

The Reality of China's Information Warfare And Cognitive Warfare against Taiwan

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China has been exercising information warfare against Taiwan in the form of intelligence espionage and United Front Work for decades, and in recent years by way of cyber and cognitive operations. In reality, current information warfare towards Taiwan is simply like old wine in new bottles, namely psychological and opinion warfare that also go online, perhaps from time to time even with the help of artificial intelligence (AI).

A reality check of the current state of China's cyber operations against Taiwan would reveal mounting number of DDoS attack and more ATP vulnerabilities exploitation than meets the eyes on daily basis. Along with time China's cyber units in Strategic Support Force and those state-sponsored mercenaries target not just business secrets espionage but also critical information infrastructure.

In addition, drawing on the lessons from the Ukraine-Russia war, physical or cyber sabotage upon underseas cables, reception stations onshore, and low-orbit communications satellite networks are supposed to come forth on the top of war plan and grey zone action plan for the People's Liberation Army in China. In a similar sense, electronic warfare like jamming and fabrication of the reception of communications satellite signals shall come as no surprise.

Content of China's cognitive operations against Taiwan came along in evolving ways, from China's produced troll, to plagiarizing and extorting Taiwanese narratives, to AI-generated or -enabled deep fake. Moreover, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been exploiting the advantage of hybrid threats by exercising cognitive operations together with cyber operations, military grey zone activities in physical space, as well as economic coercion and diplomatic boycott in attempt to boosting up intimidation and sowing more seeds of doubts than ever.

In coping with growing hybrid threats composed of information warfare and beyond, Taiwan has adopted a whole-of-society approach to incorporate not just inter-agency coordination but also public-private partnership to ameliorate complications arising from domestic societal dividedness. Safe to say, resilience-building and literacy cultivation is something Taiwan is currently pursuing against the ticking clock.