Concerns are mounting in Washington and other capitals around the globe about the negative aspects of China’s growing power and reach. Beyond pursuing economic and military competition, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) government also seek to contend in the realm of image and ideas by extending and intensifying its influence—some would say interference—abroad.¹

For example, in June 2017, the head of one of Australia’s intelligence agencies warned of foreign interference on “an unprecedented scale,”² obliquely referring to China. At the end of the year, Australian Federal Senator Sam Dastyari resigned from Parliament after evidence emerged that he had not only received political donations and personal financial support from Huang Xiangmo, a Chinese businessman with close ties to Chinese authorities, but had also expressed support for Chinese government positions on the contested South China Sea issue contrary to the positions of his own opposition party and the Australian government.³ Australia’s close neighbor New Zealand has also been subjected to objectionable influence activities from the Chinese Party-state despite a much more muted government response.⁴

Moreover, at the February 2018 Munich Security Conference, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel warned that China was “constantly trying to test and undermine the unity of the European Union (EU) through a policy of ‘sticks and carrots.’”⁵ He also assessed that Beijing was using its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) specifically to promote a system of values different from the West’s, one which is “not founded on freedom, democracy and individual human rights.”⁶ Some analysts have even argued that greater access to and potentially greater...
political control in Eastern Europe could be part of a Chinese strategy to establish a sphere of influence in the Eurasian “heartland.” Concerns over Chinese influence-projection have also grown in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as in non-Western powers in Asia and Africa.

Left unchecked, China’s influence activities could undermine aspects of the international rules-based order, weaken alliance solidarity, erode trust in U.S. leadership, legitimize the PRC’s authoritarian system of government, and induce the acceptance of Beijing’s policy preferences on such issues as its territorial disputes with neighbors and the legitimacy of CCP rule. This would ultimately contribute to a strategic environment that is far more favorable to Chinese interests.

As a result, the debate about how to respond has intensified. In Australia, proposed new Parliamentary legislation to counter foreign interference has sparked strong reactions, including dueling open letters signed by dozens of scholars arguing whether or not the laws are motivated by anti-Chinese racism. On the other side of the Pacific, Harvard professor Joseph Nye has argued that democracies should “tak[e] care not to overreact” and that “openness” remained their best defense. That is an important point, but reliance on openness alone will not suffice since the relative openness of liberal democracies has also proven to be a vulnerability in the face of objectionable CCP and PRC influence activities. While there are some initial indications of pushback within liberal democracies against such activities, a more concerted and unified strategy is needed to address this challenge.

This article puts forward such a strategy, starting with three important developments that underlie and help motivate the Chinese Party-state’s influence activities abroad and that have emerged as serious policy challenges for liberal democracies: China’s well-resourced and increasingly intensive influence activities; divisions among U.S. allies and partners about what to do; and a diminishment of traditional American leadership under the current U.S. administration.

The article first covers China’s influence activities: what are they, what drives them, and how do they work? It is essential to understand the challenge, neither exaggerating nor trivializing it. Second, we note the divergence of views—both within and across liberal democracies in Asia and Europe—about how best to respond. This shortfall has proven an opportunity for Beijing. Third, we consider the role of the United States. U.S. leadership and resources must be part of an effective strategy involving American allies and friends to counter the negative aspects of China’s growing influence-projection abroad. Yet, the United States is at risk of losing many of the advantages it could bring to this competition—
for example its global and regional political and economic leadership—and thereby ceding the field to China. We conclude with a range of practical measures to counter Chinese influence activities and strengthen the resilience and deterrence of liberal democracies in the face of this complex challenge.

**Defining the Challenge**

As concerns with Chinese Party-state influence activities have grown, so too has the nomenclature used to describe them. Analysts have pointed to the PRC’s “extra-territorial policy,” “influence-projection,” “sharp power,” “long arm,” “authoritarian advance,” “interference,” and “soft power with Chinese characteristics.” This burst in taxonomy has rightly drawn attention to the negative aspects of rising Chinese power and influence in a broad sense. However, these terms often remain vaguely defined and their wide scope makes it difficult to distinguish different forms of Chinese influence activity, differentiate across a spectrum of risk, and prioritize effective responses. This can obfuscate comprehensive analysis and invites counter-claims that such scrutiny of the Chinese Party-state is driven by an anti-China bias.

