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TRANSITION THEORY

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the newest edition of *Politicus Journal*. This special issue stands alongside our main volume to display the outstanding work of Queen's University students through a streamlined topic of interest. The theme selected for this issue, power transition theory, was decided upon with the invaluable guidance of Professor David Haglund.

Power Transition Theory (PTT) was created by A.F.K Organski in 1958, suggesting that International relations are hierarchical, as opposed to being anarchical. Organski's version of PTT only analyzed the possibility of conflict between the ruling and rising global powers; wherein conflict occurs due to the rising power amassing enough strength to conceivably challenge the dominant state. PTT has evolved to include more diversified positions, such as the possibility of preventative wars initiated by dominant powers halting the rise of potential challengers, and preemptive wars waged when the advantage of striking first is deemed paramount. This volume is centred around the theoretical structure of PTT being applied to our contemporary international structure.

We are grateful for the support of the Academic Commission of the Arts & Science Undergraduate Society for the resources and mobility they have granted us.

We share this success with our outstanding Assistant Editor, Claire and our Editorial Board: Rhianna, Annie, Bradyn, Sydney, CJ, Hazuk, Fiona; and our wonderful marketing team: Cassandra, Gabrielle, and Quinn. Your hard work and determination have brought this issue to life and we are endlessly thankful for the hours you have put into making this possible.

To those who have contributed, thank you for joining us in our commitment to academic excellence. We are proud to showcase your outstanding work. As our world plunges into a new reality we would like to encourage all of our readers to embrace the diversity of selected topics and opinions we present in this issue.

Sincerely,

Graeme Parsons & Mikhaela Connell, Editors in Chief



CHINA'S RISE, AMERICA'S PIVOT, AND NATO'S DEMISE? HOW NATO SHOULD RESPOND TO THE UNITED STATES LOOKING EASTWARD

While the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) recently celebrated its 70th anniversary, the longevity of the Alliance remains under strain from threats both external and internal to the Alliance. While NATO grapples with the external threat of a resurgent Russia, there appears to be growing concern within NATO of increasing United States (US) alienation from the Alliance. Not only has President Donald Trump cast doubt on his commitment to NATO's Article V collective defence clause and threatened a full US withdrawal from the Alliance, but the US as a whole appears ever more focused on the perceived threat to its global hegemony stemming from a rising China. Therefore, as the US shifts its focus away from European security and focuses further on the Asia-Pacific and a rising China, how should the Atlantic Alliance respond to keep the US involved and engaged in NATO?

As current NATO policy on China is lacking, this paper will argue that the Alliance must use its political and military foundation to take concerted action regarding a rising China. This will demonstrate to the US that the Alliance remains an important part of US security, and therefore, will help ensure Alliance longevity. Specifically, this paper will argue for the Alliance to unite around its political roots in regard to China, securitize the US's perceived Chinese threats as Alliance-wide issues, and demonstrate the Alliance's continued relevance to US security interests (both in the Asia-Pacific region and in Europe). If NATO fails to take action here, it risks further US alienation from European security and the Alliance as a whole. To contextualize these prescribed actions, this paper will be grounded in an analysis of the US's pivot to Asia through the

lens of Power Transition Theory (PTT). Thus, the paper will begin with an outline of PTT and its applicability to US-China relations. From there, evidence of the US's increasing pivot to Asia will be presented, with a subsequent analysis of what that means for the NATO Alliance. Next, this paper will present the possible actions NATO can take in light of the US's look eastward. Finally, this paper will briefly discuss potential issues that the Alliance may face in implementing these actions.

Power Transition Theory

PTT theory can trace its roots back to the work of Thucydides and The History of the Peloponnesian War, where Thucydides claimed that war was inevitable due to "the rise of Athens, and the fear that this instilled in Sparta." However, PTT truly saw its birth with A.F.K Organski and World Politics. Since its conception, PTT has been further debated, nuanced, and refined. At its core, PTT believes that when a state that is rising in power threatens to displace a ruling power, in a 'power transition,' there is danger ahead. A power transition comes as a natural phenomenon, and with it comes discombobulation and conflict. For power transition theorists, stability and maintenance of the global system comes from a ruling power's dominance through its power. It is when the ruling powers' dominance over the system is challenged by the rising power that instability occurs. Many scholars believe that the instability generally results in direct conflict. For example, Graham

Allison argues that twelve of sixteen power transitions over 500 years have resulted in conflict.

According to power transition theorists, the ruling power in the international system becomes fearful, paranoid, and insecure regarding its position in the system. It sees rising states as challenges to its dominance over the system, and as such, the ruling state may take steps early on to balance its strength if it feels as though it is going to be challenged. This balancing and paranoia from the ruling state, coupled with the growing strength of the rising state, bring the two powers into direct contact with one another, during which a small flashpoint can quickly turn into a large scale conflict. While scholars within PTT debate which power starts the war, that debate is beyond the scope of the paper. For the purpose of this paper, it is important to understand that a rising power invokes paranoia in the ruling power. Subsequently, the ruling power takes steps to balance against the rising power, which can see contact between the two powers turn from a flashpoint spark into an all-out war.

PTT in Contemporary Times?

Dominance of the international system is a very controversial topic, however; there is general consensus that the US became the leading power in the international system at some point in the past 100 years or so. Kori Schake believes that the US supplanted Great Britain as the global hegemon following World War I, having gained the ability to rewrite rules of the international order. Other scholars, believe the US was engaged in bipolarity with the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991, but has since ruled the international system.

Regardless of where one believes US dominance began, there is general agreement that the US has enjoyed a unipolar moment since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The unipolar moment, originally coined by Charles Krauthammer, has been echoed by many scholars. The international system entered a period where the US faced no clear great power security competitor, and presided

over its Western international order. It is in this unipolar moment where the US continued to expand its grip over the international system by exporting its values to shape the world order in its vision. However, few predicted the unipolar moment would last forever. Scholars have long predicted that the US would need to contend with the eventual rise of another power, and that rise appears now to be coming from China.

