

Measuring a masked challenge

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F. Andy Messing Jr. & Kurt E. Fischman, SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The war on terrorism is topping U.S. national security priorities. Meaning, America will continue to aggressively pursue terrorists and disrupt their decentralized organizations. However, rather than these "evildoers," the future shows the true challenge will be the meteoric rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a "major global competitor."

In order to sustain their growth and modernization, the Chinese will be required to project economic, sociopolitical and military power beyond their existing territories. One glaring example is their encroachment upon the Philippine-owned and resource-rich Spratly Islands. China fully recognizes this will inevitably infringe upon vital U.S., Japanese and Korean interests as this maritime trade route becomes jeopardized. As a result, China is preparing psychologically, intellectually and physically for future hostilities.

However, what is widely unknown or dismissed among China watchers is that their military scholars have conceptualized a new paradigm regarding the conduct of future warfare. In conflict, the Chinese will engage in a multidimensional attack designed to induce strategic paralysis within our domestic infrastructure and forward deployed forces. This type of full-spectrum warfare transcends the traditional concepts of what is, and what is not, the known battlefield. Accordingly, the Chinese are developing the interlocking capability to prevail in air, sea, space, cyber and even extended economic warfare contests.

This type of warfare lends itself to one of Sun Tzu's fundamental precepts of warfare: "Avoid strength, attack weakness." In developing asymmetric lines of attack designed to paralyze America's strategic battlefield-information platforms, China understands we cannot fight if we are deaf, dumb and blind. Thus, asymmetry will allow the PRC to negate America's conventional air and sea war-fighting capabilities, as clearly we could not engage them on land. Senior Chinese military officers Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui write: "Asymmetry as a principle is an important fulcrum for tipping the normal rules of war. Understanding and employing the principle of asymmetry correctly allows us always to find and exploit an enemy's soft spots."

The PRC is also envisioning nonmilitary forms of warfare as well, affecting our national security. China has been, and will continue to be engaged in an economic and trade war with the United States. Victory in this invisible contest will allow China to favorably shape and manipulate the geopolitical environment of the next half-century. Consider: the U.S. now runs an estimated \$130 billion trade deficit with the three Chinas (Red China, Hong Kong and Taiwan). Taiwan is included in this formula because of their close economic interface with the mainland, and their eventual absorption.

A manifestation of this subtle attack is an overwhelming inundation of products into the American economy. This is seen at Wal-Mart and even our military post exchanges (PX's), showing that the U.S. is addicted to the PRC's cheap goods and labor. Accordingly, it is now impossible for the U.S. to abandon its policy of one-sided engagement, regardless of the growing threat emanating from an expansive Chinese defense modernization just reported by a closely-held Department of Defense document. This inability to contain China until it is too late is a hallmark of Beijing's grand strategy.

Historically, China's perception of its borders has spawned military engagements with surrounding neighbors such as the Indians, Russians, Vietnamese and Filipinos. Our policymakers do not understand that this need to expand will ultimately carry over into outer space. Beijing will inevitably enforce the space above the country as sovereign Chinese territory. American and other countries' businesses will be made to pay a heavy tax to operate commercial satellites above China, and intrusions by foreign military satellites will be viewed as acts of aggression.

The Chinese as a prelude, have already begun to develop the capacity to strike space-based surveillance, reconnaissance and communication systems in an attempt to exploit the profound U.S. vulnerability to anti-satellite systems.

China is also aware that our domestic infrastructure is information-dependent and vulnerable. Beijing believes the computer hacker is a 21st century network warrior. The Chinese have openly discussed mounting a decisive cyber strike upon telecommunication systems, financial networks and electrical power grids.

What is commonly not told to the American public however is that much of this strategic information attack may come from within the United States. Chinese agent provocateurs, living here legally or illegally, will initiate its execution.

As the United States continues to flail at al Qaeda, the Chinese are patiently waiting to fulfill their "manifest destiny" and take their place as the dominant nation throughout the world. Thus far, we have not proven to be psychologically prepared to face this. If we fail to accommodate for the future on better terms, we maybe forced to make a very unpleasant choice: either fight to survive, or appease what will soon be a third of world's population.

F. Andy Messing Jr., a retired major in the U.S. Army, is executive director of the National Defense Council Foundation and has been to 27 conflict areas abroad. Kurt E. Fischman is a research assistant at NDCF.