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China's expanding involvement in global Affairs pose significant implications for the power structure of the international system generally and its influence in the Pacific more specifically. China has become a more active and important regional actor and competitor in the Pacific beyond its immediate sphere of control. China's rise and aspirations necessitate New Zealand to consider what challenges and, what is the role of New Zealand n the Pacific. Diplomatically and in terms of influence, China has altered the traditional New Zealand influence in the South Pacific. As New Zealand and the and the broader Pacific are deemed part of the Chinese periphery , New Zealand faces a threat from coercion and deference.

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Executive Summary

Title: A Karakia for the Pacific: The threat from China and New Zealand's Strategic response.

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Thesis: Understanding and effectively responding to the rise of China constitutes one of the most critical challenges facing New Zealand. The Chinese have signaled strategic intent that threatens the status of the traditional power in the Pacific. This takes the form of a battle of influence that New Zealand must identify the threat and develop an over-arching strategy to deter. This will require a renewed and aligned approach to national security and enhancing alliances in the Pacific to maintain the current balance of power and influence.

Discussion: China's continuing rapid economic growth and expanding involvement in global affairs pose significant implications for the power structure of the international system generally and its influence in the Pacific more specifically. China has now become a more active and important regional actor and competitor in the Pacific region beyond their immediate sphere of control. China's rise and aspirations necessitate New Zealand to consider what challenges, and what is the role of New Zealand in the Pacific under this evolving paradigm. China's growth affects diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) domains and exposes weaknesses in the strategic policy of New Zealand. China's actions and policies put China at odds with traditional powers in the South Pacific. Diplomatically and in terms of influence, China has altered the traditional New Zealand influence in the South Pacific. As New Zealand and the broader Pacific are deemed part of the Chinese strategic periphery, New Zealand faces a threat from coercion and deference. New Zealand remains committed to the maintenance of an open, rules-based international order, including resolution of disputes through peaceful means rather than coercion or the use of force. New Zealand faces multi-prong threats from undesirable foreign influence, traditional political and economic espionage. All of which could be exploited by China to usurp influence in the Pacific. New Zealand has experienced all of these but has been reactive rather than postured to address through the lack of a coherent China strategy.

Conclusion: New Zealand requires a China strategy that amalgamates the existing military and diplomatic forward-looking strategic documents, and incorporates private business to address an aligned economic plan. Only through a coherent strategy can New Zealand protect its public and private sectors from a coercive Chinese threat. Additionally, such a policy would provide a clear understanding of the New Zealand position, articulate goals, and regionally inform New Zealand dependencies, allies, and partners. Such a policy will connect New Zealand to the broader U.S. strategy for countering China in the Pacific. Through such a position, New Zealand will retain regional leadership and influence.

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Introduction

China is a regional power in the South China Sea and a global influence on the rise. Economic reforms have integrated China into regional and global production networks, dramatically increasing China's national power. China has now become a more active and important regional actor and competitor in the Pacific region beyond their immediate sphere of control. China's rise and aspirations necessitate New Zealand to consider what challenges, and what is the role of New Zealand in the Pacific under this evolving paradigm. China's growth affects diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) domains and exposes weaknesses in the strategic policy of New Zealand. China's actions and policies put China at odds with traditional powers in the South Pacific. Diplomatically and in terms of influence, China has altered the traditional New Zealand influence in the South Pacific. China is now one of the largest aid donors in the region, challenging Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, both in terms of funding and influence.¹ Militarily China's control of the South China Sea has raised the cost of military action within the 'first island chain.' The second-order effect is the Pacific has become an area for increased Gray Zone activity and sets the conditions for movement into the broader Pacific, maritime, and air commons as an increasingly important area of influence.

China's rise has come challenges for New Zealand through Chinese overtures to Pacific nations. This paper will discuss China's involvement in the South Pacific within the context of China's Grand Strategy, the challenges to New Zealand across the DIME construct, and what New Zealand should consider in terms of an innovative and All of Government (AoG) China Strategy. Understanding and effectively responding to the rise of China constitutes one of the most critical challenges facing New Zealand.² The Chinese have signaled strategic intent that

threatens the status of the traditional power in the Pacific. This takes the form of a battle of influence that New Zealand must identify the threat and develop an over-arching strategy to deter. It will require a renewed and aligned approach to national security and enhancing alliances in the Pacific to maintain the current balance of power and influence.