PTT theorists have argued that in order for a rising power to be considered a significant challenge to the ruler, it would require its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be 60-80 percent of the ruler's. China reached 60 percent of US GDP by 2015, and did so within just 30 years. Other common economic metrics, such as Purchasing Power Parity, demonstrate that China has already passed the US in economic power. Furthermore, China is the top trading partner with 130 countries worldwide. Thus, China has presented an exceptional economic rise in the past 30-40 years and is near or within the distance needed to challenge the ruler, according to PTT.

From a technological and military standpoint, China cannot be ignored either. China already spends twice the amount of money on military expenditure as the Russians, the US's traditional adversary. Furthermore, China is set to surpass the US in Research and Development investment by 2019. Although the US still outweighs China in military spending and capability, China's increase in capability and growth rate cannot be overlooked.



Therefore, Chinese advancements in economic growth and technological and military capability demonstrate that it is undoubtedly on the rise. Although some scholars like Beckley believe if you use the metric of GDP multiplied by GDP per capita, a superior metric of power in his view, you will see the US holds a substantial lead over China; it would be foolish to believe that China should be considered the same as any other state in the international system. China should be considered a peer or near peer competitor to the US in terms of economic, technological, and military capability. Yet, regardless of where you stand on China's position in relation to its ability to challenge the US, it is clear that China has piqued the interest of the US ruling power.

A New Focus for the US

A review of American Foreign and Defence Policy over the last decade demonstrates the US's increasing focus on the Asia-Pacific. This has been true across both the Obama and Trump administrations. As China has risen in power, we have seen the US look more toward China and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. The most (in)famous piece of evidence of this new area of US focus is the Obama administration's "pivot to Asia". In 2011, the Obama administration outlined its new focus on the Asia-Pacific region, with both an economic and security focus. Economically, Obama continued to express interest in the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, a multilateral trade agreement that excluded China and was intended to wean Pacific partners off Chinese dependence. Regarding security, the US completed five Freedom of Navigation operations (FONOPS) and one surveillance overflight in the disputed South China Sea (SCS) region throughout Obama's eight-year presidency.

The US's focus on the Asia-Pacific and China has increased further under the Trump administration. While withdrawing from the TPP, the Trump administration has engaged in a direct economic

trade war with China. Regarding regional security, Trump's three-year tenure has already overseen six FONOPS in the SCS, with four in 2017 alone. These have been in conjunction with numerous US overflights in the region, notably with three B-52 Bomber overflights within a four-month period.

Furthermore, the US has seen an increase of security force deployments in the Asia-Pacific region in Guam, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Hawaii. Troops in the region are also expected to face increased deployment periods, and have been involved in island combat training exercises, which have been explicitly stated as preparation for a dispute with China. Additionally, the US Army is considering a deployment of an additional 5000-10,000 troops into the Asia-Pacific, while simultaneously preparing to move troops into the recently opened joint US-Philippines military bases. Finally, the US Navy's 7th Fleet has had 2 additional ships added to its fleet to augment its current aircraft carrier and 50-70 other vessels, and to increase the fleet's overall air combat capabilities.

Increased US security interests in the Asia-Pacific region have come in conjunction with the direct naming of China as a strategic competitor in the US's 2018 Security Strategy. As posited by PTT, a ruling power may take steps to balance itself against a rising power early on if it feels that it will be challenged by the rising power. Therefore, PTT may help us understand the US's new focus on the Asia-Pacific region and make sense of US security actions within the region.

What does this mean for the US and NATO?

As noted previously, NATO is facing Alliance insecurity over a perceived lack of US commitment to the Alliance. To complicate matters further, the US is now calling on its NATO allies to follow its shift of focus. At a 2019 meeting of NATO members, US Vice-President Mike Pence highlighted the rise of China as "the

greatest challenge NATO will face in the coming decade.” Specifically, Pence called on NATO allies to be vigilant of China in regard to Huawei and 5G, as well as the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Therefore, not only has the US begun its pivot to Asia, it has urged its allies to shift their focus east with the US.

Although other senior officials in the Trump administration have tried to calm NATO allies about the US’s perceived weakening support for NATO, NATO allies are justifiably worried about an ever more absent US from the Alliance. A conflict in the Asia-Pacific could see the US move their military resources and focus to the region overnight, much like they did in Afghanistan (although the resources required would be much greater), and become less focused on European security. Alternatively, in the worst case scenario, Trump could try and make good on his demands and pull the US out of NATO, taking two-thirds of the NATO budget and the majority of NATO’s nuclear deterrence with him. Either of these actions would leave the remainder of NATO in a much weaker state and forced to fend for themselves, amidst the return of a Russian threat. Therefore, with US calls for allied support regarding China and an unclear Presidential position on the Alliance, NATO must take steps to demonstrate its continued purpose to the US.

Constraints and Can Do’s – What Action Can NATO Take Going Forward?

Constraints on NATO

The primary constraint NATO faces in showing its resolve to US security focus in the SCS is the NATO treaty itself. One of the core pillars of the North Atlantic Treaty is the Article V collective defence agreement, which states that an attack against one member is an attack against the Alliance as a whole. However, an Article V worthy

attack is outlined as within allied territory north of the Tropic of Cancer, or on allied forces in or above the North Atlantic Ocean or Mediterranean Sea. While the treaty does not explicitly state that an attack on an ally in a different region, such as the SCS, does not constitute an Article V declaration, it would be hazy at best for an ally (namely, the US) to make a case that it has the right to invoke Article V during a dispute in the SCS. Therefore, the Alliance cannot stand behind Article V level support for the US in regard to US-China conflict in the SCS.

