



Communist China Has Thrown Out The Old Rules of War

Description

When I first read the Chinese war manual "[Unrestricted Warfare](#)" in 1999, I thought it was wacky. I was flying B-2 Stealth bombers out of Whiteman Air Force Base in western Missouri and reading a lot about war. As an Air Force officer, I thought it was part of my day job to understand the bigger picture – even though the prevailing attitude in the military was "Just fly the planes." "Unrestricted Warfare" was one of those books that caused a stir among some military folks because it had recently been translated into English. It had that insider whiff of mystery and secrets, a peek into the mind of the Chinese Communist Party.



(AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin, Pool)

Despite that mystique, not a lot of people were finishing the book. For one thing, regardless of its title, no one thought we were ever going to be fighting a war with China, so it seemed like a lot of work for very little payoff. For another, the book itself is not a light read. It is a dense compendium of strategy, economics, social theory, and futuristic thoughts about technology. It imparts centuries of military history, particularly as it relates to the United States, but I already knew a lot of that. It seemed vague and also a little sci-fi, not relevant to a U.S. bomber pilot – even one with a fascination for military history. My mistake.

If you look closely at everything China has done since 1999 – at all aspects of its economic, military, diplomatic, and technological relations with the rest of the world – it's like watching "Unrestricted Warfare" come to life. One can find other glimpses into the secretive mentality of the CCP leaders, but this one is the single most important book for understanding the China of today. "Unrestricted Warfare" is the main blueprint for China's efforts to unseat America as the world's economic, political, and ideological leader. It shows exactly how a totalitarian nation set out to dominate the West through a comprehensive, long-term strategy that includes everything from corporate sabotage to cyberwarfare to dishonest diplomacy; from violations of international trade law and intellectual property law to calculated abuses of the global financial system. As one of the authors stated, "The only rule in 'Unrestricted Warfare' is that there are no rules."

The book is the key to decoding China's master plan for world domination, which has been progressing more steadily and successfully than most Americans realize – even accelerating in the reign of Xi Jinping. The manipulation of COVID policies, stonewalling the world about its origins, and mounting a massive disinformation campaign to blame the United States are merely recent examples.

So why is "Unrestricted Warfare" so obscure, even to people who study China professionally on behalf of the U.S. government, the Fortune 500, the investment world, the nonprofit world, academia, or the military? It's not as if the book is some secret document that has never escaped the inner sanctum of the Chinese Communist Party. Just the opposite: The original translation by the U.S. government is in the public domain; you can google it and click on an English translation, for free, in less than a second.

The problem is that "Unrestricted Warfare" is hard to read. While any American can access it, few can understand it. The prose is dense and confusing, even in the original Mandarin, and even more so in that crude, free translation you'll find on the web. Its insights are clouded by endless repetitions and meandering discursions into military history, cultural theory, and attacks on U.S. policy. The colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, get tangled in semantics and draw on faulty citations and unsourced references. They obsess about the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 to an extent that puzzles Americans who consider that war to be a minor footnote to history. And the authors' metaphors are so weird to our ears as to seem utterly baffling. Just consider two chapter titles: "The War God's Face Has Become Indistinct" and "What Do Americans Gain by Touching the Elephant?" Huh?

I mentioned "Unrestricted Warfare" several times in my previous book, "[Stealth War: How China Took Over While America's Elite Slept](#)." I noted that the book was well known to modern-day China scholars but that perhaps because of its strange complexity, Western strategists had failed to connect its strategic vision with the seemingly random actions of China's misleadingly benign and smiling

countenance. Although some of the text is pretty clear: “Using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one’s interest.”

As I wrote at the time, that strategy can justify meddling in all manner of another country’s affairs: silencing ideas or promoting political discord, stealing technology, dumping products to disrupt markets. I was intrigued with the idea of creating an “army” of academics who could be used to gather medical, technological, and engineering information. The list of incursions goes on – and has grown since then.

Consider just a small number of the things the Chinese Communists have done:

- Seized on COVID as a weapon to be used to their benefit, not a humanitarian crisis to be solved.
- Viewed the climate change issue as a bargaining chip to win them economic concessions from global elites in return for reforms that they never intend to make.
- Sponsored corporate espionage on a scale beyond what the United States acknowledges.
- Launched unrelenting cyberattacks against Western companies and governments.
- Fueled America’s deadly fentanyl drug crisis by allowing illegal smuggling of banned substances.
- Used slave labor to produce goods such as clothing for sale to Western shoppers.

Despite all of these actions by the CCP, since publication of “Stealth War,” I’ve encountered skepticism from some readers who simply can’t believe that China has been methodically undermining the rest of the world with a patient, long-term, multidisciplinary strategy. Some even dismissed “Stealth War” as the work of an alarmist.

In the wake of that reaction, I realized how useful it would be to make the Chinese manual of war accessible to American readers so that they can see it for themselves. I set out to write a user-friendly guide that would explain “Unrestricted Warfare” chapter by chapter, adding examples while editing out the irrelevant and distracting parts of the original text. In the process I’ve drawn on history, military strategy, and Chinese culture to explain the context in which “Unrestricted Warfare” was written and then applied. My goal is to show how “Unrestricted Warfare’s” advice to the leadership of the CCP maps with terrifying consistency onto the events of the past two decades.

This book has opened my eyes to how the CCP has essentially sneak attacked us in slow motion. And made me think hard about where they are going next. I hope it can have the same effect on others. I want to share with the men and women in our government, my respected former colleagues, who have to make some important – maybe life and death – decisions about how we deal with the Chinese government in the very near future.

I know it can seem excessive to compare any country with Nazi Germany. But as we rethink our views on China, what other comparison is appropriate for a regime that casually and cold-bloodedly allowed COVID-19 to spread to the rest of the world at the same time it was forcing its Muslim citizens into concentration camps? Hong Kong parallels the takeover of Austria in 1938. And how do you account for the increasingly warlike rhetoric and military movements directed at Taiwan?

Imagine the reaction during World War II if an American company had tried to export its goods to imperial Japan, or if a Wall Street firm had tried to underwrite the bonds of a Nazi arms manufacturer.

Unthinkable, right? And yet today countless Americans are still trying to do business with and in China, misunderstanding or ignoring the CCP's war without rules.

I am deeply concerned that the Biden administration, despite some positive moves, is seriously underestimating the malevolence and power of the Chinese threat. Our adversaries wrote up their long-term plans in 1999 and have been executing them relentlessly ever since. Our leaders have a moral obligation to understand what's happening, sound the alarm, wake up the country, and inspire Americans of all political stripes to do everything in their power to stop this totalitarian regime.

I also want the average American to have access to this book. It's time for every influential person in America – policy makers, diplomats, business executives, investors, journalists, scientists, academics, and more – to become part of the resistance to the Chinese Communist Party.

My hope is that by explaining "Unrestricted Warfare" and its consequences, this book will make it impossible for my fellow Americans to continue to deny the reality of our existential conflict with China. The simple, chilling truth is that the CCP is doing everything in its power – mostly via economics, technology, diplomacy, and the media, not yet via military power – to destroy our way of life. To understand that plan, you need to understand "Unrestricted Warfare." The stakes couldn't be higher.

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