Chinese Grand Strategy

Examining China's grand strategy from a historical and conceptual perspective enables the framing of key components affecting New Zealand. China has a long history as an important state in the international system. This has shaped Chinese thought and is best described as a national outlook of a 'place under heaven.'³ For China, Grand Strategy is divided into two broad and straightforward categories, civilization, and non-civilization, meaning the peoples who accepted the supremacy of the Emperor and those who do not— those who were beyond the pale, considered barbarians. Its historical experience and its environment have shaped China. What was right in the days of the Emperor remains under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The foundation of China's foreign and domestic policies has remained the same and served the same goal: to maintain internal political stability under the leadership of the strong central authority.⁴

History has led China to see "most dynasties collapse under the twin blows of 'inside disorder and outside calamity' (*nei-luan wai-huan*), that is, domestic rebellion and foreign invasion."⁵ China has a defined sense of self and a core that is further defined geographically by the land between the two rivers - forming a strategic geographic heartland, physically buffered from tributaries. It constitutes a nexus of the physical and political systems and shapes China's strategic thought.

China's Grand Strategy has three interrelated objectives: firstly, the preservation of domestic order and well-being in the face of different forms of social strife; second, the defense against persistent external threats to national sovereignty and territory; and third, the attainment and maintenance of geopolitical influence as a major, and perhaps primary-state.⁶

These objectives are security-related and have evolved as China has grown economically and politically under the CCP. China's threat perceptions, the definition of the periphery, requisites for periphery control, and internal and external requirements of domestic order and well-being that together have implications for the specific type of security strategies pursued by the Chinese State.⁷ These elements include efforts to augment its military capabilities in a manner commensurate with its increased power; develop a sphere of influence by acquiring new allies and underwriting the protection of others; acquire new or reclaim old territory for China's resources or for symbolic reasons by penalizing, if necessary, any opponents or bystanders who resist such claims; prepare to redress past wrongs it believes it may have suffered, and attempt to rewrite the prevailing international "rules of the game" to better reflect Chinese interests.⁸

China's significance for international politics has dramatically increased since 1978 when the market reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping placed China on a course of action that transformed its latent potential into actual power.⁹ This process is significant as it is causing a shift in the power situation in the Pacific. This remarkable transformation was achieved by adopting market-oriented economic reforms and opening China to foreign trade, investment, technology, and ideas. The result is a China that is firmly integrated into the regional and global economy. China's economy is now big enough and integrated enough that its economic actions can move global trade patterns and the United States (U.S.) stock markets.¹⁰

China's economic rise was enabled by an open international trading order and stability in the Asia-Pacific region underpinned by U.S. military power and alliance system.¹¹ A reasonably good working relationship with the U.S. remains critical for Chinese goals – at the time being – such as sustaining economic growth and advancing regional power. China is not competing with the "order," but they are challenging the U.S. for regional management. As China has become more powerful, it has become less comfortable with the U.S. alliance system. It has begun to seek dominance within the South China Sea region and greater influence in the international system.

In practice, Chinese strategy has oriented toward the maintenance of internal stability and prosperity and the attainment of Chinese preeminence, if not control, along a far-flung and vulnerable geographic periphery.¹² A regional power with a strong, powerful core with tentacles reaching out to secure resources to serve what is good for the center. The areas where the tentacles have moved and established can be considered competition for influence in the Pacific. It is in this space that concerns New Zealand and the application of policy in support of Grand Strategy.

The main principles that underlie Chinese foreign policy are set out in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The Five Principles are mutual respect for international integrity, nonaggression; mutual non-interference in internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and financially peaceful coexistence.¹³ The Five Principles were originally formulated in 1954 by Beijing for its relations with all foreign states and is reasserted in the Pacific. The importance of mutual non-interference in internal affairs is the key principle for China. This was established after the century of humiliation that China endured from 1839-1949 as a result of foreign intervention and imperialism at the hands of Western Powers and Japan.¹⁴ It is a mainstay of

foreign policy and integral to China's strategic goals. For China, this policy has been outwardly adhered to. It has gone as far as direction for Chinese experts working on aid projects to construct the project and train the local people on how to manage it. Still, they were never to get involved in the management of the project, as this was seen as interference in the host nations' internal affairs.¹⁵ But it is important to recognize that as China continues its rise, it is slowly updating its policies and principles to fit within its responsible rise pronouncements and subtle diplomacy. China's alleged non-interference policy belies the coercive reality whereby mismanagement has room to grow, and China can shape host nations towards a debt trap, thus giving China access to resources under favorable conditions.

Chinese grand strategy goals are based in time and space around the centenary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2021, and the centenary of the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2049. The two centenaries are benchmarks in the PRC strategic plan and are what Chinese Premier Xi Jinping calls "the great dream of the Chinese nation's rejuvenation."¹⁶ Chinese grand strategy forms a vision that translates to objectives the CCP is aspiring to. The overall tone of the two centenary strategies focusses on China's domestic and social development with a key goal of being a "moderately prosperous society in all respects" by 2021. The result will be analogous to China's per capita income being on par with a country akin to Belgium and doubling gross domestic product (GDP) from the position in 2019.¹⁷ The effect of a focus on economic growth for China is twofold. Firstly, China is likely to have the largest GDP by 2049, and secondly, it has the means to enable and sustain military ambitions to include a blue-water Navy.