However, even if conflict between the US and China broke out in the SCS and the NATO Alliance decided to get involved, most NATO allies lack the ability to power project in the Asia-Pacific. Excluding the US, NATO only has 2 aircraft carriers, provided by France and the UK. Although still more than China’s single carrier, China is projected to have five carriers by 2030. Furthermore, excluding the US from the count, Chinese naval assets outnumber NATO naval assets. In addition to power projection capabilities, European allies have a major geographical challenge alone if they wanted to send parts of their navy to the SCS, in that the distance they would have to travel is anywhere from 14,500-17,000 nautical miles (or 17-24 days of sailing). Therefore, even if the NATO allies wanted to send help to the US in the region, they would be limited in what they could offer by both capacity and capability.

Even if capacity and capability were not major issues for the allies to send aid to the US in the SCS, the Alliance is largely constrained by the political will to get involved militarily in the region. First, the allies have to contend with their own backyard. With a resurgent Russian threat, the European allies cannot remove their focus from their home territory. Furthermore, NATO allies like France, Italy, Germany, and Portugal have already voiced their opposition of using NATO as



a military tool against China. In addition to this security hesitation, many NATO allies would be extremely hesitant to get into conflict with China due to economic reasons. NATO allies like Italy and Greece have vested economic interest with China by joining the BRI and are becoming more reliant on the Chinese economic opportunity to help their domestic economies. Thus, even if NATO had the ability to be militarily active in the SCS, many key allies would lack the political will to involve themselves in a conflict with China.

What Can NATO Do?

In light of all these constraints, NATO still can have a key role to play in this matter. By acknowledging China as a strategic competitor to the Alliance, NATO can take steps to securitize issues that divide the Alliance. Securitization is the process of elevating an issue to a level of extreme importance, often seen as above the realm of regular politics. Thus, by securitizing certain issues, like Huawei or the BRI, NATO can help push members of the Alliance into positions that more closely align themselves with the US's outlook and position on China. This would in turn allow NATO to show its resolve and support to the US as it looks east, subsequently demonstrating the Alliance's continued relevance to the US's security focus and furthering the longevity of the Alliance.

The first step the Alliance should take is to start labelling China as a strategic competitor. NATO has, in recent years, been reluctant to discuss certain security threats out of fear of them being seen as controversial, and this is especially clear in regard to discussion around the security threats posed by China. However, as aptly put by Rühle, "an Alliance that turns a blind eye to challenges risks being surprised—and eventually divided by them," and Alliance division is already abundant when it comes to China. As seen previously, the US sees China as a strategic competitor and has publicly urged its fellow Alliance members to

take similar steps. While some individual actors, like Germany, have begun to follow suit, the Alliance as a whole needs to come to consensus on this matter. However, as we have seen, many NATO members are hesitant to see China as a threat when it does not pose a direct security threat to the Europeans. Yet a failure to take a stance on China will frustrate both sides of the Alliance, especially the US. Therefore, how can the Alliance come to consensus on seeing the Chinese as a threat?

The Alliance needs to escape the recent trend of seeing itself as only a military Alliance and unite itself around its shared political values. NATO calls itself a political-military organization, and the principles of individual liberty, democracy, and the rule of law are enshrined in the treaty's preamble. These principles are where the Alliance should look to form consensus regarding China. China's rise comes with a rejection of these norms held close by the Alliance; therefore, if the Alliance cannot come to consensus on China as a military threat, surely, they can build consensus around the threat China poses to the values held fundamental to the Alliance. Creating Alliance-wide consensus of China as a strategic competitor would not only put the Alliance in line with the US's security strategy, it would send an important message politically that NATO stands with the US regarding China.

Another aspect of the Chinese threat that has seen division between allied members is the Huawei/5G matter. The US has taken the stance that Huawei's 5G infrastructure poses a major security threat, due to fears over Chinese state policy being able to demand Huawei to give up its data upon Chinese government request. As such, the US has taken steps to ban Huawei from being used in the US, and has urged its allies, both NATO and non-NATO, to do the same. However, this issue remains divisive in the Alliance, as some countries, like the United Kingdom (UK), are moving

forward with Huawei infrastructure. In light of the US's direct appeals to individual Alliance members and the Alliance at large to ban Huawei's 5G, the Alliance should look to build consensus around the issue by securitizing the threat on the grounds of interoperability.

The Alliance has worked hard over multiple decades to increase Alliance interoperability. A lack of consensus on Huawei's 5G would singlehandedly erode decades of this work. If some allies choose to see Huawei as a security threat while others incorporate them into their communication equipment, the Alliance will be faced with massive issues of interoperability between allies on the basis of equipment. This issue has already been raised by the US in regard to the UK, but can be extrapolated Alliance-wide. Therefore, the Alliance should present Huawei as a threat to intra-Alliance interoperability and therefore a matter that requires consensus. This would in turn push the debate over Huawei from individual Alliance member's security concerns to a matter of Alliance-wide security that requires a unified ban; and subsequently, aligning NATO allies with the US's current position regarding Huawei.

Furthermore, Alliance-wide consensus on a Huawei ban would not only align itself with the US's position, and thus show Alliance resolve with the US, but would also align itself with core partners in the SCS region. NATO partners like Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia, are core players in the US-led regional balance against China, and have already followed the US's position on banning Huawei. Therefore, by also banning Huawei, NATO would align itself with core regional partners for the Alliance, further increasing Alliance interoperability abroad.

Finally, a push from NATO on the security threat from Huawei would align

itself with the European Union's (EU) position on the matter. The EU has voiced its concern over the security threat Huawei poses and urged its members to take preventative action against it. As 22 NATO members are also EU members, NATO joining the call to ban Huawei may be the extra push European allies need to take collective action to ban Huawei, and align themselves with US security policy on the matter.

