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**The Rise of China:
A Comparative Analysis of Empires**

Master Thesis

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Author's Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this master thesis.
2. I authorize Charles University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

30th July, 2018

Kristin Templin

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ABSTRACT

This thesis covers a historical comparison analysis between the Ancient Chinese, British and American Empires in order to compare what activities that China is currently taking in the 21st century that resemble the behaviour of the United Kingdom and United States while they were building their empires.

The thesis, using the theoretical concepts of Alfred Mahan and John Mearsheimer and the supporting arguments of Paul Kennedy, focuses on soft power tools including free trade agreements and social networks as well as tangible assets such as infrastructure development, expansion through annexation and/or colonialism and naval capacity. I have included Mahan's theory of sea power as a necessity to achieve supremacy as it corresponds closely with the development of the British and American Empires. I have also used Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism as it helps explain the US' rise to hegemony and can help provide guidance on China's future strategy.

This comparison is then used, along with the opinions of some of the most well-respected geopolitical analysts and historians of the 21st century, in the final chapter of this thesis to address the geopolitical issues associated with China's rise including the United States' response.

KEYWORDS

Imperialism, Empire, Chinese Communist Party, Neoimperialism, Colonialism, Realism, Offensive Realism, Sea Power, Chokepoint

1.INTRODUCTION

Throughout the past 30 years, there has been considerable research done in analyzing the behavior of China and her rise to power. Although China currently spreads a message of “peaceful development” that is meant to assuage the fears of other countries, her expedited economic development has propelled the concern that China may use her newfound wealth as a lever for aggression against other nations. As the United States begins to withdraw from her position as the “world’s police”, the topic has increased in importance as more and more states have begun to fear that the balance of power will be disrupted as a result. With ongoing disputes regarding territorial rights over the South China Sea and domestic human rights abuses in far-flung provinces, China is a geopolitical wildcard and her decisions now will help shape the new world order and dictate whether or not the existing status quo of major powers following international law and order will be maintained as we move forward into the 21st century.

In this master thesis, I will analyze the behaviour of previous “empires” and compare this to what we have seen developing in China since the days of Triangular Diplomacy. In order to compare and contrast empires that spanned centuries and cover three diverse continents, I will focus on the types of actions of each country’s foreign policy including soft power tools such as involvement in free trade agreements as well as social mobility and diaspora and hard power such as naval development . This will be further explained later in the thesis.

Although there are other aspects that are important to consider regarding the increase in a state’s power such as defense treaties and military build-up, I have chosen to omit these topics with the exception of naval strength due to the emphasis on post-industrialized countries reliance on economic development as a precursor to military power. Modern military strength relies on strong economies and hence, it is a crucial aspect of their power. Therefore, I have decided in the scope of this thesis, I will focus on economic and infrastructure development might as it is a necessary precondition of military strength. There is also the interesting aspect of ideational forces that dictate the behaviour of a state and I have addressed these briefly when necessary. I

understand that these are important aspects; however, I will focus on the behaviours affecting infrastructure, expansion and economies as they are more observable in their implications.

The Importance of this Research

There are thousands of articles, books and academic journals and papers dedicated to the rise of China and what this means for the future. Although China has publicly stated numerous times that she wishes to develop peacefully and share prosperity with her neighbors, many political scientists see China as a grave threat to other countries due to her desire to restore her illustrious past. China is already a global state and has the ability to greatly impact other parts of the world. Political scientists and governments around the world are watching China closely to see what her future policies will be. Many of these governments and individuals have expressed concern about how the future will look as we move farther into the 21st century.

While China's early organization into statehood may have caused complacency in regards to technological, economic and military development as discussed in the chapter of this thesis on Imperial China, China seems to have learned her lesson and will do whatever it takes to not repeat it. Peaceful development has become a new catch phrase to explain China's rapid economic growth and increasing presence on the global stage. While maintaining an external appearance of "peaceful development", an important question is what will happen when China has finally risen? Will China become an imperialist power? Is she already one? What will the US do when confronted with a viable challenger for supremacy in Asia? In his book *Overthrow*, Stephen Kinzer describes the late 19th century as a time when "outsiders watched the emergence of this new America with a combination of awe and fear."¹ The same can be said for China today.

While China is rising, there is a consensus that the United States is in decline as THE economic and political powerhouse. "In a 2009 Pew Research poll, majorities or pluralities in thirteen of twenty-five countries believed that China would replace the United States as the world's leading superpower²" and in a bipartisan Smart Power Commission at the Center for Strategic and

¹ Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg. 81

² Nye, Joseph S. *The Future of Power*. Public Affairs, 2011. Pg xii

International Studies co-chaired by Joseph Nye, “concluded that America’s image and influence had declined in recent years, and that the United States had to move from exporting fear to inspiring optimism and hope.³” Unfortunately, this has not been the case and the US’ foreign policy has become increasingly unstable under the leadership of President Trump.

It is not only America’s international reputation that has been declining in recent decades. Infrastructure and basic social services such as education and health care are also showing a downward trend which has the potential to destabilize the country.. In a 2015 article on Fortune.com, the United States scores poorly compared to other developed nations in sectors such as health care, median wealth per person, access to higher education and income inequality⁴. In a paper published by the World Health Organization, the United States now ranks 38th in terms of maximizing public health⁵ and has a GINI coefficient of 45, far higher than other developed countries in Europe and Asia⁶.

As the US faces growing domestic issues and a loss of status in the international community, more and more states, especially in the developing world, are looking for a new “role model” and turning towards China for guidance. While it is certain that she is striving for regional hegemony, it is less clear to see whether she has further global ambitions as well. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the rise and decline of recent empires to provide an analytical framework of how China’s activities amongst the international community can be interpreted.

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & THESIS LAYOUT

“In the year 1500, the date chosen by numerous scholars to mark the divide between modern and premodern times, it was by no means obvious to the inhabitants of Europe that their continents was poised to dominate much of the rest of the earth.⁷” Asia had been the home of vast, coherent empires while Europe consisted of small powers that were constantly battling

³ Nye, Joseph S. *The Future of Power*. Public Affairs, 2011. Pg xiv

⁴ “12 Signs America Is on the Decline.” *Fortune*, fortune.com/2015/07/20/united-states-decline-statistics-economic/.

⁵ “Measuring Overall Health System Performance for 191 Countries.” World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/paper30.pdf>

⁶ ‘Country Comparison: Distribution of Family Income - GINI Index.’ *Central Intelligence Agency*, Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html

⁷ Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg. 54

each other for supremacy. As such, the Anglo-centric world order is a relatively new phenomenon. The United Kingdom began to dominate the globe in the 18th century while the United States began her ascent to hegemonic power in the 19th century. While it is now hard to imagine the pre-Columbian world, the supremacy of Europe and her descendents was not inevitable and is certainly not perpetual.

Over thousands of years, China had built up a vast empire both through force and through international diplomacy. Using the tribute system, China's economic strength allowed her to dictate affairs of her region. In the early 15th century, the Chinese had access to the world's largest ships and were able to sail as far as Zanzibar, the Red Sea and Malacca. China even had tributary relationships with 36 "countries". While Europe was gradually expanding her power throughout the globe thanks to the wealth derived from her New World colonies, it was at this crucial point that formerly powerful China decided to isolate itself from world affairs. The past imperial history of China is important to remember when analyzing the behaviour of present day China. The Chinese view the 21st century as a continuation of their illustrious history and according to some historians and political scientists, there is a strong desire to relive the days when the Chinese empire was a regional hegemon. As a result, I have included a brief summary in Chapter Two of China's history and the resonating reasons behind her decisions to withdraw from the international community at the beginning of this thesis.

In Chapter Three, I will provide a brief interpretation of the rise and fall of the British Empire in regards to international relations and geopolitics. After the Industrial Revolution, England's empire grew substantially and eventually became the first global empire. I will discuss the foreign policy that the United Kingdom undertook during this time period, what their main drive for expansion was and what resources they used to eventually dominate the world. "The sun never sets on the British Empire" was certainly an apt expression for the empire that spanned the globe. Territories as diverse as India to Zimbabwe fell under British rule and the impacts of this colonialism are still apparent even today. Through a unique form of imperialism, the relatively small United Kingdom were able to dominate vast, highly populated countries such as India. The British were then able to spread their institutions, culture and language and create a world order that would linger for centuries. Throughout the world, British influence

can be seen in governments such as the one in Hong Kong, sports such as India and Pakistan's love of cricket, cultural tastes and the layout of towns and cities as in Australia and the northeastern United States.

I will follow this in Chapter Four with a similar analysis of the United States' rise to great power status with a specific emphasis on 1890 - 1970. To fully analyze the United State's ascent from a former colony to a geopolitical superpower, I will cover some of the major events of American history as they pertain to geographical expansion both across North America and across international waters as well as economic and industrial changes that have impacted the international community through various foreign policy decisions. While being ideologically against colonialism and a proponent of self-determination, the foreign policy, as well as the policy of expansion westwards across North America in the 19th century of the United States has repeatedly shown characteristics of imperialism and bore resemblance to the British Empire which I will cover in greater detail and provide specific examples of.

In the 20th century, the institutions that were created in the aftermath of World War Two gave the United States further leverage over other nations and strengthened America's economic imperialism over other states. The Bretton Woods Twins created a financial structure in which the US was a central feature. The Marshall Plan paved the way for the American sphere of influence and under the pretext of the Cold War, the United States engaged in military conflicts spanning the globe. I will also cover these aspects of American policy in greater detail. This is important to include in this thesis as the strategy that the US implemented after her industrial revolution was more aggressive to other nations than China's growth has been thus far and provides a point of analysis between the American empire and the burgeoning 21st century Chinese empire.

Next, I will discuss China's re-development from 1973 until the present day in Chapter Five. As mentioned previously, China in the pre-modern era was a strong, unified state with one of the world's largest economies. Using the previous foreign policy analysis of imperialist Britain and America, along with the current foreign policy of China and statements of Xi Jinping, I will analyze the historical comparison between the two great Anglosphere nations and

their development of the world order and to ascertain whether or not China will be able and willing to replicate this. Based on both classical realist and liberalist theory, China should, or at least aspire to, behave similar to other great empires of the post-Columbian time period. This subject matter is crucial for policy makers to understand in regards to their relations with China and its neighbouring countries.

Finally, in Chapter 6 of this thesis, I will compare the existing literature and opinions of political scientists, along with my own comparative analysis to understand what China's strategy is and how the international community is reacting to it.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to truly compare and contrast the complexity of the British, American and Chinese empires, it is imperative to follow a scientific realist approach using qualitative research with a specific focus on case studies. Case studies create a basis for comparison that is crucial to understand such a comprehensive subject. In the case studies, I will focus on each country's rise to power as this most closely resembles China's current stage of economic development. For continuity purposes, I have labeled the tangible aspects of each empire, such as the expansion of territory, naval capacity and the development of infrastructure both domestically and internationally as "hardware of an empire" and the intangible aspects, such as economic measures, social factors and trade agreements as "software of an empire." For the cases of Imperial China, the United States and United Kingdom, I will also identify the key resonating reasons for their decline. This division between hardware and software of corresponds with Alfred Mahan's six necessities for sea power which I will expand more on in the theoretical framework section of this chapter.

For the purposes of this master thesis and to ensure a comparative analysis within the constraints of this thesis, I have focused my research from 1860 until present day with the exception of the ancient Chinese Empire due to the changes to the geopolitical environment in the mid-19th century, including, but not limited to, the unification of Germany as a competitor to British power in Europe and the emergence of the United States as a unified power with strong military capabilities. I have included background historical information pre-dating this

time period as necessary but this is by no means a historical account and should not be treated as such.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout my analysis, I will assume that the states were acting in a realist manner with an emphasis on survival as the most important factor in international relations and that their strategies to this, although different, were designed to achieve the same result. By using the same elements when analyzing China's, Britain's and America's growth, I am able to identify the applicable theoretical concepts from realist theories. This will enable me to determine China's future trajectory.

When looking at the growth of the British and American empires, it is imperative to study Alfred Mahan's theory of sea power due to their reliance on trade and economic growth. Mahan believed that the reason that Great Britain was successful, and Holland was not, was due to her control of the seas which paved her way to become the world's leading military, economic and political power. He described six fundamental elements of sea power including geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, size of population, character of the people and character of the government⁸. He called for the necessity of a large navy and control over sea lines of communication and choke points. In his most famous book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan described the wars between Holland, England and France and why England emerged ahead in the end. This was ultimately what allowed her to take control North America and India as well as Australia and South Africa.

Although it was written based on the development of Britain, *The Influence*, published in 1890, had a profound impact on the foreign policy of the United States at the turn of the 20th century - arguably the time of America's most rampant imperialistic growth. Mahan's work had an especially strong influence over President Theodore Roosevelt and in a 1890 review of *The Influence of Sea Power*, Roosevelt claimed that "one or two of the points which Captain Mahan brings out have a very important bearing on our present condition, especially in view of the

⁸ Sempa, Francis P. "The Geopolitical Vision of Alfred Thayer Mahan." *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 30 Dec. 2014, thediplomat.com/2014/12/the-geopolitical-vision-of-alfred-thayer-mahan/.

increased interest which is felt in the navy and coast defense.” At least partially based off of Mahan’s work, Roosevelt believed that it was necessary to develop a large navy including battleships and expand America’s influence into the Pacific Ocean.

China’s Belt & Road Initiative, which I will discuss in more detail later, both supports and contradicts Mahan’s theory. Naval bases, ports and maritime supply lines throughout the Indian Ocean and South China Sea will give China considerable control over the waters and provides an alternative to the US-controlled Pacific Ocean. However, the other principal aspect of the Belt & Road Initiative is the overland routes that will connect China with Europe via Central Asia. I will discuss more on this later. This supports John Mearsheimer’s beliefs regarding the necessity of having a strong army and the stopping power of water. I will expand more on this theory below.

Additionally, I have also applied theoretical concepts from Paul Kennedy and the previously mentioned John Mearsheimer. Mearsheimer pioneered the concept of offensive realism and I have considered his theory in the final section of this thesis. The theory of offensive realism states that nations strive to be the most powerful as it ensures their own survival based on the three defining characteristic of the international system. “First, the main actors are states that operate in anarchy, which simply means that there is no higher authority above them. Second, all great powers have some offensive military capability, which means that they have the wherewithal to hurt each other. Third, no state can know the intentions of other states with certainty, especially their future intentions.”⁹ By being stronger and more powerful (both militarily and economically) than their neighbors, they are “free to roam around the globe and interfere in other regions of the world¹⁰” since there is no immediate threat from within their region. This then allows them to impede the rise of another regional hegemon which could ultimately threaten their state survival. The United States has been a classic example of a nation following an offensive realist strategy and I will explain more deeply on her foreign policy in Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁹ Mearsheimer, John J. “Why China’s Rise Will Not Be Peaceful.” 2004.
<http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0034b.pdf>

¹⁰ Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy.
Ch10

The most important relationship to consider when analyzing the theoretical approach of offensive realism in the 21st century is the relationship between China and the United States. In his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer questions what “America’s past behaviour tell us about the rise of China? In particular, how should we expect China to conduct itself as it grows more powerful? And how should we expect the United States and China’s neighbors to react to a strong China?”¹¹ Based off of Mearsheimer’s theory of offensive realism, China should be working towards securing her role as a regional hegemon in Asia and her behaviour should be similar to that of the US in the 20th century while she was securing her status as a regional hegemon in the Western hemisphere. Interestingly, while China is increasing her power both economically and militarily, the United States has little option but to maintain amicable relations with her due to the interconnectedness of the two nations’ economies. This is in direct contrast with the US’ behaviour towards other emerging regional hegemons such as Germany and Japan during World War Two. With growing domestic concerns such as crumbling infrastructure and civil unrest, the US simply can not afford to lose a valuable trading partner or exercise military aggression.

In his book *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, Kennedy suggested that states need to generate enough wealth before they can expand. However, the stronger that the states become, the more of their resources need to be spent on maintaining their position. This corresponds with the idea of imperial overstretch and can easily be seen with the decline of the Ancient Chinese Empire and more recently with the decline of the British Empire. By the end of the 19th century, Britain had overextended herself and two extremely costly wars in the first half of the 20th century caused the disintegration of her empire and paved the way for the rise of the American Empire. Due to space constraints, I have focused only on the rise of great powers but it is important to note that the United States is currently in a state of decline. Costly military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the high price tag associated with maintaining military bases around the world has put a strain on American resources and this can be seen in the crumbling American infrastructure. This decline has arguably opened the door for China to take a more proactive stance within the international community.

¹¹ Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch 10

In summary, I endeavour to apply Mahan's concept of sea supremacy combined with Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism to understand China's motives through the use of historical analysis. I have incorporated Kennedy's reasoning for the decline of empires when applicable. Historical analysis is a fitting methodology as Mahan himself believed that "in history entirely past, where an issue has reached sufficiently definite to show that one period has ended and another has begun, it is possible for a careful observer to detect, and with some precision, formulate the leading causes, and to trace the interaction that has produced the result."¹²

1.4 DEFINING CONCEPTS

Empire

When considering the basic definition of the word empire as per the Oxford Dictionary as an "extensive group of states or countries under a single supreme authority, formerly especially an emperor or empress", it is questionable whether or not the United States or contemporary China would qualify due to a lack of a single supreme authority over a collection of states.

However, some political scientists, including Charles Tilly in the book *After Empire* and Niall Ferguson in the book *Colossus*, view the rule of empires as being both direct and indirect. According to Tilly, "an empire is a large composite polity linked to a central power by indirect rule. The central power exercises some military and fiscal control in each major segment of its imperial domain, but tolerates the two major elements of indirect rule: (1) retention or establishment of particular, distinct compacts for the government of each segment; and (2) exercise of power through intermediaries who enjoy considerable autonomy within their own domains in return for the delivery of compliance, tribute, and military collaboration with the center."¹³ In addition, In his book *Colossus*, renowned historian Niall Ferguson argues that "imperial power can be acquired by more than one type of political system."¹⁴

Most interestingly, Robert Kaplan suggests that "empires are not sought consciously. Rather, as

¹² Mahan, Alfred. *The Problem of Asia and Its Effect upon International Policies*. University Press. London. 1900. Digital Copy Introduction. *HathiTrust*, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081599031;view.

¹³ Barkey, Karen, and Mark Von Hagen. *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: the Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*. Westview Press, 1997. Pg 3

¹⁴ Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus*. Penguin Books, 2004. Pg. 11

states become stronger, they develop needs and - counterintuitively - a whole new set of insecurities that lead them to expand overseas in an organic fashion.¹⁵” This can be seen with both the both the overseas expansion of the United Kingdom and United States, either in the form of securing new territory to import raw materials sourced from abroad or to find additional export markets. This can also certainly be true in terms of China today especially when considering her role in the affairs of Africa. I will explore more in this topic in the following chapters of this thesis.

Imperialism

Imperialism is another concept that will feature prominently in this thesis. In his book *Imperialism*, Winfried Baumgart describes “classical imperialism” as the “expansionist policies which modern industrial powers pursued after the last two decades of the nineteenth century...in order to distinguish them from the imperialism of other periods and to point out that they were the main characteristic of that epoch¹⁶.” Based on this definition, the late 19th century British and Americans practiced “classical imperialism”. This concept is further broken down into formal and informal imperialism with informal imperialism focusing more on free-trade and other economic factors rather than actual governance.¹⁷ Although during certain time periods within the peak of each empire’s influence there are exceptions to these categorizations such as the US control over the territories won in the Spanish-American War, the American Empire would be considered informal imperialism while the British Empire can be classified as formal imperialism.

In the *Dictionary of Geopolitics*, imperialism is said to be “as old as empires, but the nature of imperialism has changed from formal to informal in the twentieth century.¹⁸” This supports the ideas of Tilly and Ferguson as mentioned above.

This categorization follows a similar argument as Fergusson in *Colossus* when describing an

15 Kaplan, Robert. *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. New York. Random House, 2010. Digital Copy. Ch. 15

16 Baumgart, Winfried, and Ben V. Mast. *Imperialism: The Idea and Reality of British and French Colonial Expansion, 1880-1914*. Oxford: Oxford U, 1989. Print.

17 Baumgart, Winfried, and Ben V. Mast. *Imperialism: The Idea and Reality of British and French Colonial Expansion, 1880-1914*. Oxford: Oxford U, 1989. Print. Pg 6

18 O’Loughlin, John. *The Dictionary of Geopolitics*. Greenwood Press. 1994. Pg. 123

empire and highlights the difficulty in providing a finite definition for both the terms imperialism and empire. For the purposes of this thesis, I will include both the formal and informal forms of imperialism.

Infrastructure

In this thesis, I have analyzed the development of certain infrastructure projects which have helped each empire to expand and to maintain their supremacy. According to Investopedia.com, infrastructure is “ the basic physical systems of a business or nation; transportation, communication, sewage, water and electric systems are all examples of infrastructure. These systems tend to be high-cost investments; however, they are vital to a country's economic development and prosperity.¹⁹” Infrastructure is an often overlooked aspect of empire building with more emphasis being placed on military or economic activity such as industrialization. However, from Roman roads made of blocks of stone to bullet trains and 21st century naval bases, infrastructure has been the backbone of every empire. Without roads, sea lines or channels of communication, the empires used in the case studies of this thesis would never have been able to expand at the same speed or magnitude of which they did.

1.5 CASE STUDIES

I have chosen three historical case studies comprising of Imperial China, the United Kingdom during the peak of the British Empire and the United States from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. I have chosen to look at only these three case studies due to the importance of comparing empires that occurred after the Industrial Revolution as these empires truly operated on a global scale and were able to influence events happening around the world. Imperial China is included as a case study due to the obvious influence this history still has on modern-day Chinese diplomacy. Spain was considered due to her access to a plethora of resources and wealth due to her vast colonies in Central and South America; however, by the start of the Industrial Revolution, the empire had been severely weakened and would lose the majority of her colonies shortly after in the early 19th century. In addition, the Soviet Union was also considered as a potential case study. However, her long-lasting impact has been limited to the

¹⁹Staff, Investopedia. “Infrastructure.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 26 Apr. 2018, www.investopedia.com/terms/i/infrastructure.asp.

former Soviet Bloc and due to space constraints, it has been rejected as a case study.

In order to compare China's potential strategy for imperial expansion, I have chosen to analyze China's diplomatic behaviour from the mid-1970s to the present day based on the same parameters (economic policies, infrastructure and territorial expansion) as the Ancient Chinese, British and American empires. I have chosen this time period due to the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the beginning of Deng Xiaoping's governance in 1978. Deng started reforms in many aspects of political, economic and social life and is credited with opening China to international trade and investment²⁰. By comparing China's behaviour of this era to the realist activities of Imperial China, the UK and US during their ascent and then at the pinnacle of their strength, I believe that it will show the commonalities amongst four very different time periods and cultures while also highlighting the contrasts between contemporary China and the Anglo-American empires. In addition, by taking into account the psychological impact of China's extensive imperial history on both her populace and government, I hope to show the impact that this history has on contemporary strategy.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The dispute over the true meaning of concepts of imperialism and empire have forced the author to define narrower meanings to these concepts. As a result, all readers may not immediately agree with the subject material or the comparisons being made across time and organizations. However, it is imperative to define the topics for the purpose of this research based on the understandings that resonate most clearly throughout academia and the general population.

The rise and fall of empires such as the United Kingdom and the United States are extremely complex and impossible to fully cover in the context of this paper. As a result, I have focused primarily on each state's geopolitical and geoeconomic actions on the world stage through a classification of software and hardware as explained above and included information on the economic and domestic issues only where the information is imperative to include. This thesis assumes that the reader has some understanding of the historical process that enabled each state

20 "Deng Xiaoping." *Biography.com*. A&E Networks Television, 03 July 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2017.

to obtain their position as a power without an equal peer. However, I have included some historical background information when it was necessary to include to ensure a reader's understanding of an analysis.