In contrast, this article focuses on the “united front” (统一战线) concept used by Chinese authorities themselves to describe CCP-PRC overseas influence activities. By our definition, overseas united front activities are those that seek to bolster the legitimacy, longevity, and strategic interests of the CCP by promoting and protecting the Party’s image, record, and policy preferences including through monitoring, deflection and suppression of criticism and contrary positions. This kind of united front work is primarily aimed at shaping the political environment within target countries to achieve outcomes favorable to Chinese Party-state preferences, both in its standing at home and its strategic interests abroad. This narrower focus allows for a sharper analysis of the challenge.

Our analysis is therefore not based on the concept of China’s “political warfare,” which is largely an instrument of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to project influence abroad through the use of “three warfares” (三战): “public opinion warfare” (舆论战), “psychological warfare” (心理战), and “legal warfare” (法律战). Primarily economic and espionage activities undertaken by Chinese authorities—such as targeting investments to access highly advanced and sensitive technologies for national economic and military gain or ramping up covert efforts in cyberspace to access sensitive corporate, technical and individual personal information—would also mostly fall outside of our united front definition. Nor would we readily include traditional “hard power” tools such as military threats and economic coercion to induce countries to accept China’s policy preferences, or to punish them for noncompliance.
That said, intentional derivative political effects of primarily economic activity should be considered a part of united front work. For example, BRI is more than just a massive infrastructure development program but has political dimensions as well such as currying favor with leaders through political and economic indebtedness, entrenching China-friendly regulatory and procurement practices, promoting the PRC model of sociopolitical development, establishing BRI arbitration courts based on PRC juridical standards, and funding BRI-related think tanks and research projects, all of which helps shape the overseas political environment in ways which favor the interests of the Chinese Party-state. Similarly, foreign espionage activities can be targeted in a way to gain information and leverage which in turn can be used to shape political outcomes to China’s benefit.

While there are local nuances in China’s united front approach towards individual countries, there are some general trends and instruments that can be observed, including:

- establishing Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms, which at the end of 2017 numbered 517 and 1,076 respectively in 142 countries and regions;\(^\text{13}\)
- monitoring speech and activities of the growing numbers of Chinese students studying abroad—now about 800,000—as well as their foreign professors, while supporting the patriotic and student-monitoring activities of Chinese Students and Scholars Associations on university campuses worldwide;\(^\text{14}\)
- expanding China’s state-run media footprint across the globe through broadcast, print and digital platforms;
- increasing investment and expanding the mandate for the CCP’s United Front Work Department, International Liaison Department, and the Propaganda Department;
- intimidating and/or apprehending individuals abroad who promote views at odds with official CCP and PRC government positions; and
- cultivating current political leaders and other elites and opinion-shapers in liberal and illiberal societies alike through financial and other inducements.

United front activities are not merely soft power with Chinese characteristics, nor simply a “charm offensive” looking to promote the Chinese model of authoritarian politics and statist economics. Channeling President Xi, Zhang Yijiong, executive vice-minister of the United Front Work Department, remarked about the United Front’s mission in 2017: “If the Chinese people want to be powerful and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, then under the leadership of the Communist Party we need to fully and better understand the use of this ‘magic weapon.’”\(^\text{15}\) Under Xi, this work has become ever better-resourced and more active: the United Front Work Department, for example, has gained in
political stature, mandate and staff, including the addition of 40,000 new cadres, and the Propaganda Department—which is the ultimate arbiter of official Chinese media outputs—has overseen an enormous expansion of China’s official media presence abroad in print, broadcast, and online formats in multiple languages. Of particular importance, a massive government reorganization approved at the March 2017 National People’s Congress (NPC) will further consolidate the country’s extensive international united front, propaganda and media networks, while establishing new, well-resourced international media platforms, all under direct Party control. These changes will have a profound impact on China’s influence operations abroad. One of the big winners in the reorganization looks to be the United Front Work Department (UFWD). The UFWD will absorb three bodies formerly under the State Council, with responsibilities for ethnic minority, religious and overseas Chinese affairs. This step marks a further consolidation of united front operations under the CCP, presumably so that such outreach will be more coordinated, effective, and aligned with Party interests and objectives.