A further area for NATO to securitize an issue to demonstrate Alliance resolve against China is regarding the BRI. As China continues to expand its major trade program, the BRI, the US risks being supplanted by China as Europe's economic partner. NATO allies like Italy and Greece have already signed onto the BRI, in effect, turning to the US's main economic rival.

The BRI presents threats not only to individual signatories of the program, but to the Alliance's regional security at large. The BRI comes with a predatory loan scheme, which has already seen countries who default on their loans having to cede ports over to the Chinese government. This would be extremely dangerous to the Alliance should an individual ally, like Italy or Greece, default on their loan and cede port access. A Chinese port in the Mediterranean gives China a foothold in Europe for its navy. Even if NATO allies do not see China as a direct military threat to Europe now, the Alliance should not allow a great power like China to have direct port access in NATO's home territory. This should be even more apparent in light of Chinese policy towards the Mediterranean. China has already stated the increasing importance that the Mediterranean and the Atlantic hold to its security policy. Furthermore, an increasingly established China in the Mediterranean would also give Russia, a Chinese ally and NATO adversary, a strategic partner in the region.



In fact, China and Russia have already gotten closer together in NATO's backyard, conducting joint Mediterranean and Black Sea naval patrols.

Therefore, the Alliance should present the threats the BRI poses to the Alliance at large. By securitizing the threat, the BRI poses of allowing great powers and strategic competitors increased access to NATO's European territory, the Alliance may be able to push European allies away from the BRI. This would in turn demonstrate Alliance resolve with the US. Furthermore, as the US is embroiled with a trade war with China, not siding with the US's economic competitor would go a long way in showing resolve in support of the US.

As discussed previously, it is extremely difficult for NATO to get involved militarily in the Asia-Pacific. However, there remains the opportunity for NATO to still demonstrate that it is involved and actively participating in the region's security by furthering partnerships in the SCS. It has been argued by scholars that NATO's future is in partnerships, especially in the Asia-Pacific. NATO already has key partners in the region, such as Japan or Australia, and takes active measures to work with them in multiple realms of security, such as cyber security. Furthermore, others have argued that NATO should have standing working groups with its core partners about security concerns from the region. NATO can also work to build further partnerships in the region with other Asia-Pacific nations. By returning NATO's focus to the norms and principles outlined in the treaty's preamble, NATO can give itself a reason to seek partnership with Asia-Pacific countries under the auspices of democracy promotion. By continuing to integrate and work with these partners, NATO can demonstrate to the US that, while it may not wish to be militarily involved in SCS disputes, NATO is prepared to work with major US and NATO partners who are involved in the SCS.

Finally, perhaps the best way to show the US that NATO is still relevant is to reach the agreed upon 2 percent GDP defence expenditure agreement. For years, American Presidents have constantly urged NATO allies to increase their defence expenditures to properly share the burden of the Alliance. At the 2014 NATO Wales Summit, the allies declared a 2 percent GDP spent on defence as a commitment to be reached by members, however, most allies are still not hitting this goal. Therefore, by hitting their 2 percent benchmark, allies can show that they are still committed to NATO, and that the US should, in turn, still be committed as well. Furthermore, allies should continue to step up their role in deterrence of Russia and defending Europe. While allies have taken up key leadership roles in NATO enhanced Forward Presences following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, the allies should continue to look for opportunities where they can lead in the defence of Europe. Without accounting for the US, the NATO allies still spend more on defence than Russia, and they also have the nuclear capabilities of France and the UK. Therefore, even without full US involvement in Europe, the allies can still muster a credible deterring force against Russia.

Therefore, in conjunction with raising their defence expenditures, a more active and involved NATO in Europe would demonstrate the allies' resolve for the Alliance. Furthermore, it would allow for the US to continue looking at its threats to the east, while having confidence in its allies to maintain the security of Europe. Crucially, if the US did become increasingly absent from the Alliance, an increase to European defence spending and continental commitments will lead to an overall more secure NATO in Europe.

Potential Barriers?

If the above recommendations are adopted, NATO would be able to

demonstrate its support for the US in its focus against China, as well as offer further security and stability to the longevity of the NATO Alliance. However, there are a few complications that NATO must be prepared to contend with. Following Brexit, if the UK cannot secure a robust trade deal with the EU, the UK may be left in a difficult position economically. Thus, it may cause the UK to consider further deals with Chinese investment. As the UK has already decided to allow Huawei into its non-core systems, it is not unlikely that the UK may also consider signing on to the BRI. This would undermine NATO interoperability and European security, as discussed previously, as well as put the UK in opposition to US security policy on the matter.

NATO also needs to deal with lack of faith in the Alliance from its own membership. On top of Trump's frequently changing position on NATO, now ostensibly pro-NATO following the 2019 London Summit, French President Emmanuel Macron recently made comments expressing a lack of faith in NATO. Thus, if European allies are expressing discontent with NATO, they may further inter-Alliance divisions and alienation of the US within the alliance.

Perhaps the greatest challenge the Alliance will face regarding the US's focus eastward is the lack of supranational power NATO holds over its members. As a consensus-based organization, NATO cannot take action without the agreement of all allies. Thus, if individual states do not have the political will to take action against China, consensus may not be possible. Furthermore, the organization does not have the ability to compel any member to take action should consensus be reached. Therefore, even if the Alliance wanted to take action against China collectively, NATO lacks the ability to force members to do anything concrete.

