became president, and military deterrence and economic autonomy, together with expanding democratic cooperation, are expected to shape Taiwan’s safety protection network.

According to the president, information security is at the heart of national security and development, since fortified data systems are essential for protecting vital infrastructure, boosting the digital economy, fostering cutting-edge sectors and promoting online governance.<sup>52</sup> Further, President Tsai reportedly pledged “to make Taiwan a reliable digital nation.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> “Tsai inaugurates National Communications and Cyber Security Center in Taipei.”

<sup>53</sup> “President Tsai pledges to make Taiwan a reliable digital nation, attract investment,” *Taiwan News*, May 8, 2019, <<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3696940>>.

Like other liberal democracies, Taiwan protects the legal freedom of speech. As Harsin argues, fake news is not completely false. It will mix true and false information to misleading ends which captures attention and set agendas to divide audiences, and fake news produces false belief and confusion.<sup>54</sup> It can be hard to identify and prosecute those responsible. In response, Taiwan's government should strengthen its fact-checking mechanism and capability, offer a top-down guidance on the issue and legislate or amend the law to punish fake news.

Further, as Ying Yu Lin has said, "relevant government agencies should develop their spokespeople's crisis management capabilities and establish communication channels with conventional media and social media so that they can immediately make clarifying statements, stop misinformation from spreading, and prevent Taiwan from being manipulated by outside forces who want to create internal unrest on the island."<sup>55</sup>

In addition to strengthening crisis management capabilities and communication channels, the government must also work with regional and global liberal democracies to establish common defense mechanism for countering CCP's public opinion warfare. This includes information exchange and mutual legal assistance. In the context of globalization, the battlefield of public opinion warfare is also transnational, which makes a need for strengthened forms of international cooperation. As a result, no single country can protect itself national security, interdependence can guarantee the security of every country.

Finally, Singh notes that the key to countering 3Ws lies in developing flexible and supple responses in changing political and social conditions. All available civilian assets and resources will need to be integrated to develop the tools and techniques to counter the 3Ws.<sup>56</sup>

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54. Jayson Harsin, "A Critical Guide to Fake News: From Comedy to Tragedy," *Pouvoirs*, January 2018, No. 164, *Cairn-int.info*, <[https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E\\_POUV\\_164\\_0099--a-critical-guide-to-fake-news-from.htm](https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_POUV_164_0099--a-critical-guide-to-fake-news-from.htm)>.

55. Lin Ying Yu, "China's Hybrid Warfare and Taiwan: How China could use 'fake news' and digital warfare in its preparations for engagement with Taiwan."

56. Abhijit Singh, "China's 'Three Warfares' and India," p. 40.

And as Michael Cole notes: Public education, media literacy campaigns, collaboration with governments/private sector, reducing media polarization and emphasizing responsible editorial/fact-checking practices in professional media, can mitigate the appeal, spread and impact of disinformation.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> J. Michael Cole, “The Impact of China’s Disinformation Operations Against Taiwan.”