Since it is difficult to decipher the underlying motives behind certain foreign policy decisions of all power players, I have chosen to omit foreign policy statements unless necessary and focus instead on the actions of states. The exception to this is contemporary China where it is necessary to make assumptions on what future strategies she will take based on foreign policy statements currently being made under the government of Xi Jinping. Furthermore, due to the nature of this thesis and the changes that are happening at the time of writing, I have cited newspaper articles from highly reputed sources and opinion pieces and quotes from highly esteemed geopolitical scholars such as Robert Kaplan and George Friedman. I have also analyzed quotes from Xi Jinping and experts on Chinese history and current affairs.

On a final note, China is a constantly evolving state with an economy that has begun to slow down. This may weaken the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy in the opinions of its populace and unprecedented actions may be taken as a result. There has also been considerable emphasis placed on China's environmental degradation and the impact that this has on her citizens. In addition, the United States, as China's biggest economic partner and competitor, is currently undergoing a period of erratic behaviour towards both her allies and long-standing adversaries. This, combined with China's domestic concerns, may lead to a period of unprecedented activity from both states. Therefore, this thesis is written based on common knowledge available to the public as of July 2018.

2. PAX SINICA - CHINA'S IMPERIAL PAST

China is widely considered as one of the first nation states and formed as early as 3-4000 years ago. China is also the only ancient civilization still in existence today. This long history, and the way that the Chinese view themselves as a result, is an integral part of any study of contemporary China. Unlike other western countries, including the United States, Chinese do not identify themselves simply as a nation-state. They see themselves as a civilization.

In this chapter, I will begin by discussing the Warring States Period as it offers insight into the 21st century foreign policy of the Chinese Communist Party. I will then provide a brief description of the most important dynasties related to trade and economic growth. Finally, I will provide examples of the hardware and software of the Ancient Chinese Empire. Although the Ancient Chinese Empire existed and reached its pinnacle prior to the Industrial Revolution, this period of history is extremely important to consider when analyzing China's behaviour today due to the reflectionist view that her populace and government appear to have. In the book *Restless Empire*, Odd Westad explains that while many Chinese may not know about specific events or time periods of their history, "they do carry with them concepts of justice, rules of behavior, and view's of China's place in the world that have been shaped by practices developed centuries ago."²¹

2.1 HOW CHINA BECAME CHINA

It is important to consider China's Warring States period in order to fully understand her economic and political strategy today. Like wars amongst kingdoms and city-states throughout European history, the "wars that occurred were not generally ones due to diplomatic or territorial frictions among the seven states but instead were wars stemming from one state attempting to conquer and control all of the states. In other words, the formation of the empire came not as a result of anarchy but as a result of greed and drive for power."²² In his book *On China*, Henry Kissinger compares this period to to the "interregnum between the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the end of the Second World War, when a multiplicity of European

²¹ Westad, Odd Arne. *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*. Basic Books, 2015. Digital Copy, Ch. 1

²² *The Warring States Period of Ancient China*, www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/warringstates.htm

states was struggling for preeminence within the framework of the balance of power.²³” If this information is correct, China did not come together as one entity due to any exceptional reason; she formed based on realist principles of state survival.

“During the Warring States period, rising challengers overthrew many great powers. In each case, the successful rising power induced complacency in the old emperor by concealing any ambition to replace him. The worst thing a rising leader could do was to provoke confrontation with his more powerful rival before the point of maximum opportunity. Only in the final phase of a power bid, when the emperor was too weak to resist and had been abandoned by his former allies, did the rising challenger reveal his true aims.²⁴”

2.2 WHY CHINA?

After the Warring States Period, China began to consolidate into one large civilization region. This region grew to become one of the most populous, developed territories in the world with a complex network of tributary systems. Civilizations outside of the tributary rings were considered barbarians and the Chinese viewed themselves as the center of the world. “China produced a greater share of total world GDP than any Western society in eighteen of the last twenty centuries. As late as 1830, it produced over 30 percent of world GDP -- an amount exceeding the GDP of Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the United States combined.²⁵

There were two major factors that characterized the Chinese Empire that made China an exceptional civilization. Until 1644 and the start of the Qing Dynasty, the basic ideology behind Pax Sinica was the tribute system. Much like the world system created by the US in the 20th century, the tribute system was based on the premise of “accept our superiority and we will confer upon you political legitimacy, develop a trade partnership and provide a range of what are known in the language of modern international affairs as public goods. These included policing the maritime commons, mediating disputes and granting access to China’s would-be universal system of learning, broadly based on Confucianism²⁶”. Borders were soft and the

²³ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Ch 1 Digital Copy

²⁴ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Ch 1 Digital Copy

²⁵ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Ch 1 Digital Copy

²⁶ W. French, Howard. “What Kind of Empire Will China Be?” *Literary Hub*, 12 May 2017, lithub.com/what-kind-of-empire-will-china-be/.

Westphalian system of state sovereignty did not exist in the Chinese perspective as she was the center for universe. All other territories were subordinate and revolved around her.

While the tribute system dictated international relations, the mandarin system controlled everything else. Starting from the 7th century, China's government was administered by a group of mandarins who formed an elite bureaucracy. China's system of government lent itself to stability. Firstly, it relied on meritocracy and mandarins had to pass a gruelling exam. "By extending a relatively uniform administrative structure down to the county level, by integrating county-level gentry into a system of competition for imperial favor, by rotating imperial bureaucrats frequently and refusing to station them in their provinces of origin, by stimulating internal mobility and reducing public recognition of ethnic distinctness, and by making effective shows of central forces through much of its vast territory, the imperial state maintained most of its dynasties for centuries between collapses and conquests.²⁷" China, effectively, had managed to create a homogenous state with a collective identity. "When it entered the modern period, China had for well over one thousand years a fully formed imperial bureaucracy recruited by competitive examination, permeating and regulating all aspects of the economy and society.²⁸"

The Mandate of Heaven also provided a sense of accountability from the government towards its people and can be compared to the social contract that democratic states are expected to have with their populace today. The principle ideology behind the Mandate of Heaven was that the emperor "was answerable to Heaven and indirectly answerable to the Chinese people. If the emperor and his government failed to govern responsibly, mistreated the people or abused their power, their authority to rule could be withdrawn. Some of the signs that Heaven had withdrawn its royal mandated included natural disasters such as flood, droughts, famines or pandemics.²⁹" In summary, if a dynasty were weakened by either internal or external forces, it was considered a Mandate of Heaven that another dynasty take control.

27 Barkey, Karen, and Mark Von Hagen. *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: the Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*. Westview Press, 1997. Pg. 4

28 Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Pg. 61

29 "The Mandate of Heaven." *Chinese Revolution*, 14 July 2015, alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/mandate-of-heaven-confucianism/.

The Song Dynasty (960 - 1279) and Yuan Dynasty (1279 - 1368)

During the Song Dynasty, there was rapid economic growth and social change including “growth in commerce and maritime trade, urban expansion and technological innovation.³⁰” In 742, the population of China was roughly 50 million. Due to advances in agriculture, by 1100, the population had reached 100 million. China under the Song Dynasty had a highly integrated economy and many cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants.³¹ However, despite their economic and naval superiority, the Song Dynasty did not attempt to extend beyond China’s maritime borders. It was not until the Yuan Dynasty that an invasion of Japan was attempted.

The Yuan Dynasty are notable as they were the direct descendants of the Mongols and the first foreign dynasty in China. Although the dynasty was weakened due to internal disputes and then overtaken by the Ming Dynasty, there are many notable achievements made during this time which facilitated trade and economic development. The empire was the first to use paper notes as a main form of currency which made it much easier to carry large sums of money while the reincarnation of the Silk Road was an integral part of the infrastructure of the Mongol Empire. The Silk Road connected China to Europe and consisted of a network of trade routes across Eurasia. Similar to China’s goals of the Belt & Road Initiative today, the Silk Road facilitated safe and efficient trade throughout the Eurasian continent.

Due to the efforts of the Song and Yuan dynasties, by 1300, “China was the world’s leading economy and largest market [...] China’s huge population was unified, and order maintained by the emperor, who ruled as the son of heaven, holding power through virtue and piety.³²” The Chinese viewed themselves as the center of everything and with good reason. While China and its tributaries represented a complex, highly developed society, Europe was just beginning to show her true potential.

³⁰*Timeline of Chinese History and Dynasties | Asia for Educators | Columbia University*, afe.easia.columbia.edu/timelines/china_timeline.htm.

³¹ “China in 1000 CE.” *The Commune System (1950s) | Asia for Educators | Columbia University*, afe.easia.columbia.edu/songdynasty-module.

³² Dobson, Wendy. *Gravity Shift How Asia's New Economic Powerhouses Will Shape the 21st Century*. Toronto University Press, 2010. Pg 12-23

The Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644)

Despite the advances made in the previous centuries, the Ming Dynasty represents a turning point in Chinese history. “By 1420, when the Forbidden City was completed, Ming China had an incontrovertible claim to be the most advanced civilization in the world.³³” However, at its peak, China began to turn inward in the 15th century due to the high expense of outbound expeditions, a fear of an overland attack from the north and an overpowering sense of arrogance and superiority of their own level of development over barbarians outside of China’s realm. “In this ‘Restoration’ atmosphere, the all-important officialdom was concerned to preserve and recapture the past, not to create a brighter future based upon overseas expansion and commerce.³⁴” As a result, her well developed institutions began to collapse. “Turning inwards was fatal, especially for a complex and densely populated society like China’s...per-capita income stagnated in the Ming era and the capital stock actually shrank.³⁵” The country continued to decline while Europe became stronger due to the wealth gained through colonization and advances in technology.

The insular behaviour of the Ming Dynasty has provided a simplified answer to the long decline of Imperial China and ultimately, led the empire to being unable to compete on the international stage. However, in his thought provoking book *The China Boom*, Johns Hopkins University Professor Ho-fung Hung expands on this simplified view to describe how China’s system of government and inability to adapt to a rapidly changing world caused the empire’s decline. Hung explains that the West rose to prominence due to their ability to amass capital and the integral role that government support played in this. This supports Kennedy’s research on the rise of empires. Whereas Imperial China maintained a paternalistic style of governance, which can be seen in the ideologies of the Mandate of Heaven and of Confucianism which gave more rights to the working classes, Western governments placed more emphasis on the rights of business owners and entrepreneurs.

33 Ferguson, Niall. *Civilization*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print. Pg. 22

34 Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. Vintage, 1988. Digital Copy. Ch. 1

35 Ferguson, Niall. *Civilization*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print. Pg. 44

Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1912)

The Qing Dynasty was the last dynasty of Imperial China and although they tried to regain some of China's former glory and strength, it was not enough to remain competitive with western states. At the start of the 19th century, China dwarfed its neighbors and all European countries except Russia in regards to size, population and resources. The Industrial Revolution changed everything in favor of the West. Despite being one of the most advanced societies in the world for over a thousand years, due to the insular ideology of the Ming Dynasty, China was completely unprepared for the arrival of Europeans and, ironically for a civilization that invented gunpowder, did not have the military technology to compete with the European powers. They soon took advantage of China's weaknesses.

Domestic issues were causing the stability of the empire to decline further. "The Manchus had attempted to control the country and its neighbors in ways that no other rules had done before, and by the early nineteenth century they were suffering the consequences of imperial overstretch: The coffers were emptying out, the military was tired of engagements abroad, and the population was becoming weary of a police state that was less and less effective.³⁶" On top of this, in a situation similar to the fate of the US 150 years later, "the overall economic pattern in nineteenth-century was what economists call uneven growth. Some parts of the economy grew quite rapidly, while others stagnated, even disappeared.³⁷" Urban, coastal areas became richer while the rural inland areas became poorer. The pressure of a rapidly increasing population was causing unrest and disorder, which caused peasant revolts. One of the strongest assets of Imperial China, a government based off of meritocracy, was deteriorating due to corruption and favoritism. Between the pressure of internal forces and external players trying to forcibly open China, the Qing Dynasty began to crack

The Century of Humiliation

Throughout the reign of the Qing Dynasty, China was broken apart by European powers beginning with the loss of Hong Kong after the First Opium War. The time period foreign dominance is referred to domestically as the "Century of Humiliation" and provides an easy scapegoat for the Chinese Communist Party to explain the decline of Chinese civilization.

³⁶ Westad, Odd Arne. *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*. Basic Books, 2015. Digital Copy, Ch. 1

³⁷ Westad, Odd Arne. *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*. Basic Books, 2015. Ch. 1

However, while it is commonly believed by Chinese that China's decline in the 19th century stemmed from the forced opening of its economy and the "negative effects of Western imperialism after the Anglo-Chinese war, "a more recent hypothesis is that China's long-term political unity had a stifling effect on the country's technological and strategic development at a time when Europe was divided into rival nation states. It was their competition at home and abroad that gave the Occident its decisive economic and military edge over the populous Orient.³⁸"

"Industrialization and the growth of nationalism had made the West more powerful and more assertive at a time when the Chinese had passed the peak of their power.³⁹" The ignorance of the world around them and the arrogance of their own superiority had allowed other nations, including Great Britain and the United States, to surpass the political and economic power of China. "China's pretensions to universal hegemony vanished in an age in which the Chinese were widely scorned - a once-proud empire reduced to semicolonial status.⁴⁰" This time period in China's history is extremely important to remember when analyzing China's future strategy. China was left vulnerable due to her own arrogance and it is unlikely that Xi Jinping and the CCP will allow this to happen again.

2.3 AN IMPERIAL TOOLBOX

Below I will discuss the hardware and software of the Ancient Chinese Empire. For the purposes of this thesis, I have focused on certain key aspects of the development of the empire that were crucial for her success in building an empire. Expansion and infrastructure enabled China to spread across East Asia and soft power enabled her to maintain control over an expansive territory for millennia.

³⁸ Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. Penguin Books, 2009. Pg. 259

³⁹ Cohen, Warren I. *America's Response to China: a History of Sino-American Relations*. Columbia University Press, 2010. Pg. 6

⁴⁰ Cohen, Warren I. *America's Response to China: a History of Sino-American Relations*. Columbia University Press, 2010. Pg. 7

2.3.1 HARDWARE OF AN EMPIRE

Expansion

There has been much discussion of Imperial China and her indifference to expanding beyond her shores. Unlike the later British and American empires, the Chinese empire “acquired no overseas colonies and showed relatively little interest in the countries beyond its coast. It developed no rationale for venturing abroad to convert the barbarians to Confucian principles or Buddhist virtues.⁴¹” With the exception of the Yuan Dynasty (which was created and led by the Mongols), no dynasty attempted to reach Japan, which arguably would have provided an opportunity for eastward expansion.

However, western, northern and southern expansion proved to be a different story. During the reign of the Qing Dynasty, China gained the territories of modern day Xinjiang, Tibet, Mongolia and Manchuria. The annexation of Xinjiang was especially brutal. However, like other empires before and after her, the strain of adding new territory quickly weakened the empire further. These territorial disputes are still plague China today and in the 21st century, China battles separatism within her western provinces which has led to deadly terrorist attacks.

41 Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Ch 1 Digital Copy



Figure 1: Qing Empire circa 1820
 Source: Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation

Infrastructure

“United by a vast system of canals connecting the great rivers and population centers, China was for centuries the world’s most productive economy and most populous trading area.⁴³” While Europe was still an area of power struggles and cities were underdeveloped, China had built extensive infrastructure including a complex system of canals and irrigation systems as early as the 11th century. In the 7th century, the existing infrastructure of the Grand Canal, originally built in the 5th century, was extended to connect the Yellow River to the Yangtze. This allowed China to be able to move supplies from the northern part of the country to the southern part.⁴⁴ Prior to the Industrial Revolution, it was the world’s largest engineering project and consisted of more than 2,000 kilometers of waterways by the 13th century. Like the Erie Canal built over a millennium later, the Grand Canal linked the agricultural areas of

42 “Qing Empire circa 1820 EN.svg.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Qing_Empire_circa_

43 Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Ch. 1 Digital Copy

44 Marshall, Tim. *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything about the World*. Scribner Book Company, 2016. Digital Copy. Ch. 2

China to the cities and was an important medium for both foodstuffs and communication.⁴⁵

The Silk Road, as mentioned above, provided an overland trade route across China, through Central Asia to Europe where traders could safely travel and find food, accommodation and supplies along the way. The route stretched 4000 miles across Eurasia and consisted of caravan tracts and sea routes. The ancient road was used from the times of the Roman Empire and although usage dropped during times in instability, the route was reincarnated under the Mongol Empire. Along the route, there was a “ large network of strategically located trading posts, markets and thoroughfares designed to streamline the transport, exchange, distribution and storage of goods.⁴⁶” The goods traded included not only silk but also “fruits and vegetables, livestock, grain, leather and hides, tools, religious objects, artwork, precious stones and metals and—perhaps more importantly—language, culture, religious beliefs, philosophy and science.” Innovations in technology were also spread along the route and the use of gunpowder and paper spread westward from China towards Europe. The route was eventually closed due to a dispute between the Ottoman Empire and China.

The sea and overland routes of the Silk Road can be seen in Figure 2. These routes were integral to linking China with the Middle East and Europe and serve as a prototype for China’s 21st century Belt & Road Initiative.

⁴⁵ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. “The Grand Canal.” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, whc.unesco.org/en/list/1443.

⁴⁶ History.com Staff. “Silk Road.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2017, www.history.com/topics/silk-road.

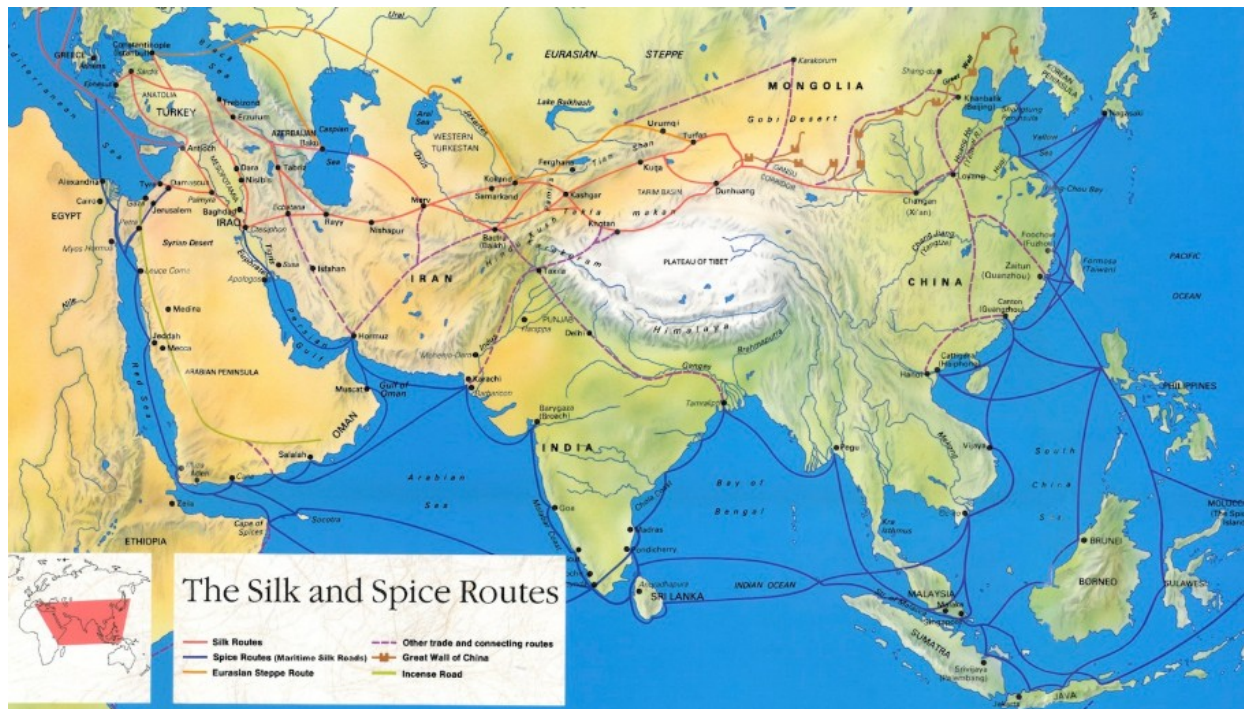


Figure 2: The Silk and Spice Routes

Source: UNESCO

Sea Supremacy - Zheng He's Navy

Although China can only be considered a sea power for a very short period of her extensive history, the accomplishments of Zheng He are an important part of Chinese history. Between 1405 - 1433, Admiral Zheng He proved China's naval dominance by completing seven voyages to Java, India, the Horn of Africa and the Strait of Hormuz. Zheng He's fleet consisted of 317 vessels including 60 massive "treasure-ships" which measured over 400 feet long.⁴⁷ His fleet dwarfed anything that had been thus far created in Europe and was significantly larger than even the Spanish Armada which existed a century and a half later.⁴⁸ "These voyages were not aimed for conquest of peoples or of territory. Instead, they were visits to swap Chinese silk and porcelain for exotic souvenirs such as zebras and giraffes."⁴⁹ After the death of Emperor Yongle, Zheng He's patron, the ships were destroyed and funds were diverted to build the Great Wall in order to protect China from northern invasions.

⁴⁷ Mizokami, Kyle. "5 Most Powerful Navies of All Time" <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/5-most-powerful-navies-all-time-13311>

⁴⁸ Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. Penguin Books Ltd., 2012. Ch 1 Digital Copy

⁴⁹ "The String of Pearls and the Maritime Silk Road." *China-US Focus*, 11 Feb. 2014, www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-string-of-pearls-and-the-maritime-silk-road/.

In an interesting twist in history for a state that had made such advancements in maritime technology, nearly 400 years after Zheng He's voyages the "Qing empire lost a war for the first time because of its opponent's superior naval firepower, maneuverability, and organization.⁵⁰" In a further reflection of Mahan's theory, the British were able to defeat the Chinese Empire precisely because of the strength of their navy.

Although the era of Zhong He ended 600 years ago and effectively marked the end to Imperial China's sea supremacy, according to a PLA's Academy of Military Science fellow, Zhou Bo, "Zheng He... left a legacy that is intangible but invaluable for China today. It is an image of China that the Chinese people would like to project again in the 21st century as they did 600 years ago: a country standing tall in the center of world, strong yet benign, and friendly to all."⁵¹

2.2.2 SOFTWARE OF AN EMPIRE

Geoeconomic Tools - The Tribute System

While Imperial China favored mercantilist policies rather than free trade, the tribute system, one of the most important foreign policy tools of the empire, is a precursor to the type of economic imperialism that was experienced under the British and American Empires.. "Like any hegemonic order [the tribute system] was backed by military force, but when the system functioned well, principles of reciprocity involving politics and economics permitted long periods of peaceful interaction."⁵² While some scholars say that the costs of maintaining the tribute system outweighed what they gained from it, the Chinese emperors relied on the foreign rulers' subservience to legitimize their rule.⁵³ "The tribute model never required territorial domination; it was a means of extending influence to realms beyond direct Chinese control."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Westad, Odd Arne. *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*. Basic Books, 2015. Digital Copy Ch. 1

⁵¹ "The String of Pearls and the Maritime Silk Road." *China-US Focus*, 11 Feb. 2014, www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-string-of-pearls-and-the-maritime-silk-road/.

⁵² W. French, Howard. "What Kind of Empire Will China Be?" *Literary Hub*, 12 May 2017, lithub.com/what-kind-of-empire-will-china-be/.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Khanna, Parag. *The Second World: How Emerging Powers Are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-First Century*. Penguin, 2009. Pg. 258

2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY & THEORETICAL APPLICATION

China built an empire based off of a highly organized form of government that practiced a complex form of diplomacy with her tributes. With an extremely advanced economy, infrastructure, government and system of diplomacy, China should have become one of the modern superpowers. However, isolationism under the Ming Dynasty brought about her long decline and due to this, she was unable to compete with the European powers. The Chinese feel that their supremacy was shattered unfairly by European powers and many historians and political scientists believe that the goal of China is to recreate her past glory.