However, by securitizing many of the issues discussed above, such as Huawei or the BRI, the Alliance may be able to generate enough political capital to persuade individual states that the issues are Alliance-wide security issues and have large implications for a member state's individual security should Alliance consensus not be reached. Furthermore, since Alliance meetings are closed door, it allows for NATO allies to freely discuss threats from China without fear of facing political repercussions from China for speaking out publicly and individually. Additionally, the EU's stance regarding Huawei has already laid some of the heavy groundwork for the Alliance. European allies who are fearful of standing up to China individually or through NATO can point to the EU to demonstrate that they are aligning themselves with EU policy. Thus, by securitizing US interests regarding China as NATO-wide issues and offering a forum for the Alliance to unify on a position, NATO may be able to generate enough political capital to push the allies to consensus and action on the matter.

Conclusion

PTT helps us better understand the US's increasing look toward Asian-Pacific security and China as a rival. A rising China sparks fear in the US ruling power and causes the US to take steps to balance against China. These steps to balance China have resulted in an increasing US military presence in the SCS region. This new focus on China, coupled with a US President who seems to cast doubt on the US's commitment to NATO, causes concern for the longevity of the NATO Alliance. It is imperative that NATO take steps to demonstrate its support for the US's position on China, to not only stop further US withdrawal of focus from NATO, but also to demonstrate NATO's continued relevance to the US's security



and enhance European security.

As such, this paper has offered a variety of methods NATO could adopt to help ease Alliance tensions. These include: acknowledging China as a strategic competitor and security threat; uniting the Alliance through the securitization of Huawei and the BRI; continuing and expanding partnerships with key state allies in the Asia-Pacific; and enhancing NATO member's defence expenditure to meet the 2 percent goal and increasing burden sharing within the Alliance.

To NATO's credit, they are beginning to adopt some of these measures. At NATO's November 2019 Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting the Alliance publicly announced that it discussed threats posed from China's increasing rise. Furthermore, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg highlighted China's opposition to NATO's core values and principles. Therefore, it is evident that NATO is becoming aware of the threat China poses to the Alliance, although more remains to be done.

As per PTT, a rising China will continue to take more and more of the US's attention. NATO needs to make sure that it does not get left behind by further US focus eastward. While NATO remains somewhat constrained by what it can do in the matter, it does not remain entirely sidelined on the issue. By adopting (or further adopting) the outlined recommendations of this paper, NATO can demonstrate that it supports the US in its endeavours in the Asia-Pacific, while simultaneously taking steps to enhance the Alliance's overall security and longevity.

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The Eagle Stands Alone? China Rising and America's Allies

Introduction

In recent years, a shift has occurred in United States' (US) foreign and defense policy. China is no longer a distant threat over the horizon, but a tangible challenge to global US dominance. As the ruling global power in what was recently a unipolar international system, the US attempts to maintain its power and influence in the face of a rising China. In doing so, the US seeks to persuade allies, by applying pressure if needed, to fall in line with its stance on security concerns it deems to be existential, particularly issues which are deemed to affect its status as the ruling power. Using the tool of Power Transition Theory (PTT) and the case study of Huawei's bid to dominate global 5G networks, this paper seeks to explain the actions of key allies of the ruling power when a rising power presents a challenge; specifically, what influences the actions of these key allies in such a scenario? This paper argues that an allied state's degree of dependence on the ruling power determines how it will act when the ruling power faces a challenge from a rising power. The US, Canada, and the United Kingdom's (UK) responses to Huawei 5G implementation will be used as case studies to demonstrate this argument.

Graham's Allison's work, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap*, as well as other PTT works, will be used to ground the arguments of this paper in PTT. Allison's work will also be used to analyze the validity of the assumption that China is in fact rising vis-à-vis the US. Subsequently, the paper will outline the case study of Huawei 5G network implementation, analyzing its importance to the Chinese state and the threat it poses to the US-led

Western world. The following section will examine responses to this threat from the US and the key allied states of Canada and the United Kingdom (UK), due to their respective close relationships with the US. This will be followed by a section which analyzes allied integration with the US, in economic and security terms. The remainder of the paper will be composed of a discussion, conclusions, and next steps.

Theoretical Context

The Thucydides Trap is essential to PTT. Based on the Peloponnesian War, the Thucydides's Trap occurs when a rising power threatens to surpass the ruling power, creating an environment where even fairly small flashpoints may lead to an escalatory conflict. In PTT, a rising power is subject to rising power syndrome, hubris, while the ruling power is affected by ruling power syndrome, paranoia. In particular, the ruling power fears challenges to its dominance. This is particularly noteworthy, because although there is disagreement within academia regarding how quickly the US is being supplanted by China, in practice the US fears that it is being surpassed by China.

Jack Levy's concept of the preventive motivation for war argues that a ruling power, fearing its decline, may decide that its best option is to launch a preventive war while it still maintains a power surplus relative to the rising challenger; it is favorable to attack now rather than later while an advantage is maintained. This is relevant to the American perception of China's relative power.

There are various methods of measuring a state's power in PTT. Allison uses purchasing power parity (PPP), as it allows for an assessment of both

a state's relative economic strength and its capacity to purchase military equipment in its own national currency. Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth use the concept of inclusive wealth to measure a state's power. This variable measures the capacity to create wealth in the long term by examining three factors: manufactured/physical capital (roads, buildings, machines, and equipment), human capital (skills, education, and health), and natural capital (sub-soil resources, ecosystems, and the atmosphere). Both techniques will be used to analyze the rise of China in the following section.

China Rising?

It is established in academia that the US has been a unipolar power since the end of the Cold War; the sole superpower, attended by Western allies. This reference to allies is particularly noteworthy. The ruling power's allies are described as "attending" it, as vassals might attend their king. It implies a lack of significant agency in the international system, delegating the allies to the role of supports for the ruling power. However, this unipolar moment was not to last. David Blagden and John Mearsheimer state that multipolarity is returning and that the American unipolar moment has passed. This helps contextualize the academic conversation on whether China's rise truly represents a replacement of America's status as the ruling power.