China's economic growth has enabled the modernization and expansion of the Chinese military. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been modernizing its forces and developing

the joint doctrine, training, and capabilities necessary to win “local wars under conditions of informationization.”¹⁸ The PLA has enjoyed double-digit budget increases for most of the last 20 years and now has the largest defense budget in the Asia-Pacific region (U.S. \$154 billion for 2016).¹⁹ The military objectives can be broken down to the following:

1. *Mechanization of the PLA;*
2. *Organizational reform (Jointness of PLA across multi-domains); and*
3. *increased informational capabilities.*

China intends to complete modernization by 2035 and to be genuine 'World Class' by the second centenary (2049).²⁰ Through the creation of a blue-water fleet, China is displaying a desire to benchmark against the U.S. in terms of military capability. The assessed aim is to redress the balance of power in the Pacific. China has achieved its 'Mahanian moment' by developing the naval facilities and supporting bases in the Indo-Pacific region called the “string of pearls.”²¹

In terms of operationalizing the Grand Strategy, China has displayed a weak-strong state security approach and has produced a “calculative” strategy, characterized by:

1. A nonideological policy approach keyed to market-led economic growth and the maintenance of amicable international political relations with all states, especially the major powers;
2. A deliberate restraint in the use of force, whether toward the periphery or against other more distant powers, combined with efforts to modernize and incrementally streamline the Chinese military; and
3. Expanded involvement in regional and global interstate politics and various international, multilateral fora, with an emphasis, through such interactions, on attaining asymmetric gains.²²

Overall, the development of a more active engagement policy requires a more thorough understanding of how the operational elements of China's calculative strategy might evolve as China's capabilities change.²³

China's continuing rapid economic growth and expanding involvement in global affairs pose significant implications for the power structure of the international system generally and its influence in the Pacific more specifically.²⁴ The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China's overseas economic activities are driven by crucial financial goals, and most importantly, continued internal development. Chinese leaders hope to address problems of excess capacity by exporting capital and labor overseas. Overseas investment projects involve contracts for Chinese firms and employment for Chinese workers, facilitating alignment of economic and political goals and alleviating some of its concerns over the potential for its supply routes to be hampered. Successful implementation of the BRI could facilitate PLA access to dozens of additional ports and airports and significantly expand China's penetration of the economies and political systems of participating countries.²⁵ Through an understanding of Chinese strategy and interventionist implementation of Chinese foreign policy enable areas of concern for New Zealand.

The threat of Chinese Influence on New Zealand

“New Zealand’s national security remains directly tied to the stability of the Pacific. As Pacific Island countries develop ... traditional partners such as New Zealand and Australia will be challenged to maintain influence,” - Minister of Defense, Ron Mark, 2018.²⁶

China's Grand Strategy has enabled China to become a regional power with global influence. Chinese regional power has bought the South Pacific into its realm of influence as China exerts its importance in a region blessed with significant natural resources. New Zealand has strategic clout, which can give China access and legitimacy, both internationally and

regionally. It has forced New Zealand to respond to a more powerful and more influential China in the region.²⁷

As New Zealand and the broader Pacific are deemed part of the Chinese strategic periphery, New Zealand faces a threat from coercion and deference. Traditionally, Chinese primacy has been maintained by eliciting various forms of deference from periphery peoples, preferably through the establishment of unambiguous suzerainty relations backed, if possible, by superior military force.²⁸ New Zealand remains committed to the maintenance of an open, rules-based international order, including resolution of disputes through peaceful means rather than coercion or the use of force.²⁹

New Zealand is a prime target for China as it has a disproportionate influence in the United Nations and other international forums, due to New Zealand administering the foreign and defense policies of three other Pacific Island nations: Niue, Tokelau, and the Cook Islands. China is challenging the status quo, and New Zealand is subsequently facing a threat across the DIME paradigm through a targeted influence agenda.