Ancient Imperial China provides an interesting case study both disputing and supporting Mahan's theory of sea power. China only controlled the seas for a limited time period and in actuality, her expansion was all land-based. Yet, she was able to maintain her position as the most powerful state in East Asia without having a large navy or sea supremacy. In addition, the Chinese Empire lasted roughly 1700 years longer than the British Empire and without a doubt, China is the much more powerful nation today.

However, her decline does correspond with Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism precisely because of China's isolation and sense of perceived superiority. Technology changed everything for the benefit of European powers and China did not adapt quickly enough to a new, globalized world. While the United Kingdom had control of the seas and developed into a regional hegemon, she was able to explore other territories and dominate them. In the words of Mearsheimer, Britain was roaming in China's backyard yet China did not have the power to stop her.

Chinese political scientists rely heavily on the lessons of history when creating their foreign policy strategy. For this reason, the period of Imperial China is critical to consider when analyzing the behaviour of 21st century China as the state becomes more and more powerful in the international community. China as an entity "began" after the end of the Warring States period and while battles that occurred thousands of years ago may not seem important in the present day, the past is a very important part of the Chinese psyche and still plays a strong role in contemporary domestic and international politics.

3. PAX BRITANNICA - BRITAIN'S IMPERIAL PAST

Between the 10th and 13th centuries, the Chinese empire reached a golden era and had built up one of the most developed civilizations in the world. At this time, European cities were underdeveloped and in the words of Thomas Hobbes, life in London was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short⁵⁵”. However, within a few hundred years, this balance had shifted considerably. China had begun its long decline due to the inward-looking behaviour during the reign of the late Ming Dynasty and the powers of Western Europe had begun a period of ruthless colonialism during which continents were plundered, native populations were decimated and the imperialistic powers continued to become wealthier and wealthier.

Spain and Portugal had divided South America and were ravaging the valuable resources of the continent while the Dutch and French had colonies spread out around the globe. England began the race towards imperialism later than its European counterparts but, nonetheless, was able to become the strongest and most far-reaching empire in history.

3.1 WHY BRITAIN?

While western Europe in general was developing faster than Asia, why did Britain eventually take the lead? Many historians have looked at the rise and fall of the British Empire to try to gain understanding of how a small nation could quickly grow to encompass an empire that spanned the globe. Due to the constraints of this thesis, I will only briefly discuss the history of the British Empire and then, in more detail, highlight the non-military based aspects of the empire (the hardware and the software) that historians and political scientists believe made the empire so successful.

Pre-1815

In order to understand how Britain became so powerful in the 19th century, it is important to understand the situation pre-1815. Privateers, which are often labelled by historians as state-sanctioned pirates, began England's initial path towards imperialism by plundering Spanish

⁵⁵ Ferguson, Niall. *Civilization*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print. Pg. 24

ships en route from Latin America to Europe. However, the country formally began her quest for globalization in the 16th and 17th centuries as a result of increased competition with France and an increase in commercial interest in the “New World”⁵⁶ due to a rise in demand for sugar, tobacco and tea. Merchants quickly realized the value of the products and thanks to relatively strong property laws, the wealthy were able to invest heavily in trade which helped fund future voyages. In turn, “flourishing overseas trade aided the British economy, encouraged seamanship and shipbuilding, provided funds for the national Exchequer, and was the lifeline to the colonies.”⁵⁷

Due to high population growth, rising unemployment, high inflation and strong competition from European manufacturers in the cloth industry (the mainstay of English manufacturers) in the 17th century, England was full of extremely poor people who would soon become “economic immigrants.” Emigrants were recruited with the promise of land and even the poor were offered a place as an indentured servant. This increased labor pool enabled the tobacco industry to develop. Tobacco could easily grow in Virginia and was lightweight which made it relatively inexpensive to ship back to England compared to the value that it represented. Having found their first profitable crop, the planters soon began using African slave labour to cut costs. This greatly increased their revenue and the colonies were then able to financially support themselves. “Tobacco transformed the economic balance and allowed the commercial ventures to continue and pay their way.”⁵⁸ This was a crucial step in the process of colonization as it meant that more settlers could move to the New World and a self-sustaining economy could develop⁵⁹.

The first “empire” of England included Jamaica (which was considered to be one of the most important colonies), Saint Kitts, Nova Scotia, New York, East and West Jersey, Carolina and Pennsylvania as well as trading outposts in West Africa and India and was established during the latter half of the 17th century⁶⁰. These colonies were staffed with British laborers that had

56 *The British Empire*, www.thelatinlibrary.com/imperialism/notes/britishempire.html.

57 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 124

58 “Timelines for the British Empire.” *British Empire Chronological History and Timeline*, www.britishempire.co.uk/timeline/timeline.htm.

59 Ibid

60 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Introduction

emigrated there as servants. However, once the slave trade increased, as mentioned above, fewer and fewer English servants were needed.

Colonies were designed to provide outlets for excess British labor but, thanks to slavery which provided very cheap labor, instead became cash-cows for wealthy plantation owners and merchants. It was only when the colonies had become self-sufficient that they were able to attract settlers with a variety of skill sets and become complex economies.⁶¹ These settlements would later become a hallmark of the British Empire and could be seen in places as far flung as Canada and Australia. In the words of Niall Ferguson, “long before the Industrial Revolution, little England was pulling ahead of the great civilizations of the Orient because of the material advantages of commerce and colonization.⁶²”

Post-1815

Despite getting a late start as compared to other powers, by 1815, Britain’s status as an imperial power had already advanced considerably over other Great Powers due to “their adroit combination of naval mastery, financial credit, commercial expertise, and alliance diplomacy.⁶³” The economic strength of the country had enabled Britain to defeat Napoleon’s navy and secure sea supremacy which according to Mahan is crucial to achieve hegemony. Although the thirteen American colonies had been lost by the start of the 19th century, Britain held territory in present-day Canada, South Africa, India, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, South America and Australia⁶⁴

The turning point in many historians’ view which made the West become economically stronger and technologically more developed than Asia was the Industrial Revolution which lasted from approximately 1760 to 1830. Prior to this, most of the industry in the United Kingdom “generally small scale and relatively unsophisticated.⁶⁵” In his book *The Rise and Fall of Great*

61 “Timelines for the British Empire.” *British Empire Chronological History and Timeline*, www.britishempire.co.uk/timeline/timeline.htm

62 Ferguson, Niall. *Civilization*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print. Pg 46

63 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 193

64 Porter, Professor Andrew. “History - British History in Depth: Britain's Empire in 1815.” *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/britain_empire_01.shtml. Accessed 20/11/2017

65 “The Industrial Revolution.” *The British Library*, The British Library, 27 Apr. 2015, www.bl.uk/georgian-britain/articles/the-industrial-revolution.

Powers, renowned historian Paul Kennedy supports this claim stating that “Asia still contained a far larger share of the world manufacturing output than did the much less populous Europe before the steam engine and the power loom transformed the world’s balances⁶⁶”.

Due to her economic strength and political stability that she had gained prior to the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain was able to fully take advantage of technological developments which followed. In addition to industrial development, there was also improvement in the technologies used in agriculture which decreased the demand for farm laborers and led to a mass migration from rural areas to cities. This then created a population of cheap laborers that was able to support a “large-scale, labour intensive factory system.”⁶⁷

“The advanced technology of steam engines and machine-made tools gave Europe decisive economic and military advantages.⁶⁸” In factories, the use of steam and iron helped increase productivity which caused an increase in “demand for more machines, more raw materials (above all, cotton), more iron, more shipping, better communications, and so on.”⁶⁹ The steam engines used in ships, as opposed to sail, drastically cut the travel time within the empire and allowed Britain greater control over her constituents. Railways were constructed across the empire. Combined, this helped promote interconnectivity of the empire’s colonies, specifically the “settler colonies” which, in turn, helped create additional consumer markets for England’s export products. There was a rapid transfer of industrial technology between regions thanks to the improvements in transportation infrastructure and communications. The increase in factory productivity was then able to fulfill the increase in demand. Due to advances in transport and technology, new sources for raw materials were able to be explored. All of these factors combined resulted in the “spectacular growth of an integrated global economy, which drew ever more regions into a transoceanic and transcontinental trading and financial network centred up on western Europe, and in particular upon Great Britain.”⁷⁰⁷¹

66 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg. 189

67 “The Industrial Revolution.” *The British Library*, The British Library, 27 Apr. 2015, www.bl.uk/georgian-britain/articles/the-industrial-revolution.

68 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg. 192

69 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg. 186

70 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 183

71 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 183

The Industrial Revolution changed not only the economic landscape of Great Britain but also of her existing and soon-to-be colonies. “Britain benefited so much from the general economic and geopolitical trends of the post-1815 era that it became a different type of power from the rest.”⁷² The expansion truly was global and at various points in history, spanned all inhabited continents. The British landed in Australia in 1788, Cape Town was seized from the Dutch in 1806, Hong Kong was ceded to the British in 1841 as a result of the Opium Wars and in 1858, Britain took formal control over India, the jewel in its crown, when the East India Company was finally disbanded. “Australia, New Zealand and many smaller Pacific Islands became ever more incorporated within Britain's imperial economy in the nineteenth century. They were encouraged to develop agricultural products that could be sold back to Britain to feed and clothes its ever increasing population.” This strength, stability and interconnectivity had a long-lasting impact on the world.

3.2 AN IMPERIAL TOOLBOX

“The engine of Europe’s dynamism was industrialization and its mode of expansion colonial conquest.”⁷³ The Industrial Revolution provided the necessary “hardware” to develop infrastructure and the “software” needed to accrue wealth that could be re-invested for further expansion. Below, I will explain in more detail how the “hardware” and ‘software” of the empire impacted the empire’s strength and ultimate survival.

3.2.1 HARDWARE OF AN EMPIRE

Expansion - Colonialism

Colonialism was an integral part of the British Empire and the reminders of British colonialism can be seen throughout the world from Royal Mail mailboxes in Malta to the British bunkers in Singapore. Ireland became the first colony of Britain in her empire and was followed by the colonies of the West Indies and the New World as mentioned above. The empire eventually expanded to cover all continents of the globe (bar Antarctica).

⁷² Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 185

⁷³ Jacques, Martin, et al. *Da Guo Xiong Xin: Yi Ge Yong Bu Tui Se De Da Guo Meng = When China Rules the World: the End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. Zhong Xin Chu Ban Ji Tuan Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2016. Pg. 1

By far, the most important colony for Britain was India known as the Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire. India fell under indirect rule of the British under the guise of the East India Company and in 1858, the UK took formal control over the territory after the fall of the Mughal Empire. However, 40% of the subcontinent was still governed by principalities, many of which had entered into treaties with the British Raj. The same “moral” justification for imposing colonization based on the superiority of European rule arose that was seen in nearly all previous empires and would continue to be argued American imperialists in the late 19th and 20th century. In the words of T.B Macaulay in 1833 it would appear that the driving force behind colonization was the concern for the welfare of the Indian population. 'By good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. ... Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history.' In the 1880s, James Fitzjames Stephen declared that empire had to be absolute because 'its great and characteristic task is that of imposing on Indian ways of life and modes of thought which the population regards without sympathy, though they are essential to its personal well-being and to the credit of its rulers.'⁷⁴ These recurring themes of moral obligations to the betterment of others throughout the history of imperialism is incredibly important to bear in mind as it was an important medium for building national support for colonization.

Figure 3 below shows the overwhelming scale of the British Empire at the turn of the 20th century. By the end of World War Two, most of these territories would be lost through the process of decolonization.

⁷⁴ Porter, Professor Andrew. “History - British History in Depth: Britain's Empire in 1815.” *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/britain_empire_01.shtml.

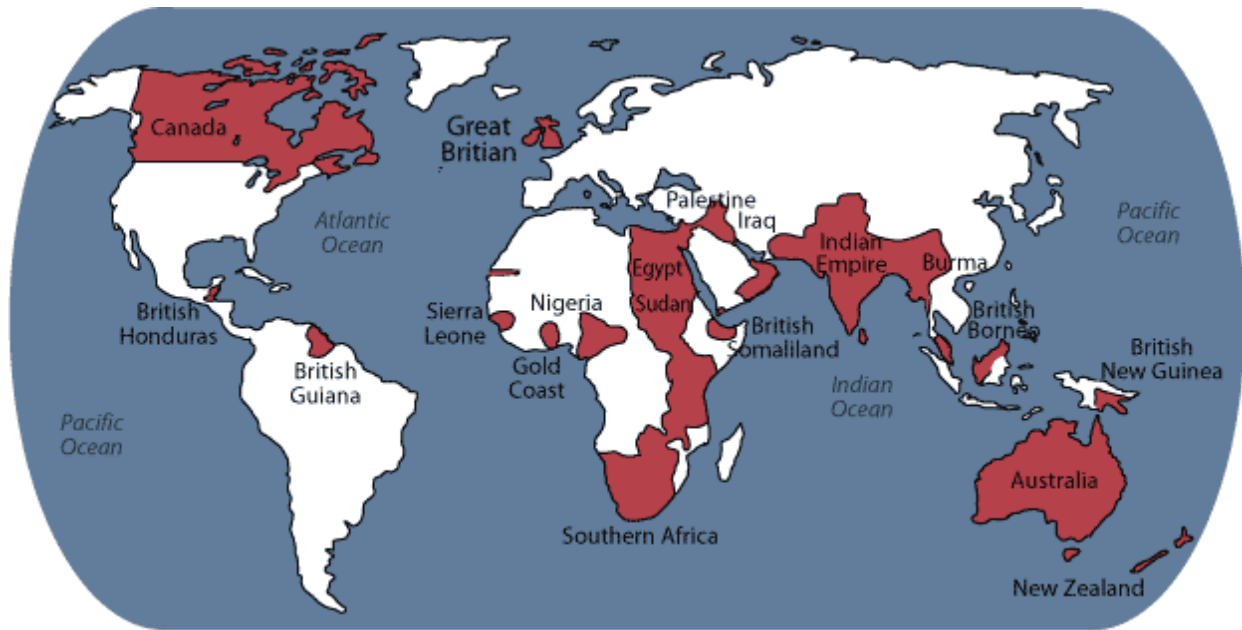


Figure 3 - British Empire - Early 20th century

Source: Center for History and New Media, George Mason University, USA⁷⁵

The Royal Navy

The remarkable growth of British trade and infrastructure development could not have been possible without the support of the Royal Navy. Knowing that maintaining sea lines was crucial for sustained economic development throughout her empire, the British government invested heavily in the development of the Royal Navy. “Protecting trade required naval strength and commitment⁷⁶” and “the primary function of the Royal Navy in Britain was the protection of these trade routes and their supply bases.⁷⁷” Safe and secure trading routes increased confidence which then facilitated even greater amounts of trade. “The average size of the Royal Navy during the 19th Century was only 52,000.⁷⁸” However, “The Royal Navy maintained its relative strength through the so-called “two power standard,” which required it to be at least as strong as the next two largest navies combined. Such overwhelming superiority deterred other powers

⁷⁵ “Women in World History : Module 8.” The Center for History and New Media. George Mason University. chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/modules/lesson8/lesson8.php?s=0#.

⁷⁶ Black, Jeremy. “A Post-Imperial Power? Britain and the Royal Navy”. 2005. <https://www.fpri.org/docs/media/black.postimperialroyalnavy.pdf>

⁷⁷ Atterbury, Paul. “History - British History in Depth: Victorian Technology.” *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/victorian_technology_01.shtml.

⁷⁸ Mizokami, Kyle. “5 Most Powerful Navies of All Time” <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/5-most-powerful-navies-all-time-13311>

from challenging London, and upsetting the balance of power in general.⁷⁹”

According to Mahan, an essential aspect for maintaining sea supremacy was to control chokepoints. Accordingly, Britain was able to gain control of Gibraltar which guaranteed access between the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea and British Malaya which secured access between the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. Today, the Royal Navy still “have three major choke points including the English Channel, the GIUK gap, and Strait of Gibraltar.⁸⁰”

Infrastructure & Foreign Direct Investment

During the formation of the British Empire, private entities were encouraged to develop basic infrastructure including transport and communication networks and given the support necessary by the British naval and military power to ensure that the networks remain viable⁸¹. These communications and transport networks created an interconnectivity that intrinsically changed the autonomy of the empire and facilitated the trade that made the empire so powerful. Colonies served as sources of raw materials for the UK and also as export markets for various industries; therefore, these networks were crucial in sustaining economic growth.

The telegraph made mass communication possible. In the 1830s, a British team created the first telegraph and in 1844, Samuel Morse sent the first instant telegraph between Washington DC and Baltimore using Morse Code. Starting in 1857, attempts were made to link Europe and North America via a cable across the floor of the Atlantic Ocean and by August, a message was sent between President Buchanan and Queen Victoria to mark the turning point in the history of international communications. In 1866, a permanent transatlantic telegraph cable was laid by a British ship and in 1878, three telegraph links were developed to India and the network continued spreading throughout the world. This caused immediate implications in the management of colonies, economic interests and military activities^{82,83}. Also, as discussed in

79 Mizokami, Kyle. “5 Most Powerful Navies of All Time” <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/5-most-powerful-navies-all-time-13311>

80 Misachi, John. “What Is The Significance Of A Choke Point?” *WorldAtlas*, WorldAtlas, 3 Mar. 2017, www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-significance-of-a-choke-point.html.

81 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 133

82 History.com Staff. “First Transatlantic Telegraph Cable Completed” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/first-transatlantic-telegraph-cable-completed>

83 Atterbury, Paul. “History - British History in Depth: Victorian Technology.” *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/victorian_technology_01.shtml.

the next section, this increase in communication had a tremendous impact on the identify of people living within the British Empire which was integral for the empire's continued growth.

The railways served as a vital link between shipping lines and grew concurrently with the telegraph. The first railway in Britain opened in 1825 and quickly spread throughout the empire. Like the Belt & Road project of the 21st century which will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis, "imperial railway building projects were often inspired by strategic as well as industrial and commercial motives, but such projects, notably in India and Africa, opened up huge and long lasting markets to British manufacturers.⁸⁴" One example of the benefits that international development created was the railway itself. "The Indian railways created a huge market for British locomotive manufacturers, since most of the tens of thousands of engines put into service were manufactured in Britain.⁸⁵"

As Britain's most important colony, India was one of the largest recipients of British infrastructure development. "Among the benefits bequeathed by the British connection were the large scale capital investments in infrastructure, in railways, canals and irrigation works, shipping and mining; the commercialisation of agriculture with the development of a cash nexus; the establishment of an education system in English and of law and order creating suitable conditions for the growth of industry and enterprise; and the integration of India into the world economy.⁸⁶" However, this all came at a cost. Taxes placed on Indian constituents were devastatingly high and resources were drained from the subcontinent.

While infrastructure development is crucial in the expansion of empires, one interesting theory regarding the decline of Britain states that the infrastructure developed during the Industrial Revolution put Britain's competitors at an advantage. The structural economic changes that Britain had put in place (the investment in colonies' infrastructure and contributing to their development) inadvertently caused the country's decline. "While the coming of steam power, the factory system, railways, and later electricity enabled the British to overcome natural,

⁸⁴ Atterbury, Paul. "History - British History in Depth: Victorian Technology." *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/victorian_technology_01.shtml.

⁸⁵ Ferguson, Niall. *Empire* New York: Penguin, 2003. Print. Pg 170

⁸⁶ Porter, Professor Andrew. "History - British History in Depth: Britain's Empire in 1815." *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/britain_empire_01.shtml.

physical obstacles to high productivity, and thus, increased the nation's wealth and strength, such inventions helped the United States, Russia and central Europe even more, because the natural, physical obstacles to the development of their landlocked potential were much greater⁸⁷. As her competitors developed (potentially thanks to the technological benefits that Britain had propelled forward), it made it harder and harder for Britain to maintain her advantage. What can be considered one of the British Empire's greatest assets can also be considered one of her greatest liabilities.

The Suez Canal

Besides the railroads, one of the most important infrastructure projects of the British Empire was the Suez Canal which linked the Mediterranean and Red Seas, effectively linking Europe to Asia. This canal, opened in 1869, reduced the travel time dramatically by eliminating the need for circumnavigation around Africa. The Suez Canal was built thanks to British, French and American investment and in 1888, the canal officially fell under British protection and troops remained stationed there until 1956⁸⁸.

Under the 1888 Convention of Constantinople, the Suez Canal should be open to all ships regardless of nation in times of war and peace. However, the canal was used strategically during the Spanish American War, Russo-Japanese War, the invasion of Ethiopia and World Wars One and Two.⁸⁹ This, again, reinforces Mahan's theory of sea power and the importance of having interocean canals in naval strategy.

3.2.2 SOFTWARE OF AN EMPIRE

The 'software' of the British Empire was crucial to sustain the empire's reach. Rather than just being seen as a core (Great Britain) and the periphery, the empire has also been described as "an interconnected zone constructed by multiple points of contact and complex circuits of exchanges."⁹⁰ This software ended up being a crucial aspect of the empire and can still be seen

⁸⁷ Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg 201

⁸⁸ History.com Staff. "Suez Canal." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2018, www.history.com/topics/suez-canal.

⁸⁹ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Suez Canal." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 10 June 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Suez-Canal#ref37107>

⁹⁰ Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 16

today in the psychological connection that many people around the world still feel towards the United Kingdom.

Geoeconomic Tools - From Mercantilism to a Laissez Faire Economy

“In the nineteenth century, the British empire (at the time the world’s pre-eminent power) willingly utilised its military might and economic influence to advance its interests - interests that included the global expansion of free trade⁹¹” and regulations were gradually lifted throughout the century. “Mercantilist measures, with their emphasis upon the links between national security and national wealth, were steadily eliminated; protective tariffs were abolished; the ban on the exports of advanced technology (e.g. textile machinery) was lifted; the Navigation Acts, designed among other things to preserve a large stock of British merchants ships and seamen for the event of war, were repealed; imperial ‘preferences’ were ended.” Military spending was cut and consumed 2-3 percent of GNP⁹².

In *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy argued that “the erosion of tariff barriers and other mercantilist devices, together with the widespread propagation of ideas about free trade and international harmony, suggested that a new international order had arisen.⁹³” The lifting of these restrictions allowed trade to flourish. “The import and export of goods facilitated its achieving the economic power that played a considerable part in its expansion. Britain’s emphasis on trade contributed to the development of a sophisticated economy, in particular in the growth of the financial sector and overseas shipping, both of which in turn helped trade.⁹⁴” As their global power spread, Kennedy claimed “the empire was not an active ingredient in economic policy-making, but neither did the British state eschew any role whatsoever in promoting imperial trade.⁹⁵” However, Niall Ferguson in *Colossus* states that “economic openness was imposed by colonial powers not only on Asian and African colonies but also on

91 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 233

92 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg. 196

93 Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Random House, 1990. Pg. 183

94 Black, Jeremy. “A Post-Imperial Power? Britain and the Royal Navy”. 2005. <https://www.fpri.org/docs/media/black.postimperialroyalnavy.pdf>

95 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 11-14

South America and even Japan.⁹⁶ Colonies were able to produce products at a lower cost and export them without prohibitive tariffs involved. Profits were reinvested back into the economy and a complex trade network between British and her colonies began to develop. Britain's control of the sea lanes allowed her to provide safe and secure passage to merchant ships in much the same way that the US does today.