Is China supplanting the US as the ruling power? Brooks and Wohlforth do not believe this to be the case, as the US's inclusive wealth was four and a half times greater than China's in 2010 (\$144 trillion versus \$32 trillion). They describe how even if China has the economic resources to challenge the US, it still lags far behind in technological capacity. Allison would disagree with this, as between 2003 and 2014 China jumped from rep-

resenting 7 percent to 27 percent of the global value-added in high-technology manufacturing, while the US declined from 36 percent to 29 percent within the same range of years. It appears that China is increasing its representation in this critical realm, while the US is declining. The increase in human capital is especially important if one accepts Brooks and Wohlforth's measurement metric that marks technological capacity as the second benchmark to demonstrate China's as a superpower to challenge the US. The 2018 United Nations (UN) Inclusive Wealth Report offers more light on China's inclusive wealth today. It finds that China offset losses in natural capital by heavily investing in both physical and human capital, and that in 2018 China outperformed every country analyzed, including the US. Applying the UN report to Brooks and Wohlforth's argument, we can see that China is indeed rising, and even beating America in certain areas.

Allison's use of PPP demonstrates that as of 2014 China has surpassed the US in economic terms, with a GDP of \$17.6 trillion to the US's \$17.4 trillion. China was also less affected by the 2008 recession when compare to the US, experiencing an average annual economic growth of 6-7 percent between 2015 and 2016, while the US had only 2.1 percent growth. These measures demonstrate that China is at the very least approaching the US in economic might, and may already have surpassed America using Allison's metrics.

Although a state's military power is linked to its economic strength, as more income means more money available for bullets, it is worthwhile to analyze this factor separately due to the importance of a military to a state's power. Brooks and Wohlforth argue that China is playing a game of "catch-up" with the US regarding technological capability, an essential aspect of contemporary military power



in today's world of constantly evolving technology. However, Allison's work notes that in 2017 China is expected to have achieved parity or to be advantaged in six of the nine areas of conventional capability. Noteworthy areas include the ability to attack air bases/surface targets, air superiority, and preventing opponents from using space-based weapons. China also fields anti-access/area-denial weapons that threaten US ships, particularly the precious aircraft carriers, and their ability to operate in seas adjacent to China. This is a challenge to dominance in the Pacific which America has enjoyed since the pivotal 1942 Battle of Midway. It may also herald a loss of global dominance that the US has enjoyed in the post-Cold War era. The inability to unilaterally operate in a strategically significant region such as the South China Sea demonstrates that a threat to US military assets from China is not imaginative.

It has been demonstrated that the US faces a true threat to its global dominance from Chinese economic and military might. However, one should recall the role of fear. What matters is not whether China is actually surpassing the US, but whether the US perceives that it is being surpassed. From the Obama administration's "Pivot to Asia", to the Trump administration's trade war, it is clear that the US at the very least sees China as a potential challenger to its global dominance. Increased freedom of navigation operations in the region, military deployments to Australia, and recent increases to near-shore attack capabilities of the American Seventh Fleet further demonstrate that the US takes the threat of China's rise very seriously. These small flashpoints are important, as Huawei's 5G implementation efforts do not represent a direct military escalation between the US and China. However, when contextualized with other challenges to US primacy, the Huawei issue may fuel the decision-making processes for such a war should the US believe it is being overtaken.

Huawei: Understanding the significance of its 5G Implementation Project
China considers Huawei to bolster its prestige on the international scale. It is a Chinese company that is also the world's largest supplier of telecommunications equipment, an important technology realm to which US firms do not significantly contribute. With Chinese tech giant ZTE, Huawei has aided China in penetrating networks abroad, especially in developing countries (often as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative), and also provides network-monitoring capabilities and intelligence-collection opportunities. The importance China places on Huawei is shown by its investment in the company, with hundreds of millions in grants and a \$100 billion dollar credit line.

US fears regarding Huawei need to be taken in the context of multiple Chinese data breaches in the US, UK, and Australian governments; although Russia was more high profile in its cyber-attacks, China is the cyber giant. The US sees Huawei as a company with obscure ownership and global ambitions, and a threat to its national interests and global dominance due to its efforts to dominate telecommunications networks. However, Huawei is already the world's largest telecommunications equipment supplier. Even Australia, which banned Huawei inclusion in its 5G network, used Huawei for its 4G network. 5G and the threats it brings need to be analyzed in order to understand US fears.

Before considering the threat of 5G, one must first understand what it is. 5G is the next evolution of internet communication, allowing much faster download speeds, more stable connection, and an increase in overall devices with internet access. It is seen as an essential step towards maintenance of an increasingly connected world, as global consumption of data increases and current telecommunications services are not able to cope with this increased demand on internet communication.

Cybersecurity threat from 5G and Huawei

5G and the heightened global connection it brings would allow states to weaponize interconnectedness by creating network chokepoints, thereby denying adversaries the use of internet communication. The threat becomes more pronounced when one considers that 5G networks operate at much higher speeds and integrate multiple data streams, ensuring that any disruption will have a greater attack surface and greater impact on the target. The threat of surveillance is also present, as 5G will enhance the “Internet of Things”, making it possible to obtain video, audio, and technical data from everything from a pacemaker to industrial robots.

5G implementation by Huawei in particular raises concerns regarding surveillance activities by the Chinese state. Significantly, Article 7 of Chinese Intelligence Law states that Chinese companies have a legal obligation to provide information to the Chinese state. Even if Huawei wished to be independent, it remains linked to the Chinese state. For example, in a 2008 statement regarding a security project in Xinjiang, Huawei director Tao Jingwen was quoted to have said, “together with the Public Security Bureau, Huawei will unlock a new era of smart policing and help build a safer, smarter society”. Thus, we have a concrete example of Huawei publicly touting its relationship with the Chinese state, and predicting future cooperation with the state. It is clear why some may consider 5G implementation to be dangerous on its own, however, with Huawei involved it becomes an intelligence and security nightmare for the West.