DIPLOMATIC

Despite China highlighting their non-interference in the Five Principles, China is effectively using coercive diplomacy to influence the domestic affairs of other countries. China is growing spheres of influence, turning them into areas ever more hospitable to authoritarian ideology, surveillance states, and crony capitalism. China's rising influence in the South Pacific could undermine regional stability. New Zealand and Australia have traditionally held the most influence in the South Pacific.³⁰ Still, the New Zealand government has reported it is now losing its sway over small island nations due to growing Chinese influence.³¹ China has pursued a line of effort to blunt alliances and partnerships, through targeting the geopolitical landscape to

dislocate further regional partners from traditional support and influence over their respective spheres in the region. In the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand regard themselves as having a special relationship with the area due to proximity and historical and cultural linkages with the Pacific peoples. Chinese engagement with the South Pacific has challenged this linkage through the nature of their regional responses and overtures.³²

China has proven adept at targeting traditional alliances through infrastructure and development loans to build influence and undermine traditional partnerships. The success of this influence operation is evident in the comments made by Fiji's Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama, in August 2019, "not for the first time that the leaders of Pacific Island countries resented Australia's behavior. China has been assisting Island countries with no political strings attached and without insults." Geng Shuang, China's foreign ministry spokesman, reinforced this theme, "Pacific Island leaders did not share Australia's fear of Chinese influence in the region."³³ The Fijian example foreshadows how China could shape the geopolitical environment through the undermining of partnerships to rebalance power in their favor. The current network of alliances, coalitions, and multinational partnerships are being targeted piecemeal to enable favorable conditions in support of China's grand strategy. China's alleged 'no political strings attached' approach exacerbates regional instability through support to illegitimate regimes and corrupt practices.³⁴

This line of effort is not confined to developing nations in the Pacific. New Zealand has a disproportionate influence in the region and has supported the BRI, thus advancing China's economic aims in the Pacific and New Zealand. As a traditional partner of the U.S., and as a critical link and spokesman for the Pacific, New Zealand is a target to disrupt the regional alliance. Targeting New Zealand occurred in 2018 as a result of the decision to block the Huawei

bid to develop a national 5G network following security concerns raised by the New Zealand Government Communications Security Bureau.³⁵ As a result of this decision, China delayed the announcement of the China-New Zealand year of tourism and dissuaded Chinese citizens from traveling to New Zealand.³⁶ Although New Zealand has weathered this tactic due to a diversified economy, the tactic could, however, prove decisive for smaller Pacific nations.

China has used coercive diplomacy to effect. The Solomon Islands has been a recent example of a diplomatic battleground. The Solomon's diplomatic recognition of Taiwan was an issue in the April 2019 election. Through the support of China, Prime Minister Sogavare was able to gain power, and in what can be categorized as a diplomatic coup, China persuaded the Solomon Islands Government to break diplomatic ties with Taiwan after 19 years of official relations.³⁷ As one of only a small number of nations that had recognized Taiwan, this event is a measure of Chinese diplomatic effectiveness. This incident was further used in comments by President Xi; he stated unification with the mainland is “an inevitable trend” and “no force can ever stop it.”³⁸

INFORMATION

The CCP controls the information environment inside China, and it is expanding its ability to shape information and discourse relating to China abroad, especially on issues that Beijing views as core to party legitimacy, such as Taiwan, Tibet, and human rights.³⁹ China is arguably only one of three countries pushing the envelope on information warfare (I.W.) strategy development, behind the United States and Russia. It has an active offensive I.W. program and has devoted significant resources to the study of I.W.⁴⁰ It enables PLA IW asymmetric options, some of which may be decisive in narrowly circumscribed situations, but the Chinese military

cannot reasonably expect anything approaching “information dominance” for the foreseeable future.⁴¹

New Zealand has experienced the effect of a China-led information operation following the botulism toxins incident in 2014, whereby milk powder products were possibly tainted. China demanded, "that New Zealand take immediate measures to prevent problem products harming the health of Chinese consumers." China temporarily blocked the import of all milk powder products from New Zealand. New Zealand's trade minister, Tim Groser, agreed with the decision calling it "absolutely appropriate." China imports US\$1.9 billion of milk powder a year, 90 percent of which originates in New Zealand. Further testing showed that the bacteria found were clostridium sporogeneses, which do not produce botulism toxins.⁴² There was no actual health risk, and the crisis was a false alarm. However, it serves as an example of how a China-led information operation can affect New Zealand.

The New Zealand leader of the opposition, Simon Bridges, met with Chinese leadership in 2019. His visit was characterized by “enthusiastic praise for the regime.”⁴³ The tour highlighted an alarming gap between government and opposition views/language concerning such a critical relationship. This example is but one of a trend whereby China is seeking to control the narrative. There is now a 'who's who' of former New Zealand politicians and statesmen on various Chinese boards in prominent positions to help shape the narrative.⁴⁴ New Zealand would be wise to follow Australia's' example and take seriously the issue of China's big push to increase its influence activities, whether through special commission or a closed-door investigation.⁴⁵

China will continue to use legal, political, and economic levers—such as the lure of Chinese markets—to shape the information environment. It is also capable of using cyber-

attacks against systems to censor or suppress viewpoints it deems politically sensitive.⁴⁶ China is shaping the narrative through Confucius Institutes in the region. There are three in New Zealand and one in Fiji that seek to provide a cultural presence and influence. This growing trend is also backed in New Zealand by Chinese students accounting for the largest source of international students in tertiary institutes.⁴⁷