Diaspora & Social Networks

“Central to the whole process of 19th-century globalisation was migration.⁹⁷” “Migrants were key players in Britain's exploitation of global resources.⁹⁸” During the latter half of the 19th century, Europe experienced an unprecedented emigration of Europeans to the less “developed” regions of the New World. Many searched for greater economic mobility or to escape persecution and out of approximately 50 million immigrants, around 25% of them were British.⁹⁹ Much of the diaspora emigrated to the settler communities. “With an abundance of fertile land, but a lack of capital and labour, they had an almost magnetic attraction for British investors and emigrants.¹⁰⁰” The colonies supported this migration from Britain as it was assumed that they would assimilate more quickly than other immigrants due to the shared culture and language.¹⁰¹

This diaspora, due to the advent of new technologies that increased transportation and communications channels, remained connected to the “motherland” and had a positive impact on the strength of the empire and can be classified as part of Mahan's necessities for sea power. In the book *Empire and Globalization*, Gary Magee states that, “it has been suggested that Britain's international pre-eminence during the ‘long’ nineteenth century was built on a complex and overlapping series of social networks, which expanded through railway, telegraph

96 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. Penguin Books, 2009. Pg. 186

97 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 233

98 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 65

99 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. Xi

100 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 40

101 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 73

and steamship technology (the ‘hardware of empire’); that after 1850 such networks became much more diverse and extensive; and that they had a marketed impact on the transmission of news, opinion and values within the British imperial world - indeed, that they helped hold it together.¹⁰²”

The British government encouraged people to imagine themselves as an interconnected global chain “who shared common standards, forms of communication and expectations.” This “exodus of people from the British Isles during the ‘long’ 19th-century turned national identities into transnational ones.¹⁰³” The exodus not only created psychological ties between the empire and its colonies but also created networks that “retained throughout a persistent bias towards Anglophone societies, in which British exporters found ready and expanding markets precisely because British settlers tended to have tastes that were more similar to than different from those of people back home.¹⁰⁴”

While the British government expanded its range, people were a crucial medium for spreading her culture. Despite many years of independence, former British colonies in the Anglosphere still maintain similar identities and overlapping norms and values. Non-English speaking countries or territories such as India and Hong Kong still follow British education and legal systems. This is important to consider when analyzing the strength of an empire and the uniqueness of the British Empire.

3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY & THEORETICAL APPLICATION

The United Kingdom, like many empires before her, relied heavily on the merits of free trade and expansion in order to build her empire. Due to her ability to control the seas and the geographical choke points such as Gibraltar and British Malaya, Britain was able to maintain hegemony over a widely spread territory. Most importantly, the Industrial Revolution gave her an important advantage over the other Great Powers and, as a result, her navy was able to

102 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 17

103 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 233

104 Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 237

maintain shipping lanes which supplied her growing network of colonies. Increases in infrastructure development allowed for greater connectivity amongst Britain and her colonies and strong ties remained amongst her population. However, as her empire became larger and larger and after two very expensive wars, Britain suffered from imperial overstretch and her empire collapsed after World War Two. Her former colony, the United States then able to surpass her by following a similar strategy regarding sea supremacy. However, her mark on the world is undeniable and as I will discuss in the following chapters of this thesis, similar trends and behaviours can be seen within the American Empire.

Britain's success was the basis for Mahan's theory on the influence of sea power. While her empire was certainly remarkable in its expanse, its longevity was not. According to Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, Britain lacked the landmass and population to maintain hegemony. Her colonies helped her gain access to resources that were not found within the British Isles but imperial overstretch and the high cost of maintaining her empire caused her decline.

4. PAX AMERICANA - AMERICA'S IMPERIAL PAST

From her inception, the United States has tried to position herself on the international stage as a state that embodies a different type of ideology. After breaking free of her humble beginnings as a series of colonial settlements, the American psyche was shaped around the ideals of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. As the nation developed and her influence grew, for policy makers, it became not only a question of spreading these ideals throughout their own territory but also into the wider international community.

While the creation of the United States was not significantly different than the expansion of other land powers in regards to subjugation of other peoples, what does make the United States unique is the imperial denial that has formed such a strong part of the American psyche. This anti-imperialist sentiment was most-famously echoed in Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points issued immediately after World War One. "Five of the (points) concerned general principles for a peaceful world: open covenants (i.e. treaties or agreements) openly arrived at; freedom of the seas; free trade; reduction of armaments; and adjustment of colonial claims based on the principles of self-determination."¹⁰⁵ Subsequent presidents followed Wilson's lead and made open proclamations against imperialism and its perpetrators. In his inauguration speech in 1949, Harry Truman later stated that "the old imperialism -- exploitation for foreign profit -- has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing."¹⁰⁶

However, the actions of the United States have shown a different strategy which I will briefly explore below - one in which the primacy of the country and her interests must be pursued at any cost. Despite obvious examples of imperialism including the annexation of Hawaii, the Pacific Southwest (formerly part of Mexico), the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, the United States continues to maintain her identity by clinging to her past as a revolutionary state that valued equality and abhorred imperialism. Imperialism gave policy makers an enemy and

¹⁰⁵ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/fourteen-points.

¹⁰⁶ "Harry S. Truman Library & Museum." *Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953*. Web. 05 Sept. 2017.

ironically, allowed the nation to continue on her own path towards imperialism. “Only when the United States could cast itself in an anti-imperialist role - first against the British Empire during the Second World War and then (more wisely) against the Soviet Union during the Cold War - were Americans able to perform their own cryptoimperial role with self-confidence.¹⁰⁷” In essence, the United States excelled as an imperialistic power when they started trying to convince themselves that they were not one.

Despite the official rhetoric given by various presidential administrations as mentioned above, some American political scientists, historians and scholars choose to see the United States’ role in 20th century geopolitics much more pragmatically and argue that the United States does resemble past empires. “America’s global supremacy is reminiscent in some ways of earlier empires, notwithstanding their more confined regional scope. These empires based their power on a hierarchy of vassals, tributaries, protectorates, and colonies, with those on the outside generally viewed as barbarians. To some degree, this anachronistic terminology is not inappropriate for some of the statues currently within the American orbit.¹⁰⁸”

Others draw similarities in particular between the American and British empires. “ In many respects, this American empire shares the same aspirations and ambitions as the last great Anglophone hegemon. Despite originating in a revolt against British imperialism, the United States inherited many of its begetter’s defining characteristics. Styling itself, in good Whig terminology, an “empire of liberty,” the fledgling Republic embarked on an astonishingly rapid colonization of the central belt of the North American continent.¹⁰⁹” When comparing various definitions of the word as discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, it is difficult to argue against the prevalence of an American Empire.

In this chapter, I will discuss a brief history of the United States focusing mainly on the foreign policy actions in the 20th century. I will discuss the factors that allowed the US to develop into

¹⁰⁷ Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2009. Print. Pg. 287

¹⁰⁸ Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York, NY: Basic, 2016. Print. Pg. 10

¹⁰⁹ Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2009. Print. Pg. 287

an imperialistic power and, despite the official foreign policy statements given, how American imperialism in the 20th century showed similarities to previous empires. While it is impossible to separate sections of history from their context, due to the constraints of this thesis I have chosen the particular time period from 1890 - 1989.

4.1 WHY AMERICA?

Leading up to the American Revolution, citizens denounced what they saw as tyranny and oppression by the British and hoped to form a nation where freedom, equality and social mobility could prevail. The United States of America declared independence in 1776 and officially began to exist in the late 18th century after the American Revolution successfully gained independence for the 13 colonies. Historically, the US colonies had served as outposts to help support the much more lucrative Caribbean Islands where sugar was being harvested. However, due to variances in immigration patterns and promises of social mobility to European immigrants on the North American continent, the colonies began to take a very different trajectory to the Caribbean colonies.

19th Century

As the United States began to take shape in the 19th century, westward expansion was an integral aspect of the nation's ascent and Thomas Jefferson as the 3rd US President "believed that a republic depended on an independent, virtuous citizenry for its survival, and that independence and virtue went hand in hand with land ownership, especially the ownership of small farms.¹¹⁰" The only way to achieve this was to expand westward. Although the land was already being occupied by native populations, this did not diminish Americans desire for additional territory and due to the perpetuating ideas regarding racial superiority, there was little to no consideration as to how the expansion would impact non-Caucasian people. "The most directive motive was economic, and there was a traditional colonial sense, taken from the Europeans, that economic interests had to be protected by political and military presence.¹¹¹"

There are a few key elements in the 19th century that shaped the development of the United

110 History.com Staff. "Westward Expansion." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion.

111 O'Loughlin, John. *The Dictionary of Geopolitics*. Greenwood Press. 1994. Pg. 124

States and its foreign policy including the Monroe Doctrine and the belief in “Manifest Destiny”. The Monroe Doctrine, issued in 1823, was designed to signify a clear break between the New World and Europe and proclaimed three main concepts including separate spheres of influence for the Americans and Europe, non-colonization, and non-intervention. Although this doctrine could be misconstrued to appear as a policy of anti-imperialism, in reality, “they also desired to increase United States influence and trading ties throughout the region to their south. European mercantilism posed the greatest obstacle to economic expansion” and the Monroe Doctrine served as an opportunity to assert America’s influence over a weakened Europe. “Monroe’s principal concern had been to make sure that European mercantilism not be reimposed on an area of increasing importance economically and ideologically to the United States.¹¹²“

While the United States was eyeing the land to the south for its economic opportunities using the pretense of the Monroe Doctrine, her strategy also included areas to the west of her current borders. Beginning in the 1845, the term Manifest Destiny was used to describe the Anglo-Saxon perceived entitlement to continue expanding west until the Pacific Ocean. “It was the notion that Americans and the institutions of the U.S. are morally superior and therefore Americans are morally obligated to spread those institutions in order to free people from the perceived tyranny of the European monarchies.¹¹³”

One of the most important territories annexed as part of the Manifest Destiny ideology was Texas in 1845 and the southwest section of the continental US as a result of the Mexican-American War in 1848. The war was the first conflict that took place on foreign soil. After defeating the Mexican Army, under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo the US bought the territories of New Mexico, California, Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Nevada for \$15 million¹¹⁴. This area greatly increased the size of the US. Like the annexation of the Xinjiang and Tibet territories by the Qing Dynasty, the areas were sparsely populated but housed a wealth of resources and gold was discovered within the territory right before the treaty was signed.

112 History.com Staff. “Monroe Doctrine.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/monroe-doctrine.

113 “Westward Expansion.” *HistoryNet*, www.historynet.com/westward-expansion.

114 “Mexican-American War” History.com, A&E Television Networks, 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/mexican-american-war>

California provided a long coastline along the Pacific Ocean and Texas offered arable land suitable for farming. More importantly, oil was also later discovered. California and Texas currently have the 1st and 2nd largest economies within the US.¹¹⁵

As you can see in Figure 4 below, much of the territory of the present-day United States was gained from other European powers which had previously been home to indigenous tribes. The westward expansion of the US is considered to be the country's first attempt at nation building.



Figure 4: Map of US Expansion

Source: Public Broadcasting System - PBS.org

Using both the Monroe Doctrine and the ideology of Manifest Destiny combined, ironically, with a message of anti-imperialism, the United States was able to create an empire by force by the end of the 19th century and expansion into foreign territories was seen as a necessity to increase economic strength. “Although the American economy grew tremendously during the last quarter of the 19th century, much of the country’s fabulous new wealth enriched only a few thousand captains of industry.¹¹⁶” As the rich became richer the poor became poorer, wages were decreasing with many people living on subsistence wages and with high unemployment. On top of the changes in the social fabric due to an increasing population as immigrants flooded into the country, an economic depression hit the US in 1893. The present-day borders of the

115 "Gross domestic product (GDP) by state (millions of current dollars)" (CFM) (Press release). Bureau of Productivity Analytics. October 13, 2017. p. 7. Retrieved March 24, 2018.

116 Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg. 34

United States were effectively set and there was little valuable territory to gain within the North American mainland. “Many business and political leaders concluded that the only way the American economy could expand quickly enough to deal with these threats was to find new markets abroad.¹¹⁷”

While Europe had mercantilist laws to protect their own industries, other parts of the world, specifically Latin America and Asia, were seen as potential economic outlets for American made products. In addition, territories in Latin America and Asia were seen as valuable economic assets with resources that could provide substantial economic gain to American-based companies. In an age when major European powers were dividing up Africa, American politicians feared that if they did not gain colonies as well, they would lose their status as an emerging global power. The Berlin Conference, held in 1884-1885, formalized the Scramble for Africa in which the great imperial powers of Europe had been colonizing Africa. Although the US did not gain any colonies in Africa during the conference, US officials were in attendance as observers. The US was the only non-European attendee and this signifies the position of the state as an emerging great power.

In his book *Overthrow*, Kinzer quotes historian Charles Beard saying “a free opportunity for expansion in foreign markets is indispensable to the prosperity of American business. Modern diplomacy is commercial. Its chief concern is with the promotion of economic interests abroad.¹¹⁸” 1898 is described by some historians, including Kinzer, as the year that the United States began to emerge as a world power largely due to her economic supremacy and foreign intervention became a part of her strategy. “Only at the end of the century did the American economy reach a level of productivity that made these impositions a central feature of United States foreign policy.¹¹⁹” A new era had begun.

However, while the United States was promoting her interests abroad, not all foreign territories

117 Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg. 34

118 Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg. 81

119 Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg 81

were receptive “The first wave of American ‘regime change’ operations, which lasted from 1893 to 1911, was propelled largely by the search for resources, markets, and commercial opportunities.¹²⁰” Extending American influence over the Philippines, Hawaii, Central America and the Caribbean gave the United States access to cheaply produced agricultural products including sugar, in the case of Hawaii, and bananas, in the case of Guatemala. The reason for these foreign interventions was clearly economic and in one of the most telling quotations during this era, US Senator Albert Beveridge left little room for doubt regarding America’s intentions for the Philippines in his 1900 article, *On the War in the Philippines*,

“Commerce must be with Asia. The Pacific is our ocean.....where shall we turn for consumers if our surplus. Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer. Our largest trade henceforth must be with Asia. The Pacific is our ocean. More and more Europe will manufacture the most it needs, secure from its colonies the most it consumes. Where shall we turn for consumers of our surplus? Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer. She is nearer to us than to England, Germany, or Russia, the commercial powers of the present and the future. They have moved nearer to China by securing permanent bases on her borders. The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East.”¹²¹

“By 1899, the United States had become a world power in the sense that it was not only the greatest industrial nation, but it was also willing to use its new power militarily, after the fashion of the European states American leaders sought to emulate. It had acquired possessions near and far, and the sun shone on the American flag unfurled in East Asia as well as in the eastern Pacific and the Caribbean.¹²²

20th century

The overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy and the Spanish-American War were some of the early examples of American imperialism stretching across blue waters. To formalize this new approach to imperialism, in 1904 the Roosevelt Corollary was added to the Monroe Doctrine.

¹²⁰ Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg. 83

¹²¹ Beveridge, Albert. *On the War in the Philippines*. 1900

¹²² Cohen, Warren I. *America's Response to China: a History of Sino-American Relations*. Columbia University Press, 2010. Pg 42-43

The corollary stated that “chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere, the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases or wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.” Since the US government played the role of the judge, jury and executioner, the Roosevelt Corollary came to “serve as justification for U.S. intervention in Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.¹²³” Like the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan 100 years later, the US, as a regional hegemon, was able to spin her own rhetoric regarding military intervention.

Expansion overseas began in earnest under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, an ardent support of Alfred Mahan, at the turn of the century. Mahan believed that one of the primary goals of US foreign policy should be to secure access to new markets that could absorb her excess production. “Securing such access would require three things: a merchant navy, which could carry American products to new markets across the “great highway” of the high seas; an American battleship navy to deter or destroy rival fleets; and a network of naval bases capable of providing fuel and supplies for the enlarged navy, and maintaining open lines of communications between the United States and its new markets.¹²⁴”

Based on Mahan’s theory, Theodore Roosevelt believe that “imperialist notions meant securing as many ports and colonies as possible, to cement America as a global power in both military and trade capacities.¹²⁵” To achieve this goal, Roosevelt invested heavily in the navy. The US Navy grew quickly and by 1907, “the American fleet was second only to the Royal Navy.¹²⁶” Roosevelt famously showed off America’s naval strength that same year by sending the “Great White Fleet” on a voyage around the world crossing the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans. This excursion prepared the navy for the logistics of long-term deployment which would serve useful in the future.¹²⁷

123 *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine.

124 *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/mahan>

125 King, Laurel “*Theodore Roosevelt and Imperialism*” <http://aboutthedoreroosevelt.com/theodore-roosevelt-and-imperialism/290/>

126 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. Penguin Books, 2009. Pg. 43

127 Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow / America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt &

While building up a large navy, it also became apparent for the necessity for a canal across Central America increased as American influence extended south and westward. President Roosevelt was especially interested in finding a route for naval ships to pass between the oceans making the newly acquired territories of the Philippines and Puerto Rico more easily accessible.¹²⁸ “Once the United States resolved to build an interoceanic canal, it felt the need to control events in nearby countries.¹²⁹” The originally chosen location of the canal in Nicaragua was abandoned due to geographical, geopolitical and economic factors and Panama was chosen instead. Despite being part of Colombia, there was already considerable American influence in the territory including the American-owned Panama Railroad. This influence was used to promote independence for Panama. Shortly after Panama declared independence, the US pledged her support for the new nation. Construction began in 1904 and the canal was opened in 1914. Like the Suez Canal before her, the Panama Canal made it no longer necessary to circumnavigate a continent to reach another ocean. Previously, ships had to sail around South America and “this 12,000-mile trip took 67 days. After the canal was completed, approximately 8,000 miles were eliminated from the trip.¹³⁰” It remained under direct American control until 1979¹³¹.

America in the World Wars

While the Spanish-American War gave America her colonies, World War One and Two gave the United States the opportunity to prove to the global community what it was capable of. World War Two was a turning point not only for American primacy but also, more specifically, Great Britain falling behind the US. After joining the Allied powers in 1941, America began to control the strategic direction that the Allied powers would take. “American domination of the Alliance reflected a new era in world history. The United States had replaced Great Britain as the dominant world power.” American productivity skyrocketed thanks to World War Two and

Company, 2007. Pg. 79

128 “What Is the Purpose of the Panama Canal?” *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, traveltips.usatoday.com/purpose-panama-canal-63793.html.

129 Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow / America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg 103

130 “What Is the Purpose of the Panama Canal?” *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, traveltips.usatoday.com/purpose-panama-canal-63793.html.

131 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. Penguin Books, 2009. Pg. 54

by 1945, the U.S was producing 45% of the world's arms around 50% of the world's consumer products¹³².

At the end of the war, “the United States was the only nation in the world with capital resources available to solve the problems of post war reconstruction thanks to the economic gains that the U.S made by being the main distributor of weapons and supplies to the Allies during World War Two¹³³ . She could use this capital to dictate the form of reconstruction and to extend the areas of her own influence.¹³⁴” The Marshall Plan came into effect in 1948 and provided funding to western European countries to help rebuild after the devastating effects of World War Two. This will be discussed further later in this chapter. In essence, the United States was the “last-man standing” of the great powers and the American Century had begun.

The Truman Doctrine & The Cold War

The end of the war “found the United States either occupying, controlling or exerting strong influence in four of the five major industrial areas of the world - Western Europe, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States itself. Only the Soviet Union operated outside the American orbit.¹³⁵” With a wealth of resources and control over much of the developed world, the United States reoriented her foreign policy “away from its usual stance of withdrawal from regional conflicts not directly involving the United States, to one of possible intervention in far away conflicts¹³⁶” by issuing the Truman Doctrine in 1947. The Truman Doctrine “established that the United States would provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces.¹³⁷”

Americans had reached a turning point in history. Rather than moving back towards isolationism, “Americans high and low implicitly assumed that with good policies and enough

132 Ambrose, Stephen E. *Rise to Globalism American Foreign Policy since 1938* Penguin Books, 1997 Pg. 27

133 Best, Richard. “How the U.S. Dollar Became the World's Reserve Currency.” *Investopedia*, 23 Sept. 2016, www.investopedia.com/articles/forex-currencies/092316/how-us-dollar-became-worlds-reserve-currency.asp.

134 Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Penguin Books, 2011. Pg. 50

135 Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Penguin Books, 2011. Pg. 49

136 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine.

137 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine.

will, the United States could control events everywhere.¹³⁸” The Cold War gave Americans an enemy and as I will discuss below, the widespread fear of the Communist ideology amongst the American population gave the US government relatively free reign to pursue its own political and economic interests in regards to foreign policy during the first two decades of the Cold War. The Truman Doctrine gave the United States justification to pursue imperialistic policies and the idea of self-governance and state sovereignty was greatly overlooked. In the words of Niall Ferguson, “American idealism could be assuaged because an imperial policy was being pursued in the name of anti-imperialism.¹³⁹”

Often called “an empire by invitation”, the United States did not need to build an empire by force immediately after World War Two unlike the Soviet Union. However, this changed under the containment strategy. Containment, formulated by George Kennan and introduced in 1947, was the strategy to stop the spread of the Soviet Union’s influence. Depending on the interpretation of whoever was president at the time, containment could mean anything from military intervention to the use of soft power and economic aid¹⁴⁰. Under the guise of containing communism, the United States was able to impose its will on sovereign states as “containment offered the resolution of all the earlier tensions between republican virtue and the exercise of global power.¹⁴¹” Foreign lands could find themselves under attack if there was a perceived threat of a Communist revolution and countries as diverse as Guatemala, Vietnam, Korea, Cuba and Iran found themselves under pressure from both the United States. Although America is called the victor of the Cold War, there was not only one loser. Around the globe, repercussions are still felt as a result of the belligerent activities of the Cold War powers.

While there are countless examples from the 20th century of American imperialism, due to space limitations I have included only the Korean War in this analysis as the outcome of this war is still greatly impacting the international community today. It also occurred when America was arguably at the height of her power and proved that she was no longer invincible. The

138 Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Penguin Books, 2011. Pg. 107

139 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York. Penguin Books. 2004. Pg. 83

140 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/kennan.

141 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York. Penguin Books. 2004. Pg. 80

Korean War is labelled the “forgotten war” although the effects of it are still raising fear amongst nations today. The war cost the lives of 5 million Koreans and nearly 40,000 Americans¹⁴² and destroyed the infrastructure of Korea. Korea remains divided to this day and while South Korea has excelled economically and is now considered a highly developed country with a high-tech industrialized economy, the Democratic Republic of North Korea survives on a combination of nuclear rhetoric and economic aid. Human rights violations are pervasive and there is a constant question on how the region can be stabilized. American imperialism is still strongly felt due to the presence of the US military on the peninsula. Since the end of the Korean War, the US military has maintained troops in the state and as of 2017, there were over 24,000 US military personnel based in South Korea¹⁴³. The troops are now effectively part of a new containment strategy against China but as I will discuss later on, this can lead to serious tensions in East Asia.

The Cold War and the rhetoric of a battle between good and evil were used as justification for the imperialism that occurred during the Cold War. This justification is reflective of a similar rhetoric from the 1890s when the US was battling against Spain over control of their island territories. Conveniently, neither the USSR or the United States had to endure the devastating effects of war on their own sovereign territories while proxy wars and covert activities destroyed other sovereign states or fundamentally changed the course of history for its inhabitants.

The End of an Era

By the 1970s, Japan and West Germany had recovered from the devastation of World War Two and were fast on their way to becoming economic powerhouses. The capitalistic model institutionalized in the 1950s which had created the American dream which increased the standard of living for blue collar workers made American labor too expensive and corporations began to seek other developing countries where they could produce their goods. The domestic consumption of American-made goods began to decrease as imported goods were better and

142 History.com Staff. “Korean War.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/korean-war.

143 Bialik, Kristen. “U.S. Active-Duty Military Presence Overseas Is at Its Smallest in Decades.” *Pew Research Center*, 22 Aug. 2017, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/22/u-s-active-duty-military-presence-overseas-is-at-its-smallest-in-decades/.

cheaper.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 heralded a new era for the world. America watched as previously unimaginable events took place in Eastern Europe and the USSR. The Soviet Empire crumbled as 15 new states declared independence and it was replaced by a shell of its former self. Once again, America was the last country standing and reigned as the world's sole superpower.