Cybersecurity threats from Huawei implementation of the 5G network are worsened by the products themselves. The Oversight Committee to the UK’s

Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre (HCSEC) found that Huawei’s software component management is defective, with higher vulnerability rates than competitors. The Government Communications Headquarters found many cases of poor design and engineering in Huawei equipment earmarked for the 5G network. Sun Soo Park describes how blurred lines between core and non-core functions within 5G networks means that a vulnerable point on the periphery jeopardizes the whole network. It should be noted here that core functions are integral to the network and provide an access point for devices, while non-core functions include radio access networks and antennas. Thus, the cybersecurity threat from Huawei is twofold; the potential for intelligence-gathering and exploitable vulnerabilities due to defunct Huawei products.

Other threats from Huawei 5G implementation

Huawei poses threats beyond the cybersecurity realm. Huawei will provide relatively cheap services and products due to the heavy subsidizing and investment from the Chinese state. Huawei products are described by Clover Telecom, a network analytics and intelligence company, as “tens of percents cheaper than competitors’ products”. This cheapness may convince other states to use Huawei products in their 5G network, particularly should the US fail to provide its own 5G option, as it may create the perception of eroding American primacy in the technology realm. Huawei’s main competitors from states friendly to the US, Finland’s Nokia and Sweden’s Ericsson, have fewer contracts than Huawei, showing a need for leadership from the American-led camp. Huawei has in some respects already successfully become independent from American technology by investing \$65 billion on research and development



in the past decade and seeks to expand this independence. This may mark the beginnings of a challenge to recent US technology dominance. As previously cited from Brooks and Wohlforth, Chinese technological capacity is essential to surpassing the US as the ruling power. Huawei dominance in 5G networks is therefore a serious threat to the ruling power's dominance, to which Western states have responded in various ways.

The Huawei Threat: A United West?

The US response to the Huawei threat was strong. The US identified the threat of cyber-theft from Chinese entities in a 2013 security roundtable on cybersecurity issues, with Huawei being specifically identified as having aided the Chinese state in its espionage activities. The Department of Commerce placed Huawei on its Entities List in May 2019, identifying it as a threat to US national security, essentially banning US companies from engaging Huawei, and flagging it as a risky customer and provider. This effectively restricts Huawei's access to physical components produced by US companies such as advanced semiconductor chips, although we have seen Huawei becoming more self-sufficient by investing in domestic semiconductor chip production. The US also seeks to block Huawei's access to US markets in general. These actions represent an escalation in economic competition between the ruling and rising power. What is especially significant is that the US is being much more aggressive and hawkish, particularly in trying to marshal support from US allies on the issue. The US is pressuring its allies to step up regulations prohibiting Huawei and other Chinese companies from providing video and telecommunications equipment. Due to vulnerabilities already assessed in this paper, the US has warned its allies of an interoperability issue should they use Huawei equipment in their 5G networks; information-sharing and cooperation could be cut off due

to the security implications. Such strong responses demonstrate American fears regarding Huawei implementation of 5G networks in light of US-Chinese competition, and imply that this issue could escalate should the US consider its global primacy as being threatened.

There is, however, the potential for the Trump administration to threaten America's national security by giving free rein to Huawei in return for other concessions related to the ongoing trade war. The administration recently granted waivers to some US companies, allowing them to do business with Huawei, even though it remains on the blacklist. It is unclear whether this portends a significant shift in US policy regarding Huawei at this point. If one takes into account the strong American position taken against Huawei thus far, the serious threat Huawei poses to American security and technological dominance, and ongoing US-Chinese competition, it is unlikely that the waivers mark a reversal in US policy on Huawei. They likely demonstrate short-term attempt to de-escalate the China-US trade war. Discussion of what a reversal would mean for America's allies requires an analysis of their responses to Huawei thus far, and the factors influencing those actions.

Canada's response to Huawei has been less clear than the American response. Decision-making has been stalled due to the recent 2019 federal election, as any decision made by the Trudeau administration would have led to controversy. Although the decision has not yet been made, former Minister of Infrastructure and Communities François-Philippe Champagne (now the Minister of Foreign Affairs) informed the public that the government's position would be determined with security as the priority. It could be argued that Canada could go either way, as Canada is looking closely at the UK's decision. However, the US stated that it will not be able to share information with Canada if it uses Huawei in its

5G network, a threat which is taken very seriously by America's northern neighbor. Canada's Communications Security Establishment (CSE) conducted tests on Huawei products, looking for potential backdoors that would disable or allow surveillance of communications networks. CSE believes it can mitigate any threat to Canadian cybersecurity, although the Canadian Security Intelligence Service strongly advises against employing any Huawei products in the 5G network, and US officials have no confidence regarding Canada's ability to mitigate the threat.

Canada's arrest of Meng Wanzhou was also significant. The Huawei Chief Financial Officer was arrested in Vancouver in response to a US extradition request related to Huawei's use of front companies in dealings with Iran. In response, China has focused on Canada as the weaker ally, detaining two Canadian nationals. US support for Canada, albeit belated, was a welcome acknowledgement of Canadian support. Canada needs support from the US, and is likely to follow the US's lead in banning Huawei in Canada's 5G network, not having much of a real choice. Canada's likelihood to ban Huawei is further demonstrated by investment in an alternate 5G provider, investing \$40 million in 2018 towards Nokia's 5G-related research and development. Although a decision has yet to be made, Canada's actions demonstrate acquiescence of US interests, and is looking for options in light of a probable Huawei ban.

