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Elsa is a graduate of Harvard College (*summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa), where her thesis on the evolution of the PLA's strategic thinking on information warfare was awarded the James Gordon Bennett Prize. While at Harvard, she worked as a research assistant at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Elsa was a Boren Scholar in Beijing, China, and she is fluent in Mandarin Chinese.