4.2 AN IMPERIAL TOOLBOX

Like the United Kingdom that dominated the world before it, the United States' power came from immense economic strength. As discussed earlier, "America's present superpower status is a product of its rapid economic growth between 1870 and 1950 and the fact that during the second half of the twentieth century it was the world's largest and often most dynamic economy. This economic strength underpinned and made possible its astonishing political, cultural and military power from 1945 onwards.¹⁴⁴" This strength and relative stability also helped the United States create an imperial toolbox which helped further propel it towards hegemonic status. "The backbone of American imperialism lay in the attempt to open up the world for a US-dominated trade and economic intercourse, while leaving day-to-day political and administrative responsibilities to individual nations which retained their independence, sometimes real, sometimes nominal.¹⁴⁵"

In this section, I will discuss the hardware and software of the American Empire based on the same parameters as I have applied to the Ancient Chinese and British Empires. In addition, I have added information regarding the financial structure that the United States has built in the post-World War Two era which has increased her soft power considerably. This topic is of significant importance as there are similarities with the activities of present-day China in regards to creating financial dominance over her neighbors.

¹⁴⁴ Jacques, Martin, et al. *Da Guo Xiong Xin: Yi Ge Yong Bu Tui Se De Da Guo Meng = When China Rules the World: the End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. Zhong Xin Chu Ban Ji Tuan Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2016. Pg 6

¹⁴⁵ O'Loughlin, John. *The Dictionary of Geopolitics*. Greenwood Press. 1994. Pg. 125

4.2.1 HARDWARE OF AN EMPIRE

As per the previous chapters, I will now discuss the infrastructure development and expansion of the United States which has enabled her to gain global supremacy. This is by no means an exhaustive list due to the constraints of this thesis.

Territory Expansion

Both the Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine as described above set the stage for America's first experience at nation-building. Manifest Destiny gave the US the ideological background for expansion and technological and economic supremacy gave them the tools needed to expand towards the Pacific Ocean. Although the westward expansion was an integral part of the formation of America, in this section I will focus on the time period from 1890 until 1950 when the United States' overseas imperial expansion was most obvious. Mahan's theory calls for naval bases and refueling stations scattered around the globe and the acquisition of islands throughout the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean supported this concept as they were of economic and strategic importance. I will discuss this in detail below.

Hawaii

When considering the United States' first step towards imperialism, it is important to analyze the history of Hawaii. In the 19th century, Hawaii was a hub for sugar production. The main plantation owners, most of whom were American, dominated the economy and politics. They relied on the exportation of sugar to the United States but after the US passed prohibitive tariffs known as the McKinley Tariff in 1890 on imported sugar, the value of sugar exports dropped from \$13 million to \$8 million. Seeing the lucrative industry begin to become less profitable, the planters decided that the more advantageous solution would be to orchestrate the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy and become part of the United States; therefore, eliminating the tariff.

The Americans were able to overthrow the Hawaiian monarchy in a step-by-step process which allowed them to gain increased amounts of power over time in a process called "bayonet constitution"¹⁴⁶ and Hawaii was declared a US protectorate in 1893. Like the ancient Chinese

¹⁴⁶ Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg 18

strategy for defeating opponents, the monarchy was weakened not through a military intervention but by diplomatic measures led by American businessmen which culminated in the queen ultimately abdicating her throne. Much like American politics today, the interests of a few rich landowners trumped the needs and wishes of the native population of roughly 40,000. Hawaii officially became part of the United States in 1959.

The Spanish-American War

The Spanish-American War began in 1898 and was based on a combination of anti-imperialism ideology and American self-interests and can be considered one of the defining moments of US history. Beginning in February and ending in December after the alleged bombing of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbour, Spain was quickly defeated by the US and the remains of her empire became part of US territory, including the Philippines, Cuba, Guam and Puerto Rico. In this section, I have chosen to more deeply discuss the Philippines and Cuba due to the geographical size and importance of the territories. While Guam and Puerto Rico remain under US control, Cuba and the Philippines are now sovereign states.

Philippines

After the Spanish-American War, “the annexation of the Philippines occurred based on three key aspects: desire for commercial opportunities in Asia, concern that the Filipinos were incapable of self-rule, and fear that if the United States did not take control of the islands, another power (such as Germany or Japan) might do so.¹⁴⁷” While Filipinos believed that they had a right to be independent, the United States had a different plan for the future of their newly gained colonies. Over the next three years, as many as 200,000 Filipino civilians were killed as a result of the war for independence from the US. The United States’ military was ultimately successful and the Philippines helped open the door to trade in Asia and provided a strategic point for the American military. Despite America’s long-standing ideology regarding anti-imperialism, the Philippines were not granted independence until 1946.¹⁴⁸ However, the Philippines continued to serve as an important part of America’s military network and represent military imperialism for nearly 50 more years. Clark Air Base was closed in 1991 and Subic Bay Naval Base was

¹⁴⁷U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/war.

¹⁴⁸U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/war.

closed in 1992.

Cuba

As one of the US newly gained colonies after the end of the Spanish-American War, Cuba quickly became an unofficial protectorate of the US. After three years of maintaining direct military rule, President Taft removed the troops but “warned Cubans that although the United States did not wish to annex their country, it was ‘absolutely out of the question that the island should continue to be independent’ if its citizens persisted in their ‘insurrectionary habit’.”¹⁴⁹

Cuba represents both military imperialism and economic imperialism. “Three times after 1902 the United States had intervened in Cuba to protect American investments, which by the end of World War Two had grown to impressive proportions. Americans owned 80% of Cuba’s utilities, 40% of its sugar, 90% of its mining wealth, and occupied the island’s key strategic location of Guantanamo Bay. Cuban life was controlled from Washington, for almost the only source of income was sugar, and by manipulating the amount of sugar allowed into the United States, Washington directed the economy.”¹⁵⁰

Despite the moralistic narrative behind the foreign policy towards neighboring territories, like the British Empire’s motives for expansion, the real motivation for the United States was economic factors. “Expansion was achieved by a combination of land hunger, religious zeal and military force.”¹⁵¹ From her start as a collection of colonies on the Atlantic coast, the United States now ranks as the 3rd largest country in the world.

America has also expanded beyond colonies and territory through offshore military bases. The Philippines is only one example of a foreign state housing US troops. “By 1967, American service personnel were stationed in sixty-four countries; nineteen of them in Latin America, thirteen in Europe, eleven in African, eleven in the Near East and South Asia and then in East

¹⁴⁹ Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow / America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Pg. 89

¹⁵⁰ Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Penguin Books, 2011. Pg 167

¹⁵¹ Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York. Penguin Books. 2004 Pg 36

Asia. The United States had treaties of alliance with no fewer than forty-eight different countries... This has justly been called an empire by invitation.¹⁵²”

US Navy

According to Mahan, in order to gain supremacy, the US needed to build up a large navy that could serve US interests both at times of war and peace. Although the Monroe Doctrine demanded non-interference in the Western hemisphere by European powers, “until such times as the United States had a world-class navy, it could not really enforce its claim to what amounted to a hemisphere exclusion zone.¹⁵³” The amount of ships increased during the presidency of Roosevelt and was a determining factor in the outcome of the Spanish-American War which ultimately gave the US her first colonies. By 1907, the US had the world’s second largest fleet. The amount of vessels jumped exponentially during World War Two. As of 2014, the US Navy has 288 battle force ships, 10 aircraft carriers which is more than the rest of the world combined, nine amphibious assault ships, 62 destroyers, 22 cruisers and 72 submarines. It also has more than 3700 aircraft¹⁵⁴.

One of the most important naval bases is Pearl Harbour and its history could be a precursor to what China will do if following either Mahan’s theory on sea power or Mearsheimer’s theory of offensive realism. In 1887, under the Hawaii United States Convention, Hawaii granted “to the Government of the US the exclusive right to enter the harbor of Pearl River, in the Island of Oahu, and to establish and maintain there a coaling and repair station for the use of vessels of the US and to that end the US may improve the entrance to said harbor and do all things useful to the purpose aforesaid.¹⁵⁵” After the annexation of Hawaii, the base was developed and expanded and became the home of the Pacific Fleet in 1941. During their bid for regional hegemony, Japan bombed Pearl Harbour in 1941 in order to destroy the US’ Pacific Fleet. This reflects both Mahan’s belief that sea power equates to destroying an enemy’s fleet to gain

152 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York. Penguin Books. 2004. Pg 86

153 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. New York. Penguin Books. 2004. Pg 42

154 Mizokami, Kyle. “The Five Most-Powerful Navies on the Planet.” *The National Interest*, The Center for the National Interest, 6 June 2014, nationalinterest.org/feature/the-five-most-powerful-navies-the-planet-10610.

155 “Hawaii-United States Treaty - 1884.” *Hawaiian Homes Commission Act*, www.hawaii-nation.org/treaty1884.html.

supremacy and to Mearsheimer's concept of offensive realism that regional hegemons should knock out aspiring competitors before they become too strong. By destroying the US fleet, Japan would effectively be able to "roam" around the Pacific Ocean freely. Today, Pearl Harbour is the homeport to the Pacific Fleet which have helped protect American interests during the Korean, Vietnam and Cold Wars and is still in active use today.

Infrastructure Development & Foreign Direct Investment

As can be seen empires throughout history, infrastructure development, especially transport, is integral to the growth of an empire. This transportation network allows good to travel more quickly, efficiently and with less financial output. One of the first expedients of this in the United States was the transcontinental railroad which was chartered in 1862 and was completed in 1869. This railroad gave access to the western part of the territory and allowed for the scale of construction that was necessary in order to build cities.¹⁵⁶

Like the Grand Canal in China and the Suez Canal linking the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, the construction of canal system in the Americas greatly helped facilitate trade. The Erie Canal helped connect the Atlantic Ocean and the resource rich American midwest after its opening in 1821. Products could be shipped at a fraction of the previous cost and led to an increase in disposable income of Americans living away from coastal areas which stimulated the economy in America's heartland. While the Erie Canal connected the American Midwest to blue water ports, the Panama Canal, as discussed earlier, was integral for connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This was extremely important before the invention of air power and regional hegemony at the time was linked with dominance of the maritime realm. The canal dramatically decreased the transit time between the two major oceans and after 64 years of American control, it was eventually handed over to Panama in 1978 after the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty. The treaty, which like the British handover of the Suez Canal stated that the US could still intervene if the security of the canal was threatened, "allowed the United States to defend itself from charges of imperialism made by Soviet-aligned states."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ History.com Staff. "Transcontinental Railroad." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2010, www.history.com/topics/inventions/transcontinental-railroad.

¹⁵⁷ *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/panama-canal.

Transportation was not limited to rail and sea as the 20th century progressed. As automobiles became more and more popular after the introduction of assembly line production, the need for a developed road system increased. In 1956, a bill was introduced to create a 41,000 mile highway system that would connect America. This road network is vital to the US' economy, defense and mobility. Henry Ford had created a nation of drivers and therefore, a nation of consumers of the raw materials such as rubber and steel that were needed to make the cars and the construction materials that were needed to build the infrastructure. The automobile changed the fabric of American society as it allowed people to move away from the existing rail infrastructure to other developing areas with the only prerequisite as having road access. The automobile created suburbs and changed the demographic makeup of cities across the US.

While Mahan's theory focused on the impact of sea power and its associated infrastructures such as ports, the rail and road networks connected the coastal areas to the inland and were an integral part of the American infrastructure.

Marshall Plan

Probably the most well-known overseas infrastructure project was the Marshall Plan, otherwise known as the European Recovery Program. It was designed to help rebuild Europe after the devastation of World War Two and 16 countries were recipients. "European nations received nearly \$13 billion in aid, which initially resulted in shipments of food, staples, fuel and machinery from the United States and later resulted in investment in industrial capacity in Europe.¹⁵⁸" In the words of John Marshall, Secretary of State, in 1947, "the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social condition in which free institutions can exist."¹⁵⁹

However, this gesture was not merely a benevolent gift made by the United States to foster

158 "The History of the Marshall Plan". <https://www.marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/history-marshall-plan/>

159 Secretary of State George Marshall, June 1947, Harvard University

development in Europe. Economic development of Europe served two goals. It deterred states from following a Communist ideology and created support for the “American way of life.” By helping to develop the economies of Europe, the US was able to create a new group of consumers for American produced goods which helped further develop the U.S. economy. In the battle between the good and the evil with the Soviet Union, for the United States, it was a win-win strategy with a high return on investment.

4.2.2 SOFTWARE OF AN EMPIRE

Geoeconomic Tools

World War One showcased not only the military power but also the economic power of the United States. During the interwar period that followed “President Wilson and his foreign policy architects turned to facilitating U.S. private investment overseas; U.S. investment dollars would be their mechanism of choice for expanding American influence abroad.¹⁶⁰” The US then furthered her economic control during World War Two through the Lend-Lease Policy of 1941 which “ was designed to serve America’s interest in defeating Nazi Germany without entering the war until the American military and public was prepared to fight.¹⁶¹” This was a form of buck-passing and allowed the US to remain neutral. Lend Lease also “laid the foundation for the creation of a new international economic order in the postwar world.¹⁶²”

Bretton Woods - A New US-Dominated International Economic Order

The Lend-Lease Agreement set the stage for US economic post-war domination. In 1944, the Allied countries signed the Bretton Woods Agreement, “seeing strengthened international economic cooperation as their best hope for avoiding the horrors of another global war.¹⁶³” The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, known as the Bretton Woods Twins, were formed during this agreement and the US dollar became the world’s reserve currency. Member states agreed to peg their exchange rates to the US and in turn, the US was linked to gold “and thus the golden age of the U.S. dollar began.¹⁶⁴”

160 Blackwill, Robert D. *War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. S.I.: Belknap Harvard, 2017. Print. Pg 158

161 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/lend-lease.

162 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/lend-lease.

163 Blackwill, Robert D. *War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. S.I.: Belknap Harvard, 2017. Print. Pg 159

164 Stephey, M.J. “Bretton Woods System.” *Time*, Time Inc., 21 Oct. 2008,

“The United States enjoys a number of strategic benefits arising from the dollar’s global role. It serves as “disaster insurance” - in times of international financial or geopolitical turmoil, money flees to dollars, boosting U.S buying power and hence the nation’s capacity to respond effectively. It affords the United States the unique ability to run sizeable fiscal and current account deficits while borrowing in its own currency. And it enables the sort of financial sanctions that whether leveled against particular banks or companies or meant to isolate entire countries, as with Iran.¹⁶⁵” Despite the expansion of the Eurozone and China’s push for an elevated position of the renminbi into reserve status, the U.S dollar has been able to weather periods of stagflation, high inflation and deflation and currently “remains the world’s reserve currency based largely on the size and strength of the U.S. economy and the dominance of the U.S. financial markets.¹⁶⁶”

Aside from controlling the world’s reserve currency, the World Bank and IMF allowed the US, along with other western countries, to dictate the policies of developing countries in order to access much needed capital and can be seen as a form of economic imperialism.

The IMF was created to monitor exchange rates and lend reserve dollars to nations.¹⁶⁷ According to their website, it “is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.¹⁶⁸” However, the altruistic premise of the organization has come under scrutiny. The IMF gave the US considerable control over other countries’ economies and according to Niall Ferguson, the reductions of tariffs under the GATT/WTO “owed much to American pressures such as the “conditionality” attached to loans from the Washington-based International Monetary Fund.¹⁶⁹”

content.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1852254,00.html.

165 Blackwill, Robert D. *War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Belknap Harvard, 2017. Pg 78

166 Best, Richard. “How the U.S. Dollar Became the World's Reserve Currency.” *Investopedia*, 23 Sept. 2016, www.investopedia.com/articles/forex-currencies/092316/how-us-dollar-became-worlds-reserve-currency.asp.

167 Staff, Investopedia. “Bretton Woods Agreement.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 3 June 2018, www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brettonwoodsagreement.asp.

168 “About the IMF.” *IMF*, www.imf.org/en/About.

169 Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus the Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. Penguin Books, 2009. Pg 9

The World Bank was designed to provide loans to countries for social and economic infrastructure and currently has 189 members. According to their website, the World Bank Group is a “unique global partnership fighting poverty worldwide through sustainable solutions.¹⁷⁰” The organization has developed into one of the key players of the development industry and in 2015 alone provided “302 commitments totaling \$60 billion in 2015.¹⁷¹”

Both of the Bretton Woods “Twins” have been criticized for not taking the needs of small countries into account while applying liberalisation principles of economics. “The World Bank and the IMF often attach loan conditionalities based on what is termed the ‘Washington Consensus’, focusing on liberalisation—of trade, investment and the financial sector—, deregulation and privatisation of nationalised industries. Often the conditionalities are attached without due regard for the borrower countries’ individual circumstances and the prescriptive recommendations by the World Bank and IMF fail to resolve the economic problems within the countries.¹⁷²” One example of this can be seen in the international debt crisis and the 1970s and 1980s where least developed countries were forced to take austerity measures in order to pay off loans after interest rates spiked. This crisis “led to lost decades of development in many Latin American, African and Southeast Asian states. The heavily indebted countries that relied on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for rescue lost their economic sovereignty when these two financial institutions forced them to adopt radical liberalization reform as a condition for their loans.¹⁷³”

Free Trade

As seen in the UK, the US relied on free trade both for the export and import of goods. Before the interwar period, the United States followed protectionist policies including the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act which substantially raised the tariffs on goods imported into the US. The heavily industrialized states to the north wanted restrictive measures to protect their industries and the agricultural states to the south wanted lower restrictions that would help increase

170 “Who We Are.” *World Bank*, www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are.

171 “History.” *World Bank*, www.worldbank.org/en/about/history.

172 “What Are the Main Concerns and Criticism about the World Bank and IMF?” *Bretton Woods Project*, 4 Feb. 2014, www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2005/08/art-320869/.

173 Hung, Ho-fung. *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*. Columbia University Press, 2017. Digital Copy. Ch. 2

exports¹⁷⁴. As countries retaliated, “U.S. imports from and exports to Europe fell by some two-thirds between 1929 and 1932, while overall global trade declined by similar levels in the four years that the legislation was in effect.¹⁷⁵” The tariffs proved to be extremely detrimental to the global economy and in 1934, Franklin Roosevelt signed the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act to promote global cooperation and reduce tariffs¹⁷⁶.

After the end of World War Two, America became one of the biggest proponents of free trade as a way to rebuild the economy including playing a key role in the formation of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). “This move to free trade wasn’t just about economics. Trade expansion was central to broader U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. Together with military alliances, trade agreements helped bind together the major free-market democracies, their growing prosperity serving as an effective counter to the centrally planned economies of the Soviet Bloc and the People’s Republic of China.¹⁷⁷”

GATT was signed by 23 countries in 1947 as a medium to boost the global economy by eliminating or reducing tariffs and quotas. As a result, US tariff rates fell from approximately 60% in 1930 down to 2.7% by 2013. “Cumulatively, these trade agreements brought about a revolution in U.S. trade policy, opening both the American and foreign markets to an unprecedented degree.¹⁷⁸” In 1994, the Uruguay Round Agreements led to the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which was signed by 123 countries and is a successor of GATT. As of 2016, there are 164 participating member states.

The Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act and the creation of GATT/WTO opened the door to bilateral free trade agreements. The US currently has agreements with 20 countries including Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador,

¹⁷⁴ Destler, I. M. “America's Uneasy History with Free Trade.” *Harvard Business Review*, 26 Sept. 2016, hbr.org/2016/04/americas-uneasy-history-with-free-trade.

¹⁷⁵ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 10 June 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/Smoot-Hawley-Tariff-Act.

¹⁷⁶ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 10 June 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/Smoot-Hawley-Tariff-Act.

¹⁷⁷ Destler, I. M. “America's Uneasy History with Free Trade.” *Harvard Business Review*, 26 Sept. 2016, hbr.org/2016/04/americas-uneasy-history-with-free-trade.

¹⁷⁸ Destler, I. M. “America's Uneasy History with Free Trade.” *Harvard Business Review*, 26 Sept. 2016, hbr.org/2016/04/americas-uneasy-history-with-free-trade.

Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Jordan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Panama, Peru and Singapore¹⁷⁹.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is one of the most important trade agreements that the US has entered and has been an important tool for integrating Mexico into the “highly-developed high-wage economies” of the US and Canada. The goal of NAFTA was to grant signatories most favored nation status, eliminate trade barriers, promote fair competition, increase investment opportunities, create procedures to resolve trade disputes, establish a framework for additional cooperation and protect and enforcement intellectual property rights.¹⁸⁰ “The hope was that freer trade would bring stronger and steadier economic growth to Mexico, providing new jobs and opportunities for its growing workforce and discouraging illegal migration from Mexico.¹⁸¹”

Despite facing domestic resistance due to the fear that American jobs would be lost, the agreement came into effect in 1994. Bill Clinton believed that “NAFTA would not only save jobs but also open new markets for US products, by combining 250 million Americans with 90 million Mexicans and 27 million Canadians into a no-tariff trading bloc with a combined GNP of some \$7 trillion a year.¹⁸² Experts claim that although NAFTA caused the loss of over 600,000 manufacturing jobs in the US, it created over 5 million new jobs because of the increase in trade between the US, Canada and Mexico. The cost of oil, and food in the US dropped because of the elimination of tariffs on imported goods from Mexico.¹⁸³

Until 2017 and the election of Donald Trump, the United States was also poised to sign the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). “This agreement was meant to reduce or eliminate up to 18,000 tariffs on both agricultural and manufactured products, boosting trade, economic growth

¹⁷⁹ *Free Trade Agreements* | *United States Trade Representative*, ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements.

¹⁸⁰ Amadeo, Kimberly. “What Is the History and Purpose of NAFTA?” *The Balance*, The Balance, www.thebalance.com/history-of-nafta-3306272.

¹⁸¹ “NAFTA's Economic Impact.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/background/naftas-economic-impact.

¹⁸² Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Penguin Books, 2011. Pg 411

¹⁸³ Amadeo, Kimberly. “6 Pros and Cons of NAFTA.” *The Balance*, The Balance, www.thebalance.com/nafta-pros-and-cons-3970481.

as well as political ties between the 12 countries. Former president Barack Obama and other TPP supporters believed that this deal could have helped the United States increase its influence over Asia-Pacific while countering China's growth in power.¹⁸⁴ I will discuss more on the impact of the TPP in the following chapter.

Free trade has been a point of contention within the US due to the perceived loss of jobs. Besides the withdrawal from the TPP, NAFTA has come under attack and in the most recent blow, the Trump administration opened negotiations in 2017 saying "it will focus on reducing the U.S.-Mexico trade deficit, tightening rules-of-origin requirements, reforming the investor-state dispute resolution mechanism, and updating the pact to include digital services and intellectual property."¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, a tit-for-tat trade war has begun between China and the US beginning in January 2018. So far, representatives from China have condemned the trade war and reiterated the benefits of free trade. According to Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, "No one will emerge as a winner from trade war, it benefits no one." In an interview on July 30th, 2018, Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi said "the current tensions were initiated by the United States, and the two should resolve their issues under the World Trade Organisation framework, rather than in accordance with U.S. law."¹⁸⁶ This is an interesting turn for a country that has been accused of not following the principles of the World Trade Organization in order to serve her own interests. Wang continued that "the United States has benefited a great deal from trade with China, getting lots of cheap goods, which is good for U.S. consumers, and U.S. companies benefit hugely in China too."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴Pham, Peter. "Why Did Donald Trump Kill This Big Free Trade Deal?" *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 29 Dec. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/peterpham/2017/12/29/why-did-donald-trump-kill-this-big-free-trade-deal/3/#1d8f3ac537e8.