In addition to further empowering the UFWD, the NPC also agreed to sweeping structural changes to the country’s media and propaganda system. The Party’s power to oversee China’s media was given a further boost when the regulatory responsibilities of the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television were “reassigned” to the CCP’s Propaganda Department. And in a further sign of a Party power-grab, a massive new media conglomerate was formed under the name “Voice of China,” which will amalgamate China Central Television (and its sprawling international arm, China Global Television Network), China National Radio, and China Radio International, all under the control of the CCP Propaganda Department.

Xinhua, China’s official state news agency and a formal part of the CCP apparatus, now has some 170 foreign bureaus; China Radio International has nearly 70 overseas affiliate stations, 18 online radio programs, and broadcasts in 61 languages; and China Central Television (CCTV) beams into 171 countries with 70 foreign bureaus. Newer platforms such as social media giants Weibo, WeChat, and TencentQQ, which are monitored for content by Chinese authorities, are increasingly important conduits of news and information for Chinese language-users around the world. In expanding their international presence, these and other major Chinese media outlets are following Xi’s call for the Party and media to “strengthen the building of our international communication capacity, increasing our international discourse power and focusing the proper
telling of China’s story . . . working to build flagship external propaganda media that have rather strong reputations internationally.”

In focusing on these united front activities, four considerations are worth noting. First, our definition goes well beyond the activities carried out by the similarly-named CCP United Front Work Department. Our definition comes closest to that of China scholar Anne-Marie Brady. She defines the united front as “China’s political influence activities” with the aim to “guide, buy, or coerce political influence abroad.” As such, united front work encompasses the efforts of the CCP United Front Work Department, as well as other Chinese Party-state organs and their subsidiaries such as the CCP Propaganda Department, CCP International Liaison Department, Chinese state-owned media, State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, and the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, among many others.

Second, some united front work can be seen as relatively benign—for example, media programming acclaiming the accomplishments of ancient China. In contrast, this article focuses primarily on the negative aspects of united front work, which are illegal, undermine the target society’s values and norms, legitimate methods which maintain the CCP’s one-Party rule, and champion the strategic interests of the Chinese Party-state to the detriment of the national interests of the target country. For the United States, its allies, and other liberal democracies, this includes efforts to undermine the rules-based system which has ordered international affairs for the past 70 years, foster division within and among U.S. allies and partners, and challenge fundamental values such as freedom of speech, media and academic inquiry.

Third, focusing on united front work is not intended to downplay other strategic, military, and economic challenges related to China’s growing influence and influence operations abroad. Rather, it is important to distinguish united front activities precisely because they are poorly understood and most difficult to monitor, assess and counter.

Fourth, use of the term “united front” needs to enter the wider public policy discourse, because of its increasing prioritization within China and growing impact. Chinese authorities cannot deny such activities: they have been part and parcel of the Chinese Party-state domestic and foreign policy apparatus since the founding of the PRC in 1949 and for decades prior. However, under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, united front work has gained considerably higher political priority. Tellingly, in July 2015 it was announced that Xi would add to his portfolio of chairmanships by heading a newly established Central United Front Work Leading Group.
In sum, there is no avoiding the fact that China’s united front activities are comprehensive and well-resourced to support a foreign policy agenda that presents growing challenges to the interests of the United States and its allies. Encouragingly, the United States and some of its allies have begun to push back on Chinese influence activities, but having a clear understanding of the united front will be central to crafting a more coordinated, long-term response.

Addressing Allied Division

An important first step in formulating a response would be addressing the division among U.S. allies on how to deal with this challenge. Arguably, one key motive behind China’s united front activities is to weaken ties that bind the U.S. alliance system together, especially in the Asia-Pacific where U.S. alliances pose the greatest potential challenge to Chinese interests. The PRC has already made significant strides to shape the strategic, economic and political environment of U.S. allies and friends such as Australia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and others to China’s benefit.

