ABSTRACT
China’s rapid expansion and the reinforcement of their claims in the Indo-Pacific threatens international stability and the United States’ global interests. China’s strategy employs the use of unconventional means which challenges the international community’s ability to respond. The unimpeded rise of China as a regional hegemon directly threatens the viability of shipping throughout the Indo-Pacific. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into Xi Jinping’s “Chinese Dream” and the String of Pearls Initiative through analyzing China’s strategic use of unrestricted warfare.

UNRESTRICTED WARFARE

- Omnidirectionality
- Synchronicity
- Minimal Consumption
- Limited Objectives
- Unlimited Measures
- Adjustment and Control of Process

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Xi Jinping became the Communist Party of China’s President in 2013 and diverted the nation’s resources with a whole-of-government approach towards the maritime sector. The “Chinese Dream” is the rejuvenation of a strong Chinese presence and regional security. Historic Nine-Dash-Line claims are used to have unrivaled sovereignty over several artificial island chains converted into military installations. This acts as a form of hard power and deterrence, reducing the consumption of Chinese naval assets.

Philippines V. China 2015, results of a case brought to the Hague’s Permanent Court of Arbitration found China’s historic claims illegitimate and ruled in favor of the Philippines. China dismissed these claims and did not recognize the authority of the court or the rulings of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

President Duterte of the Philippines’ Beijing Announcement 2016: “I announce my separation from the United States, both in military, not maybe social, but economics also, America has lost.”

CONCLUSION
Through the analysis of China’s actions in the INDOPACOM’s Area of Responsibility, it is evident that China can contend with larger powers, yet their strategy utilizes unrestricted warfare to minimize the potential risks. Through minimizing consumption and reformatting their political system to tie into both their military and industry, they are using all available means to achieve Xi Jinping’s “Chinese Dream.” While unlikely that China will directly threaten the international community through direct conflict, they are establishing a regional hegemony with a sphere of influence antithetical to both the United States and other opposition.

ORIGIN
Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xianggui of the People’s Liberation Army were strategists who formulated the theory of Unrestricted Warfare. The main purpose of unrestricted warfare is not to achieve the Clausewitzian definition of warfare, of compelling an enemy to submit to another’s will, but to gain a strategic advantage over another. Utilizing the eight principles of unrestricted warfare, this strategy allows an inferior nation the unconventional means to subvert a superior force.

INDIAN OCEAN

Ladakh Crisis - 2020
Escalation of conflict in a series of skirmishes led by the forces of China’s People’s Liberation Army into the bordering territory of India. There remained a cyclical nature of border incursion, response, negotiation, withdrawal from the late 1990’s until 2020.

Ambiguity of sovereignty over the Line of Actual Control (LAC) led to China’s ability to employ a strategy of unrestricted warfare in their multi-faceted incursion along the LAC.

Significance: While this is a land dispute, it is diverting India’s military assets and decreasing their maritime presence, thus allowing China to act unchallenged. This creates uncertainty for international commerce and affects the United State’s “War on Terror” as New Delhi cannot maintain their sphere of influence.

STRING OF PEARLS

Part of Xi Jinping’s grand strategy with the development of the Belt and Road Initiative’s maritime sector, creating infrastructure along the Bay of Bengal.

Securing hard power along key geostrategic chokepoints such as the Strait of Malacca, Hormuz, and Mandebo which threatens global commerce and increases China’s sphere of influence.

This project consists of over 1700 land projects, marine bases and regional hubs. China has an incentive to secure their maritime claims both due to Xi Jinping’s proposed national agenda and the vast requirements of China’s industrial needs.

FURTHER RESEARCH
The United States and regional stakeholders cannot rely on the UN as there is no enforcement power and China does not recognize their authority. The Chinese are also unconcerned about sanctions on their economy as the Belt and Road Initiative allows for commerce via land routes. Instead, regional stakeholders must adopt the same strategy as China and use unrestricted warfare to halt their actions in the Indo-Pacific. Restricting their ability to strangle geostrategic straits with their naval threat and conducting acts of reciprocity to deter their advancement and move from reactivity to proactive prevention.