MILITARY

"We live in turbulent times, the world is changing, and there has been a re-emergence of great power competition," New Zealand Defense Minister Ron Mark.⁴⁸

The rising threat in the broader Pacific is the Chinese blue-water fleet. It is an overt act whereby China is seeking to replace “the free and open order” that has underpinned global security since World War Two in the Pacific region.⁴⁹ As part of its efforts to deter potential U.S. intervention in a Taiwan contingency, the PLA has emphasized the development of anti-access/area-denial capabilities that would raise the costs and risks for U.S. forces operating near China.⁵⁰ These capabilities threaten to put at risk the U.S.'s ability to access its allies, extend deterrence, and meet its regional security commitments. The secondary effort of the PLA modernization effort is naval, air, and missile forces capable of projecting power beyond China's borders and places increasing emphasis on the maritime, space, and cyber domains. Expanded naval and coast guard capabilities have also supported more assertive Chinese efforts concerning maritime territorial disputes in the East and South China seas.⁵¹

In line with China's philosophy, it has cleverly operated in the 'Gray Zone' to advance their position. The 'Gray Zone' is the foreseeable operational environment that is likely to be the area of operations in the Pacific. Broadly the 'Gray Zone' is a level of conflict that is likely to be below NATO's Article five threshold and below the level of violence necessary to prompt a

United Nations Security Council resolution.⁵² The arming and employment of private fishing vessels in the South and East China Seas is an example of how the PRC has armed and mobilized to assert China's territorial claims in the region.⁵³ China has reinforced this operational plan by the positioning of several hundred land-based, anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles in a manner capable of denying or restricting freedom of movement to other countries. China calls this peripheral defense since it is designed to prevent additional power's interference.⁵⁴

New Zealand's focus is the bluewater strategy as it will involve the Pacific and is a signal for the militarization of the Chinese periphery. China has further signaled the blue-water ambitions of the PLA through China's debt-trap diplomacy tactic to secure critical strategic and dual-use locations. Viewed militarily, this is a process of developing sustainment of the blue water strategy and in support of operational aims. The PRC has facilitated loans for critical physical infrastructure, e.g., The Port of Darwin, Tonga, and Vanuatu.⁵⁵ China thus gains an economic foothold in Pacific locations to support an open-seas naval force.

The upgrade of port facilities is an enticing opportunity for small Pacific nations seeking to advance their economy; however, the Sri Lanka example serves as a warning for nations considering the PRC overtures. Sri Lanka acquiesced to a 99-year lease on its port to the state-owned China Merchants Group to avoid defaulting on loan repayments. The Sri Lanka example is a warning and indicator of how Tonga, Vanuatu, Australia, and other Pacific nations, could be developed or coerced.⁵⁶ Additionally, Pacific Islands offer locations to launch and track space and near-space military or dual-use technologies such as satellites, and missiles. Port locations could be configured to provide support PLA Navy.⁵⁷ China has not secured explicit permanent basing rights. Still, its commercial development and military ties could lay the

groundwork for gaining future military access, much like the Mahanian actions of the early 20th century United States.⁵⁸

Xi Jinping has outlined China's aspirations to benchmark against the United States not only in terms of military capability but also in terms of force projection and global reach.⁵⁹ Chinese Naval Strategy is being enabled to allow the movement into the Pacific as part of an offshore defense strategy safeguarding China's maritime security and maintaining its sovereignty over its territorial sea claims along with its maritime rights and interests. It identifies the PLA Navy will gradually shift its focus from offshore waters defense to the combination of 'offshore waters defense' with 'open seas protection' and build a combined, multi-functional, and efficient Naval combat force structure. At this stage, Chinese nuclear submarines have not been used in the broader Pacific but would be an indicator of a shifting strategy. It could affect New Zealand as the first indicator of a shift in nuclear submarine strategy and possibly detected within New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone.⁶⁰ New Zealand has recently purchased P8 Surveillance Aircraft, which are optimized for Submarine detection.