¹⁸⁵ NAFTA's Economic Impact." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/background/naftas-economic-impact.

¹⁸⁶ Blanchard, Ben. "China Tempts Britain with Free Trade, Says Door to U.S. Talks Open." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 30 July 2018, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-china-talks/china-tempts-britain-with-free-trade-says-door-to-u-s-talks-open-idUSKBN1KK0IR.

¹⁸⁷ Blanchard, Ben. "China Tempts Britain with Free Trade, Says Door to U.S. Talks Open." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 30 July 2018, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-china-talks/china-tempts-britain-with-free-trade-says-door-to-u-s-talks-open-idUSKBN1KK0IR.

While the prospect of free trade is losing popularity within the US, the world has found a new proponent of free trade. I will discuss this further in the following chapter.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY & THEORETICAL APPLICATION

The Monroe Doctrine effectively began an era of containment for European countries and excluded their involvement in the Americas. An anti-imperialist ideology helped solidify American dominance in not only North and South America but also, later on, in Asia. While the Spanish-American War had given the US her first colonies, there were many more areas of national interest. “The colonial model of imperialism occupied the United States for only a very brief period. Unlike previous modes of imperialism, the American empire has organized itself as an imperialism without colonies, economic exploitation without direct political and military control. But the treat of U.S intervention was always there.¹⁸⁸”

While the US did not hold colonies for the same duration or on the same scale as the British Empire, her foreign policy embodied Mahan’s strategy during the development of her empire and its peak. Mahan’s theory “bolstered the case for rapid expansion and reconfiguration of the U.S. Navy, which replaced small cruisers with massive battleships and underwent a concomitant change in tactics; continued expansion overseas (to the Philippines, Hawaii and other Pacific islands, and the Caribbean), which allowed the creation bases at which U.S. ships could refuel and protect commerce; and even the construction of the Panama Canal, which facilitated the movement of fleets and freight.¹⁸⁹” The military bases scattered around the globe reflect Mahan’s belief that it is necessary to hold territory in strategic locations and to have control of chokepoints.

“First Britain and then America came to focus on free trade and the unfettered movement of money as political and economic “goods,” which became central goals for government. Britain’s, and then America’s, pursuit of a benign and mutually beneficial world order reflected an imperium, rather than an empire simply of control, constraint, and coercion.¹⁹⁰” By

188 O’Loughlin, John. *The Dictionary of Geopolitics*. Greenwood Press. 1994.

189 “Alfred Thayer Mahan.” *Barry Commoner*,
c250.columbia.edu/c250_celebrates/remarkable_columbians/alfred_thayer_mahan.html.

190 Black, Jeremy. “A Post-Imperial Power? Britain and the Royal Navy”. 2005.
<https://www.fpri.org/docs/media/black.postimperialroyalnavy.pdf>

promoting her involvement in the affairs of foreign countries as being based on altruism and idealism, the United States was able to gain and maintain economic control over lucrative resources and create a liberal empire. The US' economic imperialism had replaced the UK and Spain's formal and informal imperialism in many parts of the world. Although the United States government did not always maintain a presence in the territories, American business interests did and were able to apply considerable force and influence in "domestic" issues if a country was not playing her part in serving America's interests. The overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala, the Allende government in Chile and the Mossadeq government in Iran serve as testimony to the power of corporate companies and economic interests.

1989 brought the fall of the US' most formidable opponent and there was widespread belief that the only way forward was through liberal democracy. While the 1990s created an aura of optimism about the future with political scientists such as Francis Fukuyama, the end of history has not come. Long and costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the overwhelming cost of maintaining her empire of military bases have resulted in a national debt of over \$21 trillion as of March 2017. The majority of this debt is being held by the population as the government continues to spend social security funds to fund military ventures. Funding has been cut for the educational sector, infrastructure is crumbling and the reputation of the United States has fallen rapidly in the 21st century. As the United States declines due to imperial overstretch, China is rising.

5. PAX SINICA 2.0 - IMPERIAL PRESENT & FUTURE

In the previous chapters, I have briefly discussed the development of the Chinese, British, and American empires as well as the unique factors and circumstances that allowed each empire to gain an extraordinary amount of power and control in the international community as well as maintain a position as a global (or in the case of China, a regional) state.

Trade and economic development have played a dominant role in the development of each empire discussed in this thesis and have given the nations the capital to build up extensive trade networks and colonies. In turn, this capital also helped each empire develop a strong military and in the case of the United States, become a global superpower.

In this chapter, I will begin by briefly explaining the recent transformation of China and compare and contrast certain elements of the Ancient Chinese, British and American empires as they pertain to economic development and soft power of contemporary China. I will also look in depth at China's actions within the international community in regards to their economic, social and trade policies in the 21st century. For purposes of continuity as per the previous chapters, I have labeled the tangible assets of the empire as the "hardware" of the empire and the intangible assets as the "software" of the empire as in previous chapters of this thesis. This analysis will enable the reader to ascertain whether or not China's activities foreshadow an even more aggressive foreign policy approach in the future. The author's conclusion will be covered in the closing of this chapter.

Based on this ultimate goal, the questions that I endeavour to answer in this chapter include: Is contemporary China behaving like the British and American empires in regards to economic factors? If so, is imperialism a means to an end? Unlike the British Empire which initially began to grow due to the demands of a laissez-faire economy, does China have plan in place to complete their "Hundred-Year Marathon" and return to dominance over eastern Asia?

5.1 WHY CHINA?

The 20th century witnessed massive changes in how China was perceived by the international community. The beginning of the century saw the end of Imperial China and the beginning of the civil war that would ultimately end with the victory of Communism and the beginning of Mao Zedong's reign in 1949. As the post war economy began to slow, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) turned to collectivization of rural farmland and a state takeover of existing private ventures. Although Mao's industrialization strategy of the Great Leap Forward was a colossal failure, over time the CCP "managed to extract and concentrate scattered rural surplus and build up an extensive network of state-owned urban industrial capital through rural collectivization and the "price scissors" between agricultural and industrial products during the Mao period¹⁹¹" and "industrial share of GDP rose from 20.9 percent in 1952 to 47.9 percent in 1978."¹⁹²

Unlike in the United States and the USSR, China did not experience the widespread migration from rural areas to urban areas during the industrialization process due to a household registration system that tied peasants to their home villages. However, while limiting the mobility of the rural population, the CCP also helped to increase education levels and access to basic healthcare in the rural areas. Life expectancies rose and infant mortality rates declined along with the most common infectious diseases¹⁹³. As a result, "by the late 1970s, when the state-directed primitive accumulation of urban-industrial capital had reached its limit and the economy had entered a prolonged slowdown, China was already endowed with a network of state industries and infrastructure; a large, educated, and healthy rural labor force; and a state autonomous from foreign governments and international financial institutions. These legacies of the Mao period, regardless of the high cost that the Chinese people had paid for them, laid the foundation for the success of the subsequent market reform."¹⁹⁴

191 Hung, Ho-fung. *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*. Columbia University Press, 2017. Digital Copy. Chapter 3

192 Hung, Ho-fung. *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*. Columbia University Press, 2017. Digital Copy. Chapter 2

193 Riley, Nancy. *China's Population: New Trends and Challenges*. 2004. <http://www.prb.org/pdf04/59.2ChinasPopNewTrends.pdf>

194 Hung, Ho-fung. *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*. Columbia University Press, 2017. Digital Copy. Chapter 2

China finally began to liberalize in the early 1970s after the start of Triangular Diplomacy. After the death of Mao Zedong and the appointment for Deng Xiaoping, the economy was gradually loosened and international relations were normalized with the United States. Deng is credited with having restored stability to China after the disastrous policies of Mao. “Under his leadership, China acquired a rapidly growing economy, rising standards of living, considerably expanded personal and cultural freedoms, and growing ties to the world economy.¹⁹⁵”

1989 should have marked a disastrous year in Chinese diplomacy. China imposed martial law in Tibet in response to independence movements and on June 2nd, the People’s Liberation Army opened fire on unarmed protesters in Tiananmen Square after mass demonstrations took place demanding “more freedom, an open government, an end to the privileges enjoyed by the elite, and democracy.¹⁹⁶” Thousands of protesters were killed. While the massacre was initially denounced by Bush, relations were normalized shortly afterwards. Despite outrage from politicians and the populace, a precedent had been set. China had free reign to deal with domestic issues as they saw fit.

Since then, China has experienced a meteoric rise in economic power and is now a major global player on the world stage. However, civil rights violations plague the country and the China remains an authoritarian state ruled by the CCP. According to Human Rights Watch, China “curtails a wide range of fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly, and religion.¹⁹⁷” Due to these violations, it is even more imperative for the CCP to maintain their legitimacy. Like many empires before them, one of their strategies for stability is to promote economic growth and opportunity within not only their borders but within the entire Eurasia region.

5.2 CHINA TODAY - CHINA’S PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT?

“China should develop itself through upholding world peace and contribute to world peace

¹⁹⁵ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Deng Xiaoping.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 14 Feb. 2018, www.britannica.com/biography/Deng-Xiaoping#ref331847.

¹⁹⁶ Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Penguin Books, 2011. Pg. 355

¹⁹⁷ “China.” *Human Rights Watch*, 27 Jan. 2016, www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/china-and-tibet.

*through its own development. It should achieve development with its own efforts and by carrying out reform and innovation; at the same time, it should open itself to the outside and learn from other countries. It should seek mutual benefit and common development with other countries in keeping with the trend of economic globalization, and it should work together with other countries to build a harmonious world of durable peace and common prosperity. This is a path of scientific, independent, open, peaceful, cooperative and common development.*¹⁹⁸”

Since the 1970s, China has become a very different place than it was under Chairman Mao. “The countryside has also been transformed, most notably by three forces: the re-commercialization of agriculture, the spread of industry, and the waves of rural to urban migration that have integrated China in new ways. Access to education in China has improved greatly, as has the quality of China’s university system. Chinese businesses compete globally, now going head-to-head with North American and European corporations in telecommunications, heavy machinery, and renewable forms of energy. At home, China’s new middle and upper classes have developed expanding appetites for international luxury goods, travel, and international real estate¹⁹⁹.

The CCP must ensure continuous growth of its economy and the standard of living of its populace must continue to increase in order to legitimize the “success” of the party and help it continue its Hundred-Year Marathon. Like the belief system behind the Mandate of Heaven, the CCP relies on stability to maintain their status as China’s ruling party. “Ever since the founding of ‘New China’ in 1949, China’s foreign and domestic policies have both served the same goal: to maintain internal political stability under the leadership of the Communist Party.²⁰⁰”

During the 19th Party Congress in 2017, China introduced their new 5-year plan focusing on military build-up, territorial integrity and prosperity. In Xi Jinping’s opening speech at the event, the theme of the congress was “*Remain true to our original aspiration and keep our*

¹⁹⁸ *White Paper: China's Peaceful Development*, in.chineseembassy.org/eng/zt/peaceful/t855717

¹⁹⁹ Abrami, Regina M., et al. *Can China Lead?: Reaching the Limits of Power and Growth*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2014. Pg. 9

²⁰⁰ W. French, Howard. “What Kind of Empire Will China Be?” *Literary Hub*, 12 May 2017, lithub.com/what-kind-of-empire-will-china-be/.

*mission firmly in mind, hold high the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, secure a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, strive for the great success of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, and work tirelessly to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.*²⁰¹”

According to Xi, the mission of the CCP is, and always has been on prosperity and rejuvenation. “The aspirations of the people to live a better life must always be the focus of our efforts. We must keep on striving with endless energy toward the great goal of national rejuvenation.”²⁰² In order to continue along this path and regain her lost status, China must have the economic resources to sustain itself. Despite experiencing unprecedented YOY GDP growth in the beginning of the 21st century, China still suffers from a low per capita GDP compared to developed nations and faces a plethora of problems domestically. Urbanization, access to resources and environmental considerations are of major concern to the CCP and much like powerful states before it, China has turned to imperialist activities in order to achieve this.

Urbanization

“The Chinese government recently indicated that urbanization is one of their top agenda items in the next ten years, and clearly they see urbanization as the pathway to lift millions of people out of poverty.”²⁰³ However, the increase in urbanization can lead to a decrease in arable land as well as a decrease in the rural labor force as more and more able-bodied workers relocate to cities. “The level of urbanization has risen by an annual average of 1.2 percentage points, and more than 80 million people who have moved from rural to urban areas have gained permanent urban residency.”²⁰⁴ As the Industrial Revolution changed the fabric of Great Britain and the

201 Xi Jinping. “*Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*”. Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf

202 Xi Jinping. “*Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*”. Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf

203 “What Should We Understand about Urbanization in China?” Yale Insights, 21 Nov. 2016, insights.som.yale.edu/insights/what-should-we-understand-about-urbanization-in-china.

204 Xi Jinping. “*Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*”. Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf

United States when rural dwellers fled to cities for economic opportunities and provided a pool of cheap labor, China is experiencing the same changes. The lack of economic opportunities in tertiary and rural areas draws millions of migrants to cities. This causes overcrowding in the cities and a decline in wages.

Environmental Considerations

The rapid growth of the Chinese economy has caused unprecedented environmental degradation for both herself and her neighboring countries. In the 2006 book *China: What the World Needs to Know Now About the Emerging Superpower*, the authors state that “severe air and water pollution along with water shortages are threatening human health, industrial production and crops.....Sixteen of the world’s twenty most air-polluted cities are in China. Two-thirds of China’s cities do not meet the country’s own air emission standards. Nearly 200 cities fall short of the WHO standards for airborne particles. China’s current and continuing heavy dependence on its domestic, low-quality coal, which accounts for about 70% of China’s energy supply, has led to serious health problems and deterioration of China’s air quality.²⁰⁵” The contamination of fresh water and soil has caused significant concern to the future health of the Chinese population. “More than 75 percent of the surface water flowing through China’s urban areas is considered unsuitable for drinking or fishing; 90% of urban groundwater is contaminated; and nearly 50% of river water is unsuitable for agriculture or industry.²⁰⁶”

The figures look apocalyptic. However, at a time when the United States has rescinded her support for the Paris Agreement and continues to reject the idea of climate change, China has emerged as one of the world’s leaders in renewable energy sources. While urbanization has led to an increase in pollution, “at the same time, there are efforts to raise environmental standards, including more than 80 low-carbon programs going on around the country. They include developing emissions inventories for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, setting measurable emissions-reduction targets, establishing carbon emission trading platforms, and creating carbon intensity standards (that is, determining acceptable levels of carbon dioxide

²⁰⁵ Bergsten, C. Fred. *China: the Balance Sheet: What the World Needs to Know Now about the Emerging Superpower*. PublicAffairs, 2007. Pg 68

²⁰⁶ Bergsten, C. Fred. *China: the Balance Sheet: What the World Needs to Know Now about the Emerging Superpower*. PublicAffairs, 2007. Pg 68

produced per unit of economic activity).²⁰⁷” Knowing that the health of the population and economy relies on environmental conservation, Xi Jinping sees China’s role as one of “taking a driving seat in international cooperation to respond to climate change, China has become an important participant, contributor, and torchbearer in the global endeavor for ecological civilization.²⁰⁸”

Resources

“China’s leaders have an almost paranoid fear of a coming crisis leading to regional or global resource scarcity. As a result, they are determined to obtain ownership or direct control of valuable natural resources overseas, just as Europe’s mercantilist monarchs attempted to do by colonizing the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries²⁰⁹.”

While China continues to develop and more of the population moves into urban areas, it is evident that there will be major issues in regards to available resources. As was the case with Great Britain in the 19th century and the US in the 20th century, China has turned towards developing countries and has made lucrative deals that enable China to exploit resources. “The size and speed of the increase in (their) industrial and residential demand are straining the carrying capacities of the world’s natural resources and the global commons.²¹⁰” China has a “generous endowment of coal, but must rely on imports of oil and natural gas. China feels greater vulnerability to supply disruptions because its imports come from unstable countries and must be transported through sea lanes under the control of other nations.²¹¹” In order to assure her access to resources, China has launched the Belt & Road Initiative which I will discuss more in the following section.

207 “What Should We Understand about Urbanization in China?” *Yale Insights*, 21 Nov. 2016, insights.som.yale.edu/insights/what-should-we-understand-about-urbanization-in-china.

208 *Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*. Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf”

209 Pillsbury, Michael *The Hundred-Year Marathon*. New York: St Martin’s Griffin, 2015. Print Pg 39-40

210 Dobson, Wendy. *Gravity Shift How Asia's New Economic Powerhouses Will Shape the 21st Century*. Toronto University Press, 2010. Pg 104

211 Dobson, Wendy. *Gravity Shift How Asia's New Economic Powerhouses Will Shape the 21st Century*. Toronto University Press, 2010. Pg 105

5.3 AN IMPERIAL TOOLBOX

Below, I will discuss in further detail the hardware and software of the emerging Chinese empire. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of China's activities. Instead, it serves as a point of comparative analysis with the same aspects of the British and American empires.

5.3.1 HARDWARE OF AN EMPIRE

It has yet to be seen what China's full "hardware" will be as a emerging 21st century empire. However, China is asserting her influence throughout Eurasia and this is most obvious in the Belt & Road Initiative. Dubbed as the "New Marshall Plan", the project is seen as China's attempt to pull Central Asia into her orbit as well as limit the United States' ability to control the Asia Pacific region. Below, I will discuss in greater detail how territory expansion and infrastructure development is reflective of the strategies employed by previous empires.

Territory expansion

While the United States swept westward as she expanded from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, China does not seem intent on expanding her land borders beyond the present. Between 1949 and 1979, China had border confrontations with all of her neighbors (bar Mongolia); however, has had no other major confrontations since. In *The Tragedy of Greater Power Politics*, John Mearsheimer reasons that China's imperial history plays an important role in her future strategy. "One major difference between China and the United States is that America started out as a rather small and weak country located along the Atlantic coastline that had to expand westward in order to become a large and powerful state that could dominate the Western Hemisphere. For the United States, conquest and expansion were necessary to establish regional hegemony. China, in contrast, is already a huge country and does not need to conquer more territory to establish itself as a regional hegemon on a par with the United States."²¹²

Taiwan

\While an overland expansion seems unlikely, maritime expansion is plausible due to ongoing tension over islands lying within the South China Sea. Although the position of Taiwan is

212 Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch 10

debatable due her historical and cultural ties to China, China's attempts at maritime expansion from the late 20th century to present day can be considered a form of neoimperialism. Despite having diplomatic status until 1971, Taiwan lost her position as the representative of China in the international community due to the persistence of China. In *Tragedy*, Mearsheimer also states that rather than attack another country to achieve hegemony, China is more likely to "seek to grow its economy and become so powerful that it can dictate the boundaries of acceptable behaviour to neighboring countries, and make it clear they will pay a substantial price if they do not follow the rules."²¹³ This type of behaviour is apparent when dealing with the sensitive issue of Taiwan. Taiwan still maintains her position as an independent country while, conversely, China classifies the territory as a breakaway province. China has repeatedly blocked Taiwan's attempt to join the United Nations and after pressure from China, the amount of countries that publicly support Taiwan has continued to decrease.

For China, the question of Taiwan illustrates the increasing desire to maintain its imperial "borders" which also encompass the contested areas of Xinjiang and Tibet. Rather than relying on expansion for new resources, markets, etc as other empire's have done in the past, China's view over these territories is more an issue of national pride and nostalgia over a glorious past. In Xi Jinping's speech at the 19th Congress, he reiterated China's strong stance against separatist movements. "We stand firm in safeguarding China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will never allow the historical tragedy of national division to repeat itself. Any separatist activity is certain to meet with the resolute opposition of the Chinese people. We have the resolve, the confidence, and the ability to defeat separatist attempts for "Taiwan independence" in any form. We will never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, at any time or in any form, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China!"²¹⁴

While the American empire has proven how dangerous a nation can be when either business interests are at stake (in the case of various countries in Latin America including Chile and

213 Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch 10

214 Xi Jinping. "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics". Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf

Guatemala) or national pride is wounded (in the case of Grenada), the same can be true for China. Although heavily reliant on the rhetoric of “peaceful development”, this could change if the CCP deems military action necessary in order to maintain state legitimacy.

South & East China Seas

In addition to the dispute over Taiwan, there are also ongoing disputes over uninhabited islands in the South China Sea and East China Sea with China, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Gaining ownership to these islands would extend each country's maritime boundaries and allow them access to potentially lucrative underwater oil and gas deposits. In his book *Monsoon*, Robert Kaplan refers to the South China Sea as a “second Persian Gulf” due to the oil deposits found there and even compared it to past American imperialism. “Just as the US Navy moved a century ago to control the Caribbean basin, so must the Chinese navy move, if not to control, then at least to become as dominant as the Americans in these seas, for the Malacca Strait can be thought of as akin to the Panama Canal, an outlet to the wider world.”²¹⁵

Examples of both Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism and Mahan's theory on the influence of sea power can be seen in the interaction between China and the US over the First and Second island chains of the Pacific Ocean as both countries battle for supremacy over the Pacific Ocean. The US hopes to contain China using the First island chains as a barrier to Chinese expansion. As China becomes more aggressive in her involvement in the international community, the US will continue to impede her growth. In Figure 5 below, the barrier impeding China's access to the open sea created by the First island is clear. The island chain consists of Japan home islands, Ryuku Islands, Taiwan and the Philippines.

215 Kaplan, Robert. *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. New York. Random House. 2010 Digital Copy. Ch 15



Figure 5: First and Second Island Chain

Source: GlobalSecurity.org

China has taken steps to militarize seven artificially-made islands which are now equipped with runways, hangars, radar and missile stations. While China has been heavily criticized for her activities with accusations that the militarization “only serves to raise tensions and destabilize the region²¹⁶”, China claims that she “has a right to build up defenses on the islands.²¹⁷” In response to this criticism, in 2016 National People’s Congress spokesman Fu Ying referred back to the US activity in the region as justification for China’s militarization. “Talking about militarization, if you look into it carefully, the advanced aircraft, warships in and out of the South China Sea, aren’t most of them deployed by America?.....“America made an important decision, which is deploying over 60% of its navy to the Asia-Pacific region ... [The U.S.] is strengthening military deployments with its alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. If we’re talking about militarization, what’s this? Isn’t it militarization?²¹⁸”

People’s Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN) & China’s Blue Water Strategy

216 Press, The Associated. “US Criticizes China's Militarization of Disputed South China Sea.” *Military Times*, Military Times, 20 May 2018,

www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2018/05/20/us-criticizes-chinas-militarization-of-disputed-south-china-sea/.

217 Press, The Associated. “US Criticizes China's Militarization of Disputed South China Sea.” *Military Times*, Military Times, 20 May 2018, www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2018/05/20/us-criticizes-chinas-militarization-of-disputed-south-china-sea/.

218 Beech, Hannah. “China Accuses the U.S. of 'Militarizing' the South China Sea.” *Time*, Time, 4 Mar. 2016, time.com/4247515/south-china-sea-militarization-defense-us/.