It is easy to see why it is difficult for traditional U.S. allies to deal with Beijing’s united front operations. Most have come to face a strategic dilemma: while the United States remains their principal security ally, China has become their major trading partner and an increasingly important source of inbound investment. This “dual hierarchy” is particularly nettlesome for U.S. allies in Asia where the United States remains the dominant military power, but China has emerged as the increasingly preeminent economic power. China is now the largest trading partner for Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. Beijing is also the number one source of imports for the EU and the EU’s second largest export destination. Moreover, China is becoming a progressively more important source of foreign investment for many U.S. allies. For instance, Australia ranks just behind the United States as the second-largest destination for Chinese overseas direct investment (ODI), with an accumulated US$90 billion in new investments including in mining, infrastructure, commercial property, and agribusiness since 2007. Chinese investment in the EU has surged considerably in recent years, from 1.6 billion euros in 2010 to a record 35 billion euros by 2016.

China has also profited from trends in international politics that provide fertile ground for its united front strategy. The current illiberal trend globally has supported the emergence of more nationalistic or quasi-authoritarian governments among U.S. allies and partners in Europe and Asia, which find much to appreciate in the Chinese model. Examples include Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Turkey, Thailand and the Philippines. Cash-strapped nations such as
Greece have also leaned more heavily on China for financial infusions. Meanwhile, the British government explicitly stated that growing ties with China was regarded as a key goal given its impending exit from the EU. While most of these countries certainly harbor increasing concerns about China’s regional and global ambitions, its strong-arm tactics, its repressive political system, and official Chinese influence activities in their societies, they still wish to gain the benefits of active and constructive engagement with the PRC, often in terms of trade and investment.

However, there is a significant price tag. Most prominently, regional institutions in both Europe and Asia have shown signs of disunity on critical policy issues. For instance, in June 2017, Greece vetoed an EU condemnation of China’s human rights record at the United Nations, a move directly attributed to huge Chinese business investments in the country. Addressing French ambassadors in August 2017, German Foreign Minister Gabriel thus warned against Beijing’s attempt to “divide Europe,” pointing to China’s growing influence on Eastern and Southeastern European countries. During a visit to China in January 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron voiced concerns that some European countries were much more open to Chinese interests, “sometimes at the expense of a European interest,” while German Chancellor Angela Merkel insisted that China should not link its economic investments in the Western Balkans to political demands. Moreover, in the Asia-Pacific, China’s ability to prevent the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) from developing a unified position on the South China Sea dispute has been well-documented. This has been the result of Chinese business investments and united front activities in a number of Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines and Myanmar. In these countries, united front work has helped support and sustain illiberal developments.

Fixing America’s Leadership Problem

The United States has a major leadership problem which offers Beijing further opportunities to expand its united front operations. U.S. benign leadership—based on a considerable amount of soft power, economic leadership and military capability—is arguably the best way to mitigate China’s united front and other influence activities. Yet, the strategic distraction of American resources toward Iraq and Afghanistan under President George W. Bush and the shortfalls of the Obama administration’s “pivot” to Asia resulted in ceding ground to China’s growing influence in the region. As two former Obama administration officials recently concluded, the United States fundamentally misread the prospects for China’s “peaceful rise” and liberalization, and as a result of “wishful thinking”
and “strategic distraction,” the United States “now faces its most dynamic and formidable competitor in modern history.”

Nevertheless, despite these shortfalls, there was never any doubt about the fundamental commitment of the United States to the liberal international order until the Trump administration. Now, the United States is at serious risk of losing its status as the “indispensable superpower.” In advocating for “America First,” President Trump has questioned the value of U.S. alliances, withdrawn from the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), reconsidered Washington’s commitment to other multilateral and bilateral free trade arrangements, walked away from global climate change negotiations, and has been supportive of a Russian leadership known to be challenging security, democratic processes, and inter-allied cohesion in Europe and beyond. His threat in March 2018 to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, which would hit EU countries hardest, further complicated U.S.-EU relations and angered critical allies such as Canada. When the administration followed through on those threats to impose stiff tariffs in May, the EU, Canada, and Mexico responded in shock and vowed retaliation.