The Chinese strategy in the Pacific highlights the overwhelming capability gaps between China and the Pacific nations. Only through improved alliances, multilateral training intelligence sharing, co-operation, and interoperable defense forces can a successful deterrent to China's blue-water ambitions be countered.⁶¹ The decisive operational objective is to control choke-points, to preserve the balance of power. Choke-point interdiction operations of U.S. allies could cause considerable difficulties for PLA blue-water operations. For example, a U.S. allied nation in the first island chain could physically block the choke-points, thereby not allowing PLA blue-water transits out to the open oceans to fight U.S. led forces. The same plan could be applied in the Pacific. This concept forms the basis of the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations

(EABO) concept. “The EABO concept espouses employing mobile, relatively low-cost capabilities in austere, temporary locations. Expeditionary advanced base operations may be employed to position naval ISR assets, future coastal defense cruise missiles (CDCM), anti-air missiles, forward arming and refueling points (FARPs) and other expedient expeditionary operating sites for aircraft such as the F-35, critical munitions reloading teams for ships and submarines, or to provide expeditionary basing for surface screening/scouting platforms.”⁶² This concept disrupts a PLA blue-water fleet freedom of movement and also integrates a multinational and coalition effort. Multinational forces working together allow for tactical dispersion and a clear strategy of deterrence. The approach further de-legitimizes China and addresses and affirms the current balance of power and spheres of influence.

Strategic success will necessitate economic and diplomatic means to limit China's access to foreign ports and bases, and also disrupt Chinese financial incentives and pressure. A blue-water naval sustainment and support network has proven to be the decisive element for the British and the U.S. in the operation of a blue-water navy. China’s efforts in the Pacific have been small and weak when compared to the U.S. alliance network, however, ‘chinks in the armour’ have been made that unless addressed could pave the way for China to exploit.

Additionally, Pacific Islands offer locations to launch and track space and near-space military or dual-use technologies such as satellites, and missiles. The importance of space-based guidance, navigation, and communications support is an area of concern. China has created a network of science stations, most prominently in Greenland and Argentina. China insists its space program is for peaceful purposes and its foreign ministry in a statement stressed the Argentine station is for “civilian use only.” However, radio astronomy experts have said the

Chinese could easily hide illicit data in these transmissions or add encrypted channels to the frequencies agreed upon with Argentina.⁶³

China is training and equipping its military space forces and fielding new antisatellite (ASAT) weapons. China recognizes growing reliance on space and views the capability to attack space services as a part of its broader efforts to deter an adversary from or defeat one in combat. China possesses ASAT capable of targeting low-Earth-orbit satellites, and China probably intends to pursue additional ASAT weapons capable of destroying satellites up to geosynchronous Earth orbit.⁶⁴ New Zealand has been described as the dagger pointing towards Antarctica. Both the Pacific and Antarctica offer relatively clean air space for the launch and tracing of satellites. In the event of a conflict, whoever can relaunch first will hold the initiative. The Pacific and Antarctica offer a 'strategic redoubt' for such an option, and New Zealand is a crucial factor in shaping that plan.

China has moved into the Pacific as part of a maritime defense strategy safeguarding China's maritime security and maintaining its sovereignty over its territorial seas along with its maritime rights and interest. China will gradually shift its focus from offshore waters defense to the combination of offshore waters defense with open seas protection and build a combined, multi-functional, and efficient marine combat force structure.⁶⁵ The type-allocation-makeup of the blue-water fleet and the investment in force sustainment signal China is seeking to redress the balance of power in the Pacific and, in so doing, challenging the existing alliances and spheres of influence.

ECONOMIC:

China is New Zealand's single biggest export trade market. In 2019 New Zealand exported NZ\$9.7 billion of primary goods to China alone. Chinese students contribute NZ\$5.1

billion to the New Zealand economy, and the Chinese make up approximately 17% of two million tourists who visit New Zealand each year. China is now one of the largest aid donors in the Pacific.⁶⁶ Where aid money is invested could signal intent to increase influence.

China's economic diplomacy puts New Zealand in a position of struggling with the dilemma between welcoming Chinese capital and potentially more significant vulnerability to Chinese interference. China's intelligence services have exploited the openness of western society, especially academia, and the scientific community, using a variety of means. New Zealand has been targeted for primary industry technology. Essentially China has displayed a 'why develop when you can just take attitude.'⁶⁷ The evolution of global trade and communication has increased global interconnectedness, where states are now connected through a vast number of complex networks. It comes with significant threats to New Zealand's national security from Chinese cyber-espionage; it is vital for the New Zealand economy that New Zealand has an effective cyber-security framework.

The counter to Chinese economic influence could have been the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). New Zealand and partners in the region have stressed U.S. economic engagement with the Pacific as a key means of demonstrating U.S. staying power. The Obama administration faced several practical and political obstacles in increasing U.S. trade and investment ties with the Asia-Pacific, especially in the context of the global financial crisis. The centerpiece of the administration's efforts was the TPP, as "an ambitious, next-generation Asia-Pacific trade agreement," including Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam. The TPP was signed on February 4, 2016, but was canceled by the Trump administration.⁶⁸ Without a viable counterbalance to Chinese economic enticement, New Zealand will be connected to China

through complex networks and subject to influence. It comes with significant threats to New Zealand's national security and highlights the deficiency of a strategy to address China.