Based on a 2015 white paper titled “China's Military Strategy”, there is little room for doubt as to which direction China wants to develop. *“The seas and oceans bear on the enduring peace, lasting stability and sustainable development of China. The traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests. It is necessary for China to develop a modern maritime military force structure commensurate with its national security and development interests, safeguard its national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, protect the security of strategic SLOCs and overseas interests, and participate in international maritime cooperation, so as to provide strategic support for building itself into a maritime power.”*²¹⁹

In order to gain control of the South China Sea and to achieve her status as a regional hegemon, it is essential for China to build up a strong international naval presence, according to Mahan’s theory. “The PLAN has been growing rapidly during the last twenty years, and has become the second largest navy in the world, supported by decades of Chinese economic growth and strong government resource allocations.”²²⁰ In July 2017, China opened her first overseas naval base in Djibouti which is an important step in creating a true blue water navy. It also offers access to the Bab al-Mandab Strait, an important chokepoint. Djibouti is an important strategic location due to her possibility as a connection point between Europe, Asia and Africa and the Djibouti-Ethiopia Railway was opened as part of the Belt & Road Initiative which will be described in more detail below.²²¹

While the PLAN is nowhere near as strong as the US Navy, “PLAN seems to have been aiming to transform itself from a "brown-water" coastal navy to a true "blue-water" open-ocean navy with expeditionary capabilities and the ability to operate on the high seas in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.”²²² However, China lacks one important tool that the US has in the form of

219 “Full Text: China's Military Strategy.” *Quotable Quotes on Belt and Road from World Intellectual, Business Personnel - Xinhua* | *English.news.cn*, 26 May 2015, www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-05/26/c_134271001_4.htm.

220 Yoji, Koda. “China’s Blue Water Navy Strategy and its Implications” Center for a New American Security. March 2017. https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/Koda_BWN.pdf?mtime=20170320220424

221 “Djibouti China Naval Base”. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/djibouti/forrel-prc-base.htm>

222 Yoji, Koda. “China’s Blue Water Navy Strategy and its Implications” Center for a New American Security. March 2017. https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/Koda_BWN.pdf?mtime=20170320220424

alliances with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. As discussed earlier, these alliances form a geographical containment wall impeding China's free access to open ocean.

Infrastructure Development & Foreign Direct Investment

Like the United Kingdom and US before her, China made significant investment in public infrastructure during the Mao era. "Public infrastructure - ports, telecommunication networks, transportation systems - built on the foundation laid in the Mao period became an indispensable facilitator of the movement of capital, labor, and goods within China and across its border."²²³

China has also invested heavily in the development of infrastructure projects around the world. "Chinese-financed and -built dams, roads, railroads, natural gas pipelines, ports, and airports are either in place or will be from Samoa to Rio de Janeiro, St. Petersburg to Jakarta, Mombasa to Vanuatu, and from the Arctic to Antarctica. Many are built in service of current and prospective mines, oilfields, and other businesses back to China, and at times to markets abroad."²²⁴ As we saw in the construction of the railroad in India or the Panama Canal in Central America, these projects have been designed to facilitate trade and give heavily industrialized countries access to the resources of the developing world.

"China's outward investment comes partly from a national policy, not just from Chinese companies seeking profits overseas. The Chinese government encourages firms to invest in strategic industries and select countries." This policy is labeled "Go Out" or "Go Global"²²⁵. Much of this investment is directed towards energy resources which China desperately needs in order to maintain strong economic growth. Unlike the United States in the 20th century, China has yet to use military force in order to secure resources.

As China's economy continues to grow, Africa is one region that has drawn considerable interest from China due to the rich natural resources there and potential for developing markets.

²²³ Hung, Ho-fung. *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*. Columbia University Press, 2017. Digital Copy. Ch. 2.

²²⁴ LeVine, Steve. "China Is Building the Most Extensive Global Commercial-Military Empire in History." *Quartz*, Quartz, 9 June 2015, qz.com/415649/china-is-building-the-most-extensive-global-commercial-military-empire-in-history/.

²²⁵ Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. Yale University Press, 2008. Pg 88

European powers pursued the same strategy during the Scramble for Africa and China has been accused of neocolonialism. However, unlike the Scramble for Africa which purged Africa of its resources, instead “China’s role on the African continent has been defined by the financing of more than 3,000, largely critical, infrastructure projects, according to the AidData Project.”²²⁶

U.S Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stated that China’s strategy “increases dependency, using opaque contracts, predatory loans practices and corrupt deals that mire nations in debt and undercut their sovereignty denying them their long term self-sustaining growth.”²²⁷ However, recent reports in the *Diplomat* and *Washington Post* have refuted these claims. Deborah Bräutigam of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies argues that China has in fact created jobs and built infrastructure projects that have boost economic growth²²⁸. In addition, Jean-Marc Blanchard of the East China Normal University claims that “there is no doubt that some Chinese infrastructure projects are about enhancing the PRC’s resource security, but many — including highways, power distribution lines, and railways — are not. Indeed, they will facilitate internal exchange of goods, services, and peoples. Other projects will integrate countries into global production networks or regional connectivity schemes.”²²⁹

In addition, to focusing on infrastructure development in Africa, China also launched the Belt & Road Initiative in 2013 which is projected to include land and sea-based infrastructure networks throughout Eurasia. Much like the Marshall Plan provided the United States additional economic growth opportunities, the Belt & Road Initiative currently being undertaken by China includes up to \$1.3 trillion of investment from China²³⁰. The project, if successful, will bring a plethora of benefits to China in regards to economic development and access to resources. This

²²⁶ Schneidman, Witney, and Joel Wiegert. “Competing in Africa: China, the European Union, and the United States.” *Brookings*, Brookings, 18 Apr. 2018, www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/04/16/competing-in-africa-china-the-european-union-and-the-united-states/.

²²⁷ france24english. “US Secretary of State Says China Investment in Africa Has Led to More Debt.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 6 Mar. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOQt-xxA5rs.

²²⁸ Bräutigam, Deborah. “Opinion | U.S. Politicians Get China in Africa All Wrong.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 12 Apr. 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldpost/wp/2018/04/12/china-africa/?utm_term=.73f41cc178b3.

²²⁹ Blanchard, Jean-Marc F. “Revisiting the Resurrected Debate About Chinese Neocolonialism.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 8 Feb. 2018, thediplomat.com/2018/02/revisiting-the-resurrected-debate-about-chinese-neocolonialism/.

²³⁰ Manuel, Anja. “China Is Quietly Reshaping the World.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 20 Oct. 2017, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/china-belt-and-road/542667/.

Belt & Road is reminiscent of the ancient tribute system discussed in Chapter One where interconnecting overland and maritime routes facilitated trade and transportation.

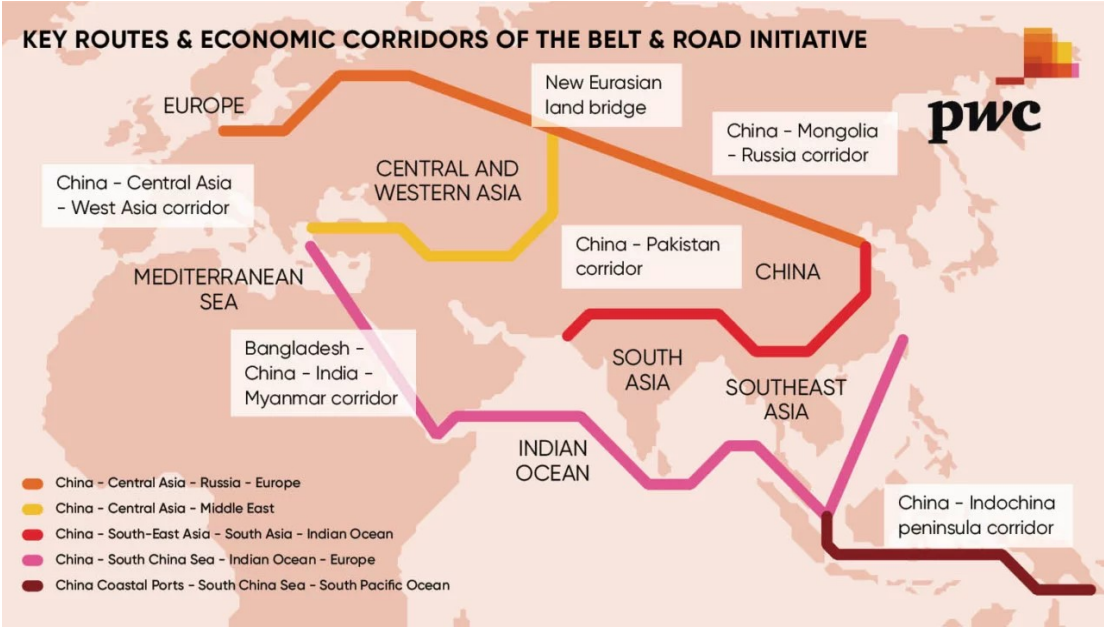


Figure 6: Key Routes of Economic Corridors of the Belt & Road Initiative
 Source: Price Waterhouse Cooper Report - Repaving the Ancient Silk Road

The obvious benefit of the Belt & Road Initiative is that it provides China an additional transportation route through Eurasia and towards Europe in case seabased lines are interrupted. “Beijing has financed an increasingly dense network of cross-border railways, roads, water projects, and oil and gas pipelines across mainland China in recent years.²³¹” These projects allow China to access strategic natural resources, create additional political support for Beijing and bring neighbouring countries more closely under their influence²³². Like the tribute system of Imperial China or the infrastructure projects of the British and American Empires, the Belt & Road Initiative is an opportunity for China to re-create herself as the epicenter of Asia.

The most important of these resources is oil and China is currently reliant on the stability of the Malacca Straits to ensure that oil can be safely shipped to feed its ever growing needs. “In the twenty-first century an escape from the Malacca dilemma means, among other things,

231 Blackwill, Robert D. War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft. Belknap Harvard, 2017. Pg 115
 232 Blackwill, Robert D. War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft. Belknap Harvard, 2017. Pg 75-76

eventually using Indian Ocean ports to transport oil and other energy products via roads and pipelines northward into the heart of China, so that tankers do not have to sail through the Strait of Malacca to reach their destination.²³³ As part of the Belt & Road Initiative, China is working to provide an alternative to the “Malacca Strait Dilemma” through the development of her string of pearls in the Indian Ocean and the Kra Canal. This string of pearls includes “China’s network of maritime facilities in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.²³⁴” This strategy is reflective of Mahan’s belief that it is necessary for a state to have naval bases outside of the state’s territory to project power around the world and interocean canals to facilitate maritime capabilities. China’s attempt to gain control of maritime facilities throughout Southeast Asia and the subcontinent, including ports in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Gwadar, Pakistan has caused concern over potential primacy of the Indian Ocean. In addition, China has been making advances in Africa and opened her first overseas naval base in Djibouti in 2017. However, Zhou Bo, a honorary fellow of the PLA Academy, claims that “China has only two purposes in the Indian Ocean: economic gains and the security of Sea lines of Communication (SLOC)²³⁵” and that “access, rather than bases, is what the Chinese Navy is really interested in the Indian Ocean²³⁶”

The construction of port facilities is reminiscent of the strategy of the US for naval expansion and is one of the key points of Mahan’s theory. While considering the history of Hawaii from the annexation of Pearl Harbour in 1887 to the overthrow of the monarchy, the US’ desire for a naval base in the Pacific was obvious. As China continues on a similar trajectory with the ports associated with the Belt & Road Initiative, it is questionable whether or not unlimited access to the seas is only to secure resources and economic growth or if further militarization will occur in the future as was the case in the history of the US’ overseas expansion.

Like the construction of the railways in India by the British or the US expansion into the Caribbean and Pacific, the project also provides China an additional outlet for Chinese

²³³ Kaplan, Robert D. *Monsoon: the Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. Random House, 2011. Digital Copy. Ch. 1

²³⁴ Tiezzi, Shannon. “The Maritime Silk Road Vs. The String of Pearls.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 13 Feb. 2014, thediplomat.com/2014/02/the-maritime-silk-road-vs-the-string-of-pearls/.

²³⁵ Tiezzi, Shannon. “The Maritime Silk Road Vs. The String of Pearls.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 13 Feb. 2014, thediplomat.com/2014/02/the-maritime-silk-road-vs-the-string-of-pearls/.

²³⁶ Tiezzi, Shannon. “The Maritime Silk Road Vs. The String of Pearls.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 13 Feb. 2014, [thediplomat.com/2014/02/the-maritime-silk-road-vs-the-string-of-pearls/..](http://thediplomat.com/2014/02/the-maritime-silk-road-vs-the-string-of-pearls/)

consumer and industrial goods, particularly steel. The growth rate of China's economy has been declining in recent years and "China has reached the point where the manufacturing share of GDP has peaked and will begin to decline as the economy becomes increasingly service based, but services seldom grow at the double-digit rates that manufacturing is sometimes capable of."²³⁷ In order to sustain rapid economic growth, and, in turn, promote a stable environment and support for the CCP, it is crucial to find an outlet that will help prop up the manufacturing sector.

Like the Marshall Plan, the Belt & Road Initiative has been promoted as being "all-inclusive" and serves as a conduit for spreading Chinese influence throughout the region. While the project is not entirely altruistic and some opponents compare this to a power grab, some experts claim that benefits from the initiative have already been felt in areas that are in need of both infrastructure and economic development. One example of this is "the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a \$62bn collection of job creating projects, mooted to strengthen Pakistan's economy by the construction of modern transportation networks, has created thousands of jobs for young men who could otherwise have been radicalised."²³⁸ According to the CPEC website, the corridor project will include integrated transport and IT networks, energy cooperation, industrial and agricultural development, and tourism cooperation with a mission to "To improve the lives of people of Pakistan and China by building an economic corridor promoting bilateral connectivity, construction, explore potential bilateral investment, economic and trade, logistics and people to people contact for regional connectivity."²³⁹

While the Belt & Road Initiative offers a number of benefits to China, it has also raised major concerns amongst the international community about the financing and possible corruption associated with the projects. In a March 2018 study by the Centre for Global Development, it was found that the infrastructure projects could cause debt distress in eight countries due to the countries' inability to pay back such high external debt. The eight at risk countries include

²³⁷ Huang, Yiping. "Understanding China's Belt & Road Initiative: Motivation, Framework and Assessment." *China Economic Review*, vol. 40, 01 Sept. 2016, pp. 314-321. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1016/j.chieco.2016.07.007.

²³⁸ Haworth, Elliott. "Everything Under Heaven: Xi Jinping Is Establishing His Empire." *City A.M.*, 18 Oct. 2017, www.cityam.com/274151/everything-under-heaven-xi-jinpings-belt-and-road-could.

²³⁹ "CPEC | China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Official Website." *Introduction | China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Official Website*, cpec.gov.pk/.

Pakistan, Djibouti, Maldives, Laos, Mongolia, Montenegro, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.²⁴⁰ “Most of its funding will come in the form of loans, not grants, and Chinese state-owned enterprises will also be encouraged to invest. This means, for example, that if Pakistan can’t pay back its loans, China could own many of its coal mines, oil pipelines, and power plants, and thus have enormous leverage over the Pakistani government. In the meantime, China has the rights to operate the Gwadar port for 40 years.²⁴¹”

Kra Canal

Similar to the UK with the construction of the Suez Canal or the US and the Panama Canal, China has been searching for an maritime alternative to the Malacca Straits (where 80% of China’s oil currently is transported through). Previously referred to as the “Malacca Dilemma” by former Chinese president Hu Jintao, the Malacca Straits currently handle around 30% of annual global transit and are vulnerable to a blockade.²⁴² The proposed Kra Canal, which would run through Thailand, would connect the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean²⁴³ and could be a geopolitical game changer if it gets completed.

The idea to build a canal across Thailand is not a new one and as far back as the 17th century, nations have tried to find a way to facilitate the project. Due to technical obstacles and high costs, no state was able to undertake the project²⁴⁴. However, China is currently in a position of economic strength and the project has been reintroduced as part of the Belt & Road Initiative.

As of June 2018, no progress had been made on the canal’s construction; however, the project may gain momentum as the Belt & Road Initiative develops further. While the support of the canal does not in itself point to ambitions of regional domination, it could signify a move to

²⁴⁰ “China's Belt and Road Initiative Heightens Debt Risks in Eight Countries, Points to Need for Better Lending Practices.” *Center For Global Development*, 4 Mar. 2018, www.cgdev.org/article/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-heightens-debt-risks-eight-countries-points-need-better.

²⁴¹ Manuel, Anja. “China Is Quietly Reshaping the World.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 20 Oct. 2017, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/china-belt-and-road/542667/.

²⁴² Swami, Praveen. “Fears Rise in India as China Pushes Plan for Canal to Reshape Indian Ocean.” *Business Standard*, Business-Standard, 6 Apr. 2018, www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/china-pushes-plan-for-canal-to-reshape-indian-ocean-118040600034_1.html.

²⁴³ Menon, Rhea. “Thailand's Kra Canal: China's Way Around the Malacca Strait.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 9 Apr. 2018, thediplomat.com/2018/04/thailands-kra-canal-chinas-way-around-the-malacca-strait/.

²⁴⁴ Micallef, Joseph V. “The Geopolitics of the Kra Canal.” *Military.com*, CodyUnderwood, www.military.com/daily-news/2017/10/04/geopolitic-kra-canal.html.

have more control over the Indian Ocean when naval build-up is taken into account. It also follows Mahan's recommendation of building interocean canals in order to gain control of the seas. As per Mahan, sea power is a necessity to gain regional hegemony.

5.3.2 SOFTWARE OF AN EMPIRE

“Beijing has begun to use aid, trade, investment, and the allure of China's economic model, which combines growth with state control, to charm other nations.²⁴⁵” While many countries have been, and continue to be, rightly concerned about China's low cost labour and economies of scale to negatively impact domestic industries, Beijing apparently has realized that, like the United States and Japan before it, it also can utilize its economic heft to minimize these concerns, and even to boost its appeal in foreign nations, if it portrays its growth in a certain light, and if other countries can benefit from China's consumer power.²⁴⁶”

In a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2017, Xi Jinping offered a pragmatic view of globalized economy and the benefits that he feels China has received from it. “To grow its economy, China must have the courage to swim in the vast ocean of the global market. If one is always afraid of bracing the storm and exploring the new world, he will sooner or later get drowned in the ocean. Therefore, China took a brave step to embrace the global market. We have had our fair share of choking in the water and encountered whirlpools and choppy waves, but we have learned how to swim in this process. It has proved to be right strategic choice.²⁴⁷”

“China is using diplomacy and a sophisticated charm offensive to win over neighbours who remain nervous about China's current intentions and past record.” In this section, I will discuss the various aspects of this charm offensive which can be classified as aspects of China's imperial “software”.

245 Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. Yale University Press, 2008. Pg. 84

246 Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. Yale University Press, 2008. Pg. 86

247 Xi Jinping Speech: Davos World Economic Forum. 2017 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum>

Geoeconomic Tools

According to China expert James Reilly as quoted in the book *War by Other Means*, China is following a ‘win-win’ strategy by “drawing nearby countries into China’s economic orbit while bolstering its diplomatic leverage and creating commercial opportunities for Chinese firms.²⁴⁸” The similarities between this and the United States’ strategy in the 20th century are endless; however, I will focus on global finance and banking, the Bretton Woods system and international trade and investment.

Finance

As mentioned in the chapter focusing on American imperialism, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were created in 1945 as part of the “Bretton Woods” system. Since then, the “Twins” have been criticized by developing countries due to the constraints that come along with financial assistance. The existing system is heavily influenced by western countries and it is claimed that there is little to no consideration for the circumstances of developing countries. Although China’s share of the IMF voting rights has increased to 6.4% SDR as her economy has grown in the 21st century, “several past attempts to reorganize the governance structures of the World Bank and the IMF to give a bigger voice to developing countries have failed.²⁴⁹”

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is one of the first major steps to shake up the remains of the Bretton Woods system and is “the first Asian-based international bank to be independent from the Western-dominated Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.²⁵⁰” Like the World Bank and IMF, AIIB’s mission is one of altruism. According to their website, the AIIB is “an organization that aims to create a better tomorrow by helping clients finance sustainable infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia and beyond.²⁵¹” The AIIB began in 2015 with 57 countries including some of

248 Blackwill, Robert D. *War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Belknap Harvard, 2017. Pg. 115

249 Maasdorp, Leslie Vice President, New Development Bank. “What Is 'New' about the New Development Bank?” *World Economic Forum*, www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/08/what-is-new-about-the-new-development-bank/.

250 “57 Nations Approved as Founder Members of China-Led AIIB.” *South China Morning Post*, 27 Apr. 2015 www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1766970/57-nations-approved-founder-members-china-led-aiib.

251 “2017 Highlights - AIIB Annual Report 2017.” *Members of the Bank - AIIB*, www.aiib.org/en/news-events/news/2017/annual-report/highlights.html.

the US' traditional trade partners including Australia, United Kingdom, Philippines, Germany and France and classifies itself as “a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia and beyond.”²⁵² The number of members has now rise to 84 states and by the end of 2017, \$4.22 billion had been invest in projects and funds and there were 23 approved projects receiving funding. This is in comparison with 8 projects at EOY 2016 and \$1.69 billion in investments.²⁵³

According to a 2014 white paper regarding foreign aid written by the Chinese government, “when providing foreign assistance, China adheres to the principles of not imposing any political conditions, not interfering in the internal affairs of the recipient countries and fully respecting their right to independently choosing their own paths and models of development. The basic principles China upholds in providing foreign assistance are mutual respect, equality, keeping promise, mutual benefits and win-win.”²⁵⁴ Although China does not demand the same degree of political or economic reform when providing aid to developing countries as the United States, Chinese aid does come with strings attached and “AIIB analysts expect that projects stemming from the new Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank will be dominated by Chinese firms.”²⁵⁵

Besides AIIB, “the emergence of the BRICS Bank - billed somewhat openly as a BRICS-led alternative to the World Bank - is one of the clearest signals yet that assistance will no longer always be dictated on Western terms.”²⁵⁶ Now known as the “New Development Bank”, this BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) -led bank, like the World Bank and AIIB, is focusing on sustainable projects in the developing world. “The General Strategy of the Bank lays out how the NDB intends to fulfill its mandate of mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.”²⁵⁷ Most interestingly, despite the fact

252 “Introduction.” *About AIIB Overview - AIIB*, www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/index.html.

253 “2017 Highlights - AIIB Annual Report 2017.” *Members of the Bank - AIIB*, www.aiib.org/en/news-events/news/2017/annual-report/highlights.html.

254 *China's Foreign Aid (2014)*, english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986592.htm.

255 Blackwill, Robert D. *War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Belknap Harvard, 2017. Pg 74

256 Blackwill, Robert D. *War By Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Belknap Harvard, 2017. Pg 74

257 “NDB.” *New Development Bank*, www.ndb.int/.

that the size of the economies of the BRIC countries vary greatly, “in the day-to-day management and governance of the bank, the five member states have an equal share.”²⁵⁸

Free Trade Agreements

Thanks to the support of Bill Clinton who saw it as an opportunity to insert democracy into the country, China entered the WTO in 2001 with his support. While Americans are still deeply divided over the benefits of free trade, as can be seen most clearly in the election of Donald Trump, China has embraced the policies of it. On July 25th, 2018 Xi Jinping reiterated his support for free trade and advised BRIC countries that “the escalation of protectionism and unilateralism are directly affecting the external development environment of emerging markets and developing countries”²⁵⁹.

Rather than the US leading the way in free trade in the 21st century as it did in the latter half of the 20th century, China has taken over this role. “The Chinese Government deems Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as a new platform to further opening up to the outside and speeding up domestic reforms, an effective approach to integrate into global economy and strengthen economic cooperation with other economies, as well as particularly an important supplement to the multilateral trading system.”²⁶⁰ Currently, China has signed 16 bilateral free trade agreements with eight more currently under negotiation.

The End of the TPP - An Opportunity for China?

While China was originally excluded from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), she now stands to benefit greatly from Trump’s decision to withdrawal from the agreement. “Free trade in the South China Sea won’t die out just because the TPP ended, but it does mark the end of U.S.-led free trade. One of the biggest benefactors from TPP’s ending is the superpower that didn’t participate in deal from the start – China”²⁶¹ The resumption of mercantilist policies in the US

²⁵⁸Maasdorp, Leslie Vice President, New Development Bank. “What Is 'New' about the New Development Bank?” *World Economic Forum*, www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/08/what-is-new-about-the-new-development-bank/.

