

## USAWC students discuss China's sphere of influence in the global south and its national security implications

By Elena Patton 08 December 2022



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*Dr. Dawn Murphy, Associate Professor of National Security Strategy at the National War College, engaged with USAWC students about China's sphere of influence in the global south and the implications for U.S. national security interests.*

When China is mentioned, the tensions with Taiwan and China's complex economic relationship with the United States comes to mind. Army War College engaged with a subject matter expert about another aspect of China's sphere of influence—the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Dawn Murphy is an Associate Professor of National Security Strategy at National War College. Part of USAWC's Economics Issues lecture series, Murphy used her most recent research project—analyzing China's interests and behavior as a rising global power towards the existing international order—to guide her discussion and share her insights, Nov. 6, 2022.

China does not seek to change the distribution of territory in the Middle

East or Sub-Saharan Africa, said Murphy. However, China competes with the U.S. to build spheres of influence in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa and challenges the international system by constructing an alternative international order to facilitate its actions as its power grows.

This research aimed to answer several questions said Murphy. What are China's interests in those regions? Is China competing or cooperating with the U.S. in these regions? Is China's conduct converging or diverging from the liberal order. How is China demonstrating itself as a great power in these regions, etc.?

China's primary interests in the regions center on attaining resources and markets to build and sustain China's domestic economy, said Murphy. China also looks to gain support for itself in the international system, preserve its territory and sovereignty, and, more recently, safeguard its citizens and business abroad.

Murphy outlined some of the foreign policy tools China uses to interact with these regions and pursue their interests. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation are the main multilateral tools China utilizes to engage in these regions about various economic, political, security, environmental, educational, etc. China's four Special Envoys are a way for it to contribute to peace and security and to address pressing issues in the regions.

There are other economic, political and military foreign policy tools China utilizes, such as special economic zones, free trade agreements, agricultural demonstration centers, UN Security Council voting, strategic partnerships, involvement in UN peacekeeping operations, anti-piracy efforts, and the Belt and Road Initiative, said Murphy.

Murphy's research focuses on China's rise in the global south. She specializes in Chinese foreign policy and domestic politics, US-China relations, and international relations. Her book *China's Rise in the Global South: The Middle East, Africa, and Beijing's Alternative World Order* further explores the topics addressed in her lecture.