A New Zealand Strategy to Address Chinese Influence

China is adept at exploiting the global environment and has demonstrated an ability to navigate and disrupt an established international order defined by complexity and aggressiveness. New Zealand faces multi-prong threats from undesirable foreign influence, traditional political and economic espionage. All of which could be exploited by China to usurp influence in the Pacific. New Zealand has experienced all of these but has been reactive rather than postured to address through the lack of a coherent national strategy.

New Zealand is the only Five Eyes partner without an explicit National Security Strategy document.⁶⁹ In light of the growing competition in the Pacific from China, New Zealand's obligations to dependencies and partner expectations, New Zealand requires foresight in a form that brings together all the strands of the country's strategic activities and lays in one document, where New Zealand is going and where, in the future, resources to achieve national security goals should be directed.⁷⁰ Commitment to such a goal is limited. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has reduced its Strategic Policy Division, highlighting that there does not appear to be an emphasis on developing strategic direction for national security.⁷¹

What New Zealand currently has is a collection of separate documents with varying levels of connectivity to a national strategy on China. The only forward-looking documents are those from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Primary Industries, encompassed in the Defence White Paper 2016 and Biosecurity 2025. However, these are not connected nor to any other agency plan leading to a situation where the Ministry of Defence is leading on a

Pacific strategy with activities that go beyond the purely military. This is despite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, that agency submitted a comprehensive review of Pacific activities to Cabinet in December 2018 in, 'The Pacific Reset - The First Year.' But that document did not mention Defence activities at all.⁷² This lack of co-ordination needs to be addressed. The Defense White Paper 2016 fails to consider the relationships between the State, economic and social factors that shape armed conflict and does not provide the necessary analysis for the significant security challenges facing New Zealand from China. Additionally, the Defence Capability Plan 2019, is just a continuation of the previous two documents and provides some more detail on specific spending; however, it has toned down the aggressive rhetoric towards China. These documents appear to contain more of the same content, with no changes to the Cold War-era structures or capabilities of the NZDF to meet the changing threats to New Zealand national security posed by China.

To be effective- vis a vis China - an All of Government (AoG) approach to national security is required and needs collaboration between government agencies and the private sector. The New Zealand Pacific reset is heavily reliant on relationships. New Zealand lacks the financial heft of China, and Pacific leaders have been clear that while New Zealand is saying the right things, action must match the rhetoric.⁷³ Noted by Demos, a London-based think tank specializing in social policy, that the boundaries between domestic and international politics have become blurred and interconnected.⁷⁴ The Chinese threat across the DIME paradigm exposes New Zealand's strategic weakness and undermines traditional relationship strength.

New Zealand needs to face up to the challenges of China across the DIME paradigm and assess the impact of Chinese influence activities. The start point would be a special commission or closed-door investigation with a view to the development of a national security strategy that

will guide New Zealand's China policy and synchronize actions.⁷⁵ To be able to address the situation, a China Strategy needs to be a living document that changes with the environment and to be adaptable to the geopolitical situation. China has proven adept at learning and incrementally adjusting their method – New Zealand must follow suit.

A national security strategy is a method of synchronizing all parts of government into a common system. A strategy allows for the allocation of resources into the right areas and focuses on the different parts of the State's power for a collective effort. New Zealand relies upon a responsive national security system, which to date - when tested, has operated very well. But waiting for a crisis to occur is not a sustainable plan. An AoG approach needs an AoG strategy. We cannot be dismissive about national security, and we must make every possible attempt to strengthen ourselves and put the nation in the best possible position for risk mitigation. New Zealand must remain prepared to employ diplomacy, economic relations, and military instruments against a more assertive and militant China in a variety of political, strategic, and economic issue-areas.

The foundation for a China strategy is in the National Security System (NSS) Handbook 2015, a document more akin to a guide of what happens in the event of an emergency. The Cold War era saw security provided primarily by defense, police, and intelligence agencies. Now the responsibility for security has expanded to include a range of different agencies that can respond to a wide range of threats. It should not just focus on the military, but rather on diplomatic and influence, and guide all sectors of government and business that deliver elements of national security.⁷⁶ The private sector must also be an informing contributor.

The need for an increase in the private-public sector dialogue is articulated by Professor Rouben Azizian, who argued that businesses should be more vocal pre-crisis, rather than only

becoming involved after an event has occurred.⁷⁷ As China is New Zealand's biggest export market, key industries such as Air New Zealand and Fonterra, need to be actively involved in the national security dialogue. Given that the protection of the economy is one of the seven objectives of New Zealand's national security, it would make sense to have a more inclusive environment for the private sector to be involved in the development of a security strategy. Currently, the NSS Handbook is a little-known publication.

