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## From Exploitation to Innovation: Acquisition, Absorption, and Application

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in China and Cybersecurity: Espionage, Strategy, and Politics in the Digital Domain

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The rising tide of Chinese cyber espionage has prompted deepening concern in the United States and around the world. Espionage does not translate simply into innovation, however, but rather must be processed by a complex network of government and industrial organizations and translated into successful performance against competitors. Inefficiencies throughout the entire intelligence-to-innovation process can erode the value of stolen data. This chapter provides a framework for understanding illicit acquisition, institutional absorption, and competitive application and then evaluates China's efforts to overcome the obstacles in each step. But there are reasons to be skeptical that China's impressive cyber exploitation campaign delivers a meaningful strategic advantage. Overreliance on economic espionage, moreover, may become an impediment in China's quest to become a leading industrial superpower.