²⁵⁹Mbatha, Amogelang. “China’s Xi Calls for BRICS to Reject Protectionism Outright” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-26/china-s-xi-calls-for-brics-to-reject-protectionism-outright>

²⁶⁰ “China FTA Network” <http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/english/>

²⁶¹Pham, Peter. “Why Did Donald Trump Kill This Big Free Trade Deal?” *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 29 Dec. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/peterpham/2017/12/29/why-did-donald-trump-kill-this-big-free-trade-deal/3/

leaves China as the main power center behind developing regional trade agreements.

With the US' withdrawal from the TPP, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is now the biggest trade deal under negotiation. The deal includes ASEAN, China, Japan, South Korea, India, New Zealand and Australia. Combined, this area includes 46% of the global population and 24% of the world's GDP²⁶². The deal is expected to “open job opportunities for individuals, increase supply and demand of workspaces and promote competition as a result of the establishment of more small and medium enterprises and multinational companies.”²⁶³

Diaspora & Social Networks

The UK and China have both benefited from widespread immigration. Diaspora is an important aspect to look at regarding imperialism especially when considering the interconnectivity that has developed between people over the past 100 years . As discussed previously, the British diaspora, specifically migrant networks, “were powerful vehicles for disseminating British styles of architecture, fashion, fiction, food and music.”²⁶⁴ While 21st century China has yet to export the same “soft goods” as Britain, the Chinese diaspora is still an integral part of their “empire”. Like British migrants, many “Chinese overseas” still maintain ties with Mainland China and speak Mandarin.

As of 2009, there were roughly 55 million “overseas Chinese” who currently live outside of the Greater China territory. Many of these inhabitants reside in areas along the Asian periphery. “Historical ties between China’s northeast and South Korea and Japan, the Pearl River delta region and Hong Kong, the Yangzi River delta and Taiwan, and the southeast and the greater Mekong subregion all form natural economic territories that transcend peace and conflict.”²⁶⁵

The diaspora spreads beyond the Asian region and there are huge population centers of ethnic

#1d8f3ac537e8.

²⁶² Jozuka, Emiko. “TPP vs RCEP? Trade Deals Explained.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 26 Jan. 2017, edition.cnn.com/2017/01/24/asia/tpp-rcep-nafta-explained/index.html.

²⁶³ “RCEP Can Stem the Tide of Rising Protectionism.” *BusinessMirror*, 21 Sept. 2017, businessmirror.com.ph/rcep-can-stem-the-tide-of-rising-protectionism/.

²⁶⁴ Magee, Gary Bryan, and Andrew Stuart Thompson. *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg 28

²⁶⁵ Khanna, Parag. *The Second World: How Emerging Powers Are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-First Century*. Penguin, 2009. Pg 259

Chinese throughout North America. In the book *The Second World*, Parag Khanna refers to this diaspora as the “demographic equivalent of climate change: imperceptibly advancing, knowing no boundaries, and affecting everyone.”²⁶⁶

While there are large populations of ethnic Chinese in the developed world, Chinese culture is spreading throughout the developing world. “China’s appeal is reflected in another explicit sign of success. Chinese-language and -cultural studies have skyrocketed in popularity in the developing world, as average people come to see learning Chinese as vital to business and as providing a kind of popular cachet, the way English long has.”²⁶⁷ This is an important part of the government’s plan and Premier Wen Jiabao (2003-2013) “emphasized the role of culture as a source of China’s national strength and international competitiveness.”²⁶⁸ Like the spread of American culture in the 20th century, the benefits of the spread of Chinese culture is not merely political. The cultural industry itself which is based off of the exports of “cultural products” including heritage goods, books, print media, audiovisual media and the performing arts is worth an estimated \$170 billion.²⁶⁹

The importance of diaspora, especially when they have a strong connection to their “motherland” should not be dismissed. For developing countries, diaspora often represents foreign direct investment and small scale trade in the form of parallel imports. More importantly, diaspora represents a psychological connection between geographic regions and as was witnessed during the British Empire, these ties can have an impact on both domestic and foreign policy.

Nationalism

Despite representing a one-party system, it is still crucial for Xi Jinping to maintain national support for the country’s foreign policy moving forward into the future. One of the tools currently being used is the rise of nationalism and populism. According to Mearsheimer,

²⁶⁶Khanna, Parag. *The Second World: How Emerging Powers Are Redefining Global Competition in the Twenty-First Century*. Penguin, 2009. Pg 259

²⁶⁷ Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. Yale University Press, 2008. Pg 116

²⁶⁸ Shambaugh, David. *China Goes Global: the Partial Power*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Pg 365

²⁶⁹ Shambaugh, David. *China Goes Global: the Partial Power*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Pg 366

“nationalism is likely to play a role in energizing the rivalry between China and the United States, as well as between China and its neighbors.²⁷⁰” He explains that Chinese feel a sense of “specialness” about their history and that this “sense of specialness sometimes leads nations to conclude that they are the “chosen” people, a perspective that has a rich tradition in both China and the United States, among other countries.²⁷¹” In addition, ““Chinese elite and popular opinion is strongly influenced not only by nationalistic discourse emphasizing China being victimized by other powers.²⁷²” This sense of victimization supports the CCP strategy of reclaiming China’s lost status and, like the US’ belief in specialness, legitimizes the actions that the government takes. This sense of victimization can easily morph into hypernationalism, the most dangerous form of nationalism in which hate becomes a prevalent factor and can serve as a conduit to war. This was very clearly seen in Weimar Republic Germany which paved the way to Hitler’s rise and in Imperial Japan. Unfortunately, hypernationalism is nothing new in China and under Mao, the Cultural Revolution cost the lives of up to 1.5 million people. This hypernationalism could be seen in the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands.

As I have already discussed regarding the rise of the British and American empires, this nationalism could be beneficial in the future in order to justify foreign policy and domestic policy decision and ultimately, military aggression. In recent history, this type of nationalism and propaganda has been most devastating in the actions of Germany and Japan before and during World War Two but also as the basis for many civil wars including the collapse of Yugoslavia and the ensuing Balkans Wars.

Confucianism

Over the past 15 years, Chinese leaders have spoken about the benefits and wisdom of Confucianism. Once considered by Mao as an enemy of the state, Confucianism values based on “social harmony, ethical behaviour, respect for the elderly and obedience to authority” have been cited as an integral part of Chinese culture. During a speech in September, 2014, Xi

²⁷⁰ Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch 10

²⁷¹ Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch. 10

²⁷² Sutter, Robert. “China's Self-Absorbed Nationalism.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, thediplomat.com/2012/08/chinas-self-absorbed-nationalism/2/.

Jinping stated that “Confucianism, along with other philosophies and cultures taking shape and growing within China, are records of spiritual experiences, rational thinking and cultural achievements of the nation while it strived to build its identity [...]These cultures have nourished the flourishing Chinese nation.²⁷³”

While Confucianism alone is a benevolent force, the way that Confucian values are being used by the CCP propaganda machine can be used as a political tool internationally to assuage the concerns of other states and reduce the risks of states “balancing” against China. In his book, Pillsbury argues that “Chinese sources played up the Confucian, pacifist nature of Chinese culture and played down - and in many cases completely omitted any reference to the bloody Warring States period.²⁷⁴”

There may also be a domestic political strategy behind these statements. “The CCP is held up as “successor to and promoter of fine traditional Chinese culture.” By having the CCP embrace Confucianism as an integral part of both Imperial China and modern-day China, it may be an “attempt to establish the political legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, both to the Chinese public and to the West. Under Xi’s formula, to reject the CCP means rejecting Chinese culture itself, including Confucianism.²⁷⁵”

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY & THEORETICAL APPLICATION

China has changed remarkably in the past 50 years. The days of the Cultural Revolution and Great Leap Forward are long gone as Communism has been replaced with Capitalism. China has relied on her large population to provide cheap labor to produce export goods. Like the US and UK before her, she has amassed capital through international trade and is now a proponent of free trade despite previously following strict mercantilist policies under the leadership of Mao. As the costs of manufacturing within her own borders is rising, she is looking to diversify her economy and transition to more service-based industries like other developed countries have done. China is also trying to turn the US-dominated financial structure towards developing

273 “Xi Jinping Endorses the Promotion of Confucius.” *South China Morning Post*, 28 Feb. 2016, www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1603487/xi-jinping-endorses-promotion-confucius.

274 Pillsbury, Michael *The Hundred-Year Marathon*. New York: St Martin’s Griffin, 2015. Print Pg 32

275 Kai, Jin. "The Chinese Communist Party's Confucian Revival." *The Diplomat*. The Diplomat, 30 Sept. 2014. Web. 12 Sept. 2017.

countries and is a stakeholder in the AIIB, which can be seen as a direct competitor to the World Bank.

Perhaps most importantly in regards to Mahan's theory, China has also invested heavily in infrastructure development and naval build-up like the US and UK before her. Her first overseas naval base opened in Djibouti and she is currently transitioning from a green-water navy to a blue-water one. She is building artificial islands in the South China Sea to help project power and using the Belt & Road Initiative as a way to gain more sea access in the Indian Ocean. The Belt & Road Initiative is an opportunity to project power not only across blue water but also overland. If successful, the initiative will bring Asia and Europe into her sphere of influence and effectively re-create the ancient world when she was the center of everything.

While China has been criticized heavily for imperialistic activities, her strategy is no different than the US or UK before her. All three states relied on a strong economy to expand their power, either formally in the case of British colonies or informally in the case of economic imperialism such as America's banana wars. Infrastructure facilitates trade and communications and naval presence secures it across the open water. As a country desperate to increase the standard of living for her populace and maintain control of her legitimacy, China is following the "right" imperial strategy based on the success of the British and American Empires.

6. EXPERT ANALYSIS & THESIS CONCLUSION

There is a wealth of scholarly books, papers and interviews regarding China's role in the 21st century. In this section, I will discuss some of the most generally-held beliefs amongst geopolitical and political science scholars. I have included mainly works from European and American scholars and omitted many articles written by Chinese scholars due to the potential for biased and misleading information as well as translation-related errors. I will finish this chapter by introducing my own perspective on China's behaviour based on the historical analysis, expert opinions and first-hand experience.

Nearly all political scientists view China's behaviour as part of a realist strategy in which she is trying to secure her own interests and the needs of her populace, especially energy needs and food security. Due to China's economic clout and position as the most heavily populated country on the planet, it is imperative to consider which direction China will move forward if her actions continue to mirror past empires. Are her actions merely a reflection of a realist approach to international relations where survival is the ultimate goal or are they pointing towards a grander strategy of imperialist power? Despite the rhetoric surrounding China as a responsible power developing peacefully, how much will China use her re-established economic clout to achieve strategic goals comparable to the imperial strategies of the United States and the United Kingdom as addressed above? Finally, if she is an empire, than what type of empire is she?

In his book *The Hundred Year Marathon*, Michael Pillsbury warns readers that China's strategy follows the pace of a "Hundred Year Marathon" referring to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 until 2049 - the date when he claims the Chinese Communist Party plans to overtake the United States as the dominant power in international politics and begin a new world order. According to Pillsbury, "they see a multipolar world as merely a strategic waypoint en route to a new global hierarchy in which China is alone at the top."²⁷⁶ The strategy of this hundred year marathon is based off of the strategy used during the Warring States period and the nine elements of it include: "1) Induce complacency to avoid alerting your opponent; 2)

276 Pillsbury, Michael. *The Hundred-Year Marathon*. New York: St Martin's Griffin, 2015. Pg 38-39

Manipulate your opponent's advisors; 3) Be patient - for decades, or longer - to achieve victory; 4) Steal your opponent's ideas and technology for strategic purposes; 5) Military might is not the critical factor for winning a long-term competition; 6) Recognize that the hegemon will take extreme, even reckless action to retain its dominant position; 7) Never lose sight of *shi*; 8) Establish and employ metrics for measuring your status relative to other potential challengers; 9) Always be vigilant to avoid being encircled or deceived by others.²⁷⁷ Parts of this ancient strategy sounds remarkably similar to Deng Xiaoping's "24 Character Strategy. "Observe calmly; secure our position, cope with affairs calmly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile; and never claim leadership."²⁷⁸

Much like I have done in this thesis, Michael Pillsbury reflected on history to understand what actions China will take in the future in this book *The 100 Year Marathon*. This history not only includes ancient lessons learned during the Warring States Period but also on more recent history starting with China's Century of Humiliation. According to Pillsbury, China is preparing to finish her Hundred Year Marathon in which she finally overtakes the US as the regional hegemon of Asia. As the US is slowly self-destructing, she is giving China the chance to rise.

In his book *Mind of Empire*, Christopher Ford supports this claim regarding China's ambitions stating that "China's security strategy seeks "hegemony over much of Asia" and wishes to replace the United States as the preeminent power in Asia, to reduce American influence, to prevent Japan and the United States from creating a kind of 'contain China' front, and to extend its power in the South China and East China Seas so that it can control the region's essential sea lanes."²⁷⁹ John Mearsheimer echoes this sentiment in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* claiming that China is not different than the U.S and is "likely to follow basic realist logic and attempt to become a regional hegemon in Asia."²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Pillsbury, Michael. *The Hundred-Year Marathon*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2015. Pg 39-40

²⁷⁸ "Deng Xiaoping's 24 Character Strategy". <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/24-character.htm>

²⁷⁹ Ford, Christopher *The Mind of Empire*. Kentucky. The University Press of Kentucky. 2010. Digital Copy Pg 30

²⁸⁰ Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch 10

In the words of Mearsheimer, “China will have a vested interest in creating security problems for the United States in the Western Hemisphere, so as to limit the American military’s freedom to roam into other regions, especially Asia.²⁸¹” Perhaps, most alarmingly, is Mearsheimer’s belief that “if China continues its striking economic growth over the next few decades, it is likely to act in accordance with the logic of offensive realism, which is to say it will attempt to imitate the United States.²⁸²” Although Mearsheimer does not believe that the US is a global hegemon or that one could even exist, the US has been the strongest state in terms of military and economic advantage and as discussed previously in this thesis, she has used her economic clout and military might to subjugate other territories based on her own strategic interests.. As China is working to build her military and has already shown aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea like the US did in the Caribbean, China appears to be preparing herself for gaining control of the Pacific and Indian Oceans if history is, in fact, cyclical and her actions will imitate the US as theorized by Mearsheimer.

But..... Does History Always Repeat Itself?

As per the comparisons that I have made in the above case studies, China’s activities are very similar to what other aspiring powers have done in the past and China fulfills Mahan’s six necessities for sea power including geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, size of population, character of the people and character of the government. As the 4th largest country in the world with 14,500 kilometers of coastline and a population of 1.3 billion²⁸³, China’s CCP has control over the country’s media outlets and can easily instill nationalistic tendencies in her population. This nationalism permeates society with a strong desire to regain China’s lost status. Based on figures from the World Economic Forum, China’s economy has reached \$14 trillion and according to a study by PwC, by 2050 China’s economy will reach \$58 trillion²⁸⁴.

281 Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch 10

282 Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014. Digital Copy. Ch. 10

283 *Worldatlas.com - Worldatlas Resources and Information.*, worldatlas.com/.

284 Smith, Rob. “The World’s Biggest Economies in 2018.” *World Economic Forum*, www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/the-worlds-biggest-economies-in-2018/.

History shows that “rising powers in time invariably use their new-found economic strength for wider political, cultural and military ends.²⁸⁵” According to Mahan’s theory, China’s ultimate goal should be to maintain peace in order to sustain economic development. However, in the past century, World War One has proven that interconnected economies do not guarantee peace. While some political scientists such as Henry Kissinger and Robert Kaplan believe a collision between the US and China is not inevitable, others such as Pillsbury and Mearsheimer view the situation very differently.

As I have discussed earlier in this thesis, economic strength and naval supremacy were used by Great Britain and the United States to expand across landmasses and oceans and also helped promote the spread of Anglo-American cultures. We have also seen China making the same moves using the same hardware and software that past empires have employed. While the common narrative amongst the Western world is one of a hawkish China, some scholars believe that China’s goals are more benevolent. In Joshua Kurlantzick’s 2007 book *Charm Offensive*, Kurlantzick lists what he believes are the long-term goals of China. “China’s goals include maintaining peace and stability on its borders, portraying itself to other nations as a benign and constructive actor, possibly becoming a model of development to other nations, obtaining resources needed to power the Chinese economy, isolating Taiwan, and demonstrating the possibility that it can eventually become a great power - one day even an equal of the United States.²⁸⁶”

In the past 11 years, the international community has been inundated with messages from China regarding her benign imperial rise, her all-inclusive attitude for development and her desire to re-establish her status in the world. This appears to be remarkably similar to the narrative given by the US in the mid-20th century when her height was arguably at its peak. However, do China’s steps towards building an empire mean that she will begin acting aggressively against other nations or will she continue in her own unique path of promoting peaceful development? There is one important factor to consider when looking at China’s future and that is her past.

²⁸⁵ Jacques, Martin, et al. *Da Guo Xiong Xin: Yi Ge Yong Bu Tui Se De Da Guo Meng = When China Rules the World: the End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. Zhong Xin Chu Ban Ji Tuan Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2016. Pg 12

²⁸⁶ Kurlantzick, Joshua. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. Yale University Press, 2007. Pg 130

Chinese civilization has existed for thousands of years and it is important to not only consider how Western countries have behaved in the post-Columbian period but also how Chinese foreign policy has been throughout her long history.

In modern times, the first world order can be considered a resulting factor of the Treaty of Westphalia which put an end to the Thirty Years War, one of the most destructive conflicts in European history. The treaty set forward the beliefs of sovereignty, the “balance of power” and non-intervention..²⁸⁷ The Treaty of Westphalia created an international order based on how Europeans saw the world with little respect for what was happening beyond Europe. To the contrary, China was the dominating power in Asia but the concept of sovereignty did not exist to them unlike the powers of Europe. Instead, China viewed her domain as “All Under Heaven” and Chinese political and cultural influence radiated outwards as part of her world order. Therefore, while performing a historical analysis of imperial and contemporary China, it is also important to note Imperial China’s behaviour during the Song and early Ming dynasties when China was most likely to pursue sea supremacy based on Mahan’s theory. Despite being the dominant regional power, the Chinese navy “did not seek to establish bases or maintain permanent presences in Indian Ocean ports the way the European powers did later; rather, they sought access through the building of alliances in the form of a tribute system.”²⁸⁸

Some political scientists believe that China’s unique history plays an extremely important role in her behaviour and can help dictate what her actions will be in the future. As Jacques argued in his book *When China Rules the World*, “China is the product of a history and culture which has little or nothing in common with that of the West. It is only by discounting the effects of history and culture and reducing the world to a matter of economics and technology that it is possible to conclude that China will become Western.”²⁸⁹ Robert Kaplan also argues in his book *Monsoon* that China will use a more subtle display of power than other great states, such as the United States and Britain, have done in the past based on her history and that a clash with

287 Kissinger, Henry. *World Order*. NY, NY: Penguin, 2015. Print. Pg 4

288 Kaplan, Robert D. *Monsoon: the Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. Random House, 2011. Ch 15

289 Jacques, Martin, et al. *Da Guo Xiong Xin: Yi Ge Yong Bu Tui Se De Da Guo Meng = When China Rules the World: the End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. Zhong Xin Chu Ban Ji Tuan Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2016. Pg 13

the United States is not inevitable²⁹⁰.

Although much has changed in regards to technology since Imperial China controlled East Asia, serious students in the realm of geopolitics know the danger that can arise when factors such as history, national identity and geography are ignored. Imperial China has shown her capabilities as a regional power and as I have discussed, contemporary China looks closely at her history to help shape her future. In Xi Jinping's speech at Davos in January 2017, he frequently echoed the paternalistic and inclusive sentiment of Imperial China and promised to "open our arms to the people of other countries and welcome them aboard the express train on China's development."²⁹¹

While Xi Jinping has been a vocal proponent of China's peaceful development in harmony with other nations' growth, he has also been an advocate of free trade while continuing to follow a policy of non-intervention, which is decidedly unlike the US in her imperial history when interventions were common and spanned the globe. At the 2017 World Economic Forum in Davos, Xi stated that "all countries enjoy the right to development. At the same time, they should view their own interests in a broader context and refrain from pursuing them at the expense of others."²⁹² While stated intentions do not guarantee the direction a foreign policy will take, China's economy continues to grow and it is in her best interests to maintain a peaceful environment to help facilitate economic growth.

As discussed above, the scholarly works available discussing Chinese strategy are endless and based off of these and my own personal experience, I believe that China will follow a different trajectory than the United States. Like the British and American Empires before her, China is a proponent of free trade and is currently investing heavily in building up transportation and communication networks that will bring more states under her as the centerpoint of her own 21st century Middle Kingdom. Like the US before her (especially in the aftermath of World War Two), China has the capital to invest in large scale products and an economy that is strong

290 Kaplan, Robert D. *Monsoon: the Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. Random House, 2011.

291 "Full Text of Xi Jinping Keynote at the World Economic Forum." *CGTN America*, america.cgtn.com/2017/01/17/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum.

292 "Full Text of Xi Jinping Keynote at the World Economic Forum." *CGTN America*, america.cgtn.com/2017/01/17/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum.

enough to influence the international community.

Using the strategies of the US and UK as an example of empire building, China is building an empire without a doubt. She is concentrating on economic growth, infrastructure development and naval build-up which all point towards Mahan's theory of the influence of sea power. As it is imperative to control the seas in order to develop into a hegemon, this is China's first step in recreating her lost empire. However, thanks to advances in technology, this time China does not need to stop at her eastern frontier.

China is following Mahan's strategy in the development of naval forces and infrastructure in order to pursue sea supremacy. Control of the seas is vital in a time where 90% of global trade is shipped and states rely heavily on their economies for stability and security. As per Mahan's theory, China's will be to maintain peace and have unfettered access to seaways and checkpoints which will allow her empire to continue growing. China relies on a strong economy and while looking at her long, illustrious past, it is hard to quantify the nation as an aggressor. However, if Mearsheimer is correct in his theory on offensive realism, China will need to do whatever it takes to become a regional hegemon while the US tries to prevent her from doing so.

While I do agree that China is following an offensive realist strategy under the pretense of restoring her lost legacy, I believe that China will be a different type of empire than the US or Great Britain. Rather than focusing on military intervention like the international community saw from the US in Chile and Iran, China will instead use her economic strength to sway countries to behave according to her best interests.

Mearsheimer has been heavily criticized on his disregard for the domestic situation surrounding states and has simplified his theory to a mere survival strategy. I agree with these criticisms. In the case of China, domestic concerns, including everything from wealth inequality, environmental degradation to an aging population, could de-legitimize the CCP and China will do everything possible to support her economic growth. If the economy begins to drastically slow down and discontent begins to spread, I believe that China will initially turn to the latent

nationalism present in the country to gain support for aggressive actions against Taiwan. This nationalism would then prop up the legitimacy of the CCP. As we have experienced in history, governments need scapegoats to explain their inadequacies. For Nazi Germany, it was the Jewish population. For the US, it is Latin Americans. For China, it has historically been Japan. However, this does not guarantee that it will not be Taiwan in the future.

I believe that China will not act aggressively against her neighbors due to the necessity for maintain peace and stability. The real question for now lies in whether or not China will be willing to battle the United States in order to achieve her empire and if the US will be able to stop her. Despite her decline, the US is still a superpower with the strongest military in the world. This combined with other states desire to balance against China will make it very difficult for China to sustain prolonged growth.

It is impossible at this time to guess what direction the US will take due to the instability of the US presidency. As we have seen from the recent trade war between the US and China, interconnecting economies do not guarantee cooperation amongst states. However, China has much more to lose than to gain and as Kaplan said, a collision between the US and China is not imminent.

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