A New Zealand China Strategy would ensure a cohesive narrative and common objectives-based approach is in place to address Chinese influence, rather than Government departments trying to operate independently. With increased Chinese competition, New Zealand will continue to rely on relationships and the international rules-based order whilst maintaining a minimal credible military capability so that New Zealand can contribute to military responses if order breaks down. The means and the resources applied to these ways of achieving security are those the government has to hand. The armed forces, diplomacy (not only by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade but all agencies with an international presence), and society more generally all have a role to play here.⁷⁸

New Zealand cannot deter nor push back the Chinese challenge alone, nor can any single one of its partners. The U.S. National Security Strategy addresses the China challenge to American power, influence, and interests explicitly. "To push this position back, the U.S. has reinvigorated and allocated additional effort to the Pacific region."⁷⁹ New Zealand has benefited by the U.S. being the preeminent deterrent to adversaries, through a monolithic advantage in being able to fight and win and policy to compete with all tools of national power to ensure that regions of the world are not dominated by one power.⁸⁰ New Zealand and its regional ally, Australia, have intensified moves to shore up their military and economic dominance in the

southwest Pacific, in concert with Washington, in order to counter Beijing's growing influence. The Pacific is once again becoming a key geostrategic battleground as it was in World War II.⁸¹ In 2019 "Advancing Pacific Partnerships" was released by the New Zealand Ministry of Defence. This document aligned the military focus with the government's efforts to reassert its interests in the Pacific. The paper talks of New Zealand bolstering, people-to-people links as a competitive edge to combat competition for influence in the region. In practice, this takes the form of leadership training, cultural awareness, and women's rights encompassed in the Vaka Tahi ("one boat") Pacific Partnership model.⁸² New Zealand's role in reinforcing this through multilateral training with Pacific and international partners, intelligence sharing, co-operation, and interoperable defense forces to push back China.

CONCLUSION:

New Zealand has demonstrated it still has the ear of the Pacific. At the Pacific Islands Forum in 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, started the event with a 'Karakia' or prayer. He followed this up with, "it's great that we can start this way. Not all nations will allow that."⁸³ There was a highly positive reaction from the Pacific forum.⁸⁴ What is clear from the Pacific leaders is New Zealand is willing to listen; what is missing is a China strategy to sustain diplomatic influence and a forward looking AoG strategy of how New Zealand can use its "ear of the Pacific" to help counter Chinese influence.

China's rise and aspirations area a challenge that effects diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) domains. New Zealand is faced with the greatest threat to its regional influence in the diplomatic and information domain by China. New Zealand must address and deal with this problem and acknowledge it cannot do it alone, nor can it do it when the government is not aligned across the ministries.

New Zealand requires a China strategy that amalgamates the existing military and diplomatic forward-looking strategic documents and incorporates private business to address an aligned economic plan. Only through a coherent strategy can New Zealand protect its public and private sectors from a coercive Chinese threat. Additionally, such a policy would provide a clear understanding of the New Zealand position, articulate goals and regionally inform New Zealand dependencies, allies and partners. Such a policy will connect New Zealand to the broader U.S. strategy for countering China in the Pacific. Through such a position, New Zealand will retain regional leadership and influence.

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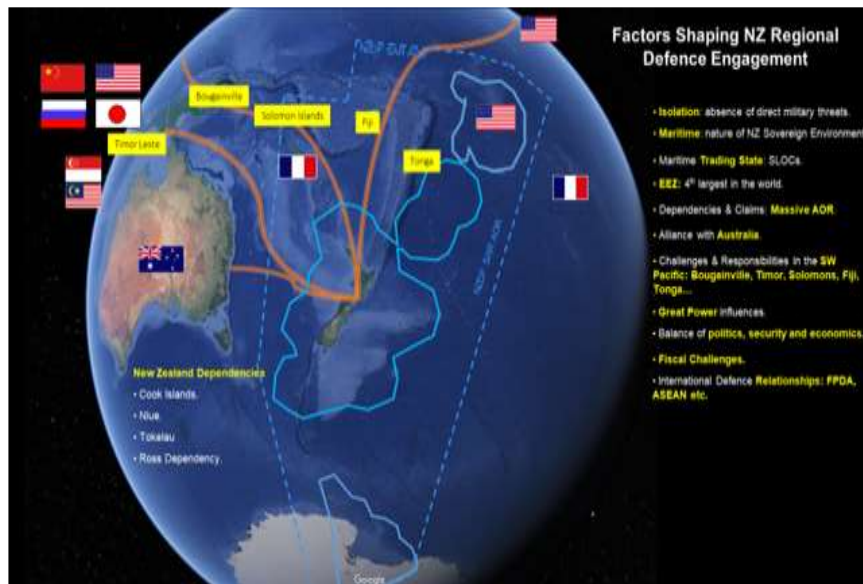
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