Recent Gallup polls illustrate the magnitude of the challenge facing U.S. global leadership. In 2017, the average global approval rating for American leadership across 134 countries dropped to 30 percent from 48 percent in 2016, a record low for this global survey. This put the approval of U.S. leadership on par with China, and marginally higher than that of Russia. Expressed disapproval of U.S. leadership, at 43 percent on average worldwide, was considerably higher than the average for Russia (36 percent), China (30 percent) and Germany (25 percent). Tellingly, the biggest losses of support for U.S. leadership occurred among America’s most long-standing allies. In Canada, approval for U.S. leadership collapsed from 60 to 20 percent. In Europe, 18 NATO allies saw substantial drops in the approval ratings of U.S. leadership led by countries such as Portugal (51 percent drop), Belgium (44 percent), Norway (42 percent), France (28 percent), the United Kingdom (26 percent), and Germany (21 percent). In the Asia-Pacific, a similar story unfolded in 2017. Approval ratings for the U.S. presidency fell to new lows in Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore—all dropping by more than 30 percent—with ratings in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan also posting substantial declines in the double digits.

With such levels of doubt and disapproval, a U.S.-led effort to forge a common approach among liberal democracies to counter Chinese united front operations will face difficulties from the start, even if Washington were willing to pursue such a strategy. The Trump administration’s first National Security Strategy (NSS), published in late 2017, did little to address concerns about U.S.
leadership. The NSS, along with the subsequently issued National Defense Strategy, both identified China as a major challenger, but did not prove that Washington has a clear understanding of the Chinese challenge itself. American allies are not convinced that the United States is marshaling the requisite diplomatic, economic, and military assets to meet the challenge, or that it correctly judges allied interests vis-à-vis China.

Many allies view the Trump administration, not China, as the nation most keen on “revising” the liberal political and economic order, along with the U.S. alliance system underpinning it. Allies are also concerned with the fiscal responsibility, spending priorities, and policy preferences of the Trump administration. The president has embraced large tax cuts, protectionist trade measures, and deficit spending while cutting the resources supporting other critical aspects of U.S. national power such as the Department of State and the Agency for International Development (USAID). The financial measures alone create enormous uncertainties and pressures on the country’s long-term fiscal stability and economic wherewithal. This should weigh heavily on the minds of U.S. partners—not to mention on the minds of American leadership—as they contemplate a far tougher official U.S. strategy to confront China. This is especially true considering the Trump administration’s stated willingness to confront a power of China’s economic size, growth prospects and burgeoning overseas influence capabilities of its own.

**Toward a Comprehensive Response**

While not all U.S. allies and partners face the same kind of Chinese united front activities in the same way, both unilateral and coordinated responses are possible for the United States and likeminded partners to take. Efforts already underway require further strengthening and harmonization. Some responses have been slow to take shape and will require greater consensus both within individual countries and multilaterally. All of these responses should seek greater American commitment and engagement. Moreover, to be politically effective and sustainable, these responses must avoid demonizing and alienating those citizens and residents of Chinese descent living in liberal societies around the world who share the growing concerns about united front and other influence activities of the Chinese Party-state.

First, much more can be done at the level of strategic cooperation, consultations, intelligence sharing, and building greater resilience across like-minded countries in support of the liberal political and economic order. To begin, the United States and its allies should give higher priority to holding regular consultations at senior political and operational levels to share
experiences and intelligence in relation to Chinese united front and other influence activities. These discussions should also exchange views on appropriate joint responses.

The United States and its allies should also give priority to reinvigorating their relationships and to bringing other likeminded partners on board. The proposal to establish an economic development and infrastructure investment partnership among Australia, India, Japan, and the United States is a case in point. Such a partnership would see the four major democratic societies of the Indo-Pacific work together to help contribute to the massive economic and infrastructure needs of the region. But sustained U.S. commitment to these ideas will be crucial if they are to move from rhetoric to reality. The concepts of the “Quad” and a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” have also been vigorously promoted by Japan in the past as a means to bring together like-minded liberal governments to counterbalance China. Positively, these concepts have gained greater traction under the Trump administration, though its ultimate commitment to these partnerships remains unclear. If it were to proceed, such a partnership could aim to develop common understandings of and responses to Chinese united front and other influence activities.

In the absence of sufficient U.S. leadership, it will also be important for American allies and partners to work among themselves to sustain the liberal international order through economic, political and other government-to-government cooperation. Pursuit of the recently signed Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), as the successor to the TPP, stands out as a critically important example of such cooperation, which includes the option for the United States to join at a later stage. Other examples include the conclusion of an EU-Japan free trade agreement and the deepening of Australia-Japan defense cooperation. Japan and Australia are particularly keen to push complementary and competitive options alongside China’s BRI for the development of the region’s economies while ensuring continued American engagement in the Indo-Pacific. Australia even resisted Chinese invitations to take part in BRI, and while Japan expressed its interest to do so in June 2017, it has also been promoting alternatives including the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIGB) and the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC).

Second, liberal societies can do more within their own legislative and regulatory systems to counter unwanted and sensitive activities by the Chinese government. A good example is Australia, where in part as a response to concerns over Chinese united front efforts, the parliament has taken up a set of new bills intended to counter foreign interference in Australian politics and society. This new security legislation includes banning most foreign political donations; expanding the scope of espionage charges to include individuals who possess or receive sensitive
information (in addition to those who pass on such information); targeting activities which are not expressly espionage, but which aim to covertly meddle in Australian democratic processes; and creating a publicly available register to catalogue lobbyists for foreign entities such as governments and corporations, including information on who they are working for.

Countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, Germany, and the UK have also begun to scrutinize Chinese investment more closely, especially in the high-technology and advanced manufacturing sectors. In the United States, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) rejected the acquisition of Lattice Semiconductor—a U.S. manufacturer of advanced integrated circuitry and other programmable logic devices—by a private firm supported by a PRC state-owned asset manager. Great Britain put in place a specialized inspection process to oversee a research facility operated by Huawei, the Chinese telecom giant. Following its decision to block a Chinese takeover of the chip equipment maker Aixtron in 2016, the German government in 2017 further expanded its ability to scrutinize and block similar takeovers in the high-tech sector. Moreover, former Danish Prime Minister and Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Anders Fogh Rasmussen has argued for tighter EU-wide regulations governing Chinese investment to deny Chinese entities the chance to exploit the weaker regulatory systems and foreign investment review mechanisms of some European countries to gain access to potentially sensitive technologies. All of these decisions and proposals point to the need for greater inter-allied consultation and coordination not only in relation to sensitive technologies per se, but also how and whether such acquisitions affect political choices within partner countries.

In this regard, it is critical for European countries to develop effective strategies to counter Chinese efforts to undermine the EU’s ability to speak with one voice and to remain a coherent actor. For example, there is a need for European policymakers to understand that China’s investments and other business activities in Eastern Europe can have the political effect of weakening Europe’s resolve and unity as an important global actor maintaining a liberal rules-based order. Despite the problematic trends toward illiberalism among Eastern European states, major European powers such as Germany, France and the UK need to offer stronger incentives to keep Eastern Europe firmly anchored in the West and committed to liberal values.
Need for a Balanced but Serious Response

Future responses to Beijing’s united front activities will need to strike a difficult balance between taking this challenge seriously and avoiding alienation of persons of Chinese heritage resident abroad who are not engaged in united front activities. Nevertheless, concerns about united front and other Chinese influence operations are justified. Chinese influence activities present a complex and worrisome strategic challenge to the United States and its allies, making it imperative that Washington and its allies work internally and cooperatively to counter it. To increase the chance of success, Washington has work to do in rebuilding and reassuring U.S. allied relationships through investments in diplomacy and defense, demonstrating commitment to free-trade arrangements along with the political solidarity and economic benefits they bring to like-minded partners, and providing convincing leadership to friends in support of the liberal international order.

The world has come to know China’s economic competitiveness. China has also begun to loom larger as a geopolitical competitor to the United States, its neighbors and other countries. Under Xi Jinping, in a twenty-first century battle for hearts and minds, China is now investing powerful resources to compete in the realm of ideas and political influence. Until the United States and its allies can show a more unified response to the negative aspects of China’s united front and other influence activities, expect Beijing to continue exploiting a remarkable window of opportunity.

Notes


6. Ibid.


11. See note 1.


23. G. John Eikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” Political Science Quarterly 131, no. 1 (2016). While this article analyzes the “dual hierarchy” in East Asia, U.S. allies in Europe face a similar situation.