The UK decided to implement a partial ban of Huawei products in its 5G network. Former UK Prime Minister May approved Huawei equipment use in non-core elements of the UK 5G network. Recall that any vulnerability in the peripheral network will endanger the whole network. The HCSEC's Oversight Board found that flawed engineering process-

es and insufficient control over critical third-party software led to a limited assurance of safety if Huawei is used in the UK's 5G network. It was, however, concluded that, from a technical perspective, excluding Huawei from the UK's 5G or other telecommunications networks was not a proportionate response to the potential threat it poses. The UK has been warned by the US that it may face consequences for not cooperating, but has not at this point altered its stance.

Dependence Between Allies and The Ruling Power

Although it is difficult to predict Canada's response, the information that is currently available points to the fact that it will follow the ruling power's lead on this issue. This is not surprising, as Canada is dependent on the US as a nuclear deterrent, intelligence producer, to ensure security through the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and to support its economy, including its defense industry. Canada relies on the US as a nuclear deterrent, as it does not have nuclear attack capabilities itself. This means that Canada does not have to take on the risks of becoming a nuclear power itself. Cooperation with the US also gives Canada access to the largest sophisticated intelligence gathering system in the world. This allows Canada to support its own operations while not taken on the costs of having such a system itself. Cooperation within NORAD has given Canada access to senior US defense officials and a significant stake in the joint decision-making process, which acts as a force multiplier for the Canadian security apparatus. It is also important to mention that Canada's security engagement is more and more under the auspices of Homeland Initiatives and NORAD, and less through multilateral institutions such as the North Atlantic Treaty



Organization and the UN. Such bilateral engagement is where Canada has the most dependence and least autonomy towards America. Canada is more dependent than ever on the US regarding security concerns.

Economic relations with the US are essential to Canada; integration is so strong that some predict there may be a future where Canadians become simply “Northern Americans”. This integration is set to increase as Canadian foreign policy shifts to North America and the two economies become more fused. For example, Canada’s imports and exports to the US increased from \$90 billion in 2014 to \$100 billion in 2019. Canadian and US trade totaled \$714.1 billion in 2018. Although US tariffs were imposed on Canadian steel and aluminum in May 2018, these were reversed in May 2019. The US remains Canada’s most important trading partner today, and there was an increase in both exports and imports from 2017 to 2018. Canadian defense firms receive much from Canadian government investment in US suppliers; Canada’s \$8 billion purchase from Boeing in 2006 obliges Boeing to reply in kind. Any Canadian foreign policy autonomy requires a delicate hand, as independent policy positions require consideration of its dominant neighbor. It is clear that Canada is dependent on the US, and relies on the US for both protection and economic support. This helps explain why Canada supports the US regarding the Meng Wanzhou extradition process and is considering alternatives to Huawei 5G network implementation, likely precursors to a Huawei ban. Canada cannot afford to undertake policy positions that place it at odds with the US, particularly on issues that the US deems to be stemming from the rising power, as Canada is the junior partner in the relationship.

The UK’s relationship with the US is markedly different. Although the US is the dominant partner in the relationship, the relationship is more equal than

the Canada-US relationship. This is due to the UK’s status as a nuclear power, its impressive intelligence apparatus, strong conventional military, and economy that is more independent from the US than Canada’s. The UK maintains a secure second-strike nuclear capability which, although integrated with US programs, remains independent. This provides more confidence in acting on the international stage. The UK’s intelligence services are highly regarded, representing a part of the US-UK relationship where the UK can truly contribute— they are a net producer rather than net consumer of intelligence. The UK maintains the capability to quickly and effectively act against threats, as seen in Kuwait, Iraq, and Libya, which demonstrated willingness to support the ruling power. The UK spends around \$49 billion on defense annually, compared to Canada’s \$22 billion. It should also be taken into account that the UK has European Union (EU) defense support through its Common Foreign and Security Policy; even if Brexit is finalized, the UK’s commitment to European defense will remain an important part of its relationship with Europe, as the UK is Europe’s most active military power. This conventional military gives the UK more tools in the realm of the international arena, facilitating more independent policy positions. In economic terms, US-UK trade totaled \$261.9 billion in 2018, about a third of US-Canada trade, although the UK’s GDP (PPP) of \$3.04 trillion is larger than Canada’s \$1.84 trillion. This means that the UK has a more diverse economy that is not as reliant on the US as Canada’s economy.

The UK’s more nuanced relationship with the US means that it has more leeway to act, as the UK does not have as much to lose as Canada does if it disagrees with the US on a foreign policy matter. The potential severity of the consequences should the UK go against the US on the Huawei issue will be discussed later; however, it should be

noted that dependence on the US should be seen in degrees. Although the UK is not as integrated and dependent on the US as Canada, this does not mean that the UK has nothing to lose; it benefits from US practical assistance, leadership, and the resulting influence of being the US's foremost ally. However, its lesser degree of dependence allows the UK to act as it sees fit when there is upheaval at home.

The UK has serious concerns regarding the potential economic impact of Brexit, and the Brexit process dominates the UK's political and policy agenda. Brexit represents an existential threat to the UK's role in the world, and an economic slowdown is likely even if Brussels provides a deal. As we have already seen, Huawei offers the cheapest 5G implementation. If one combines this with a worried government that is focused on internal matters, and a longer leash vis-à-vis the ruling power, the choices made regarding the Huawei issue make sense. 5G implementation is guaranteed. In such trying times the UK must make hard decisions, even against a key ally's wishes. Lower dependence means that the UK can make this tough decision.

Counterarguments

Questioning Canadian Dependency

Canada's dependency on the US and this dependency's effect on Canadian foreign and domestic policy decisions appear to be based in sound logic. Due to recent developments, including the Trump administration's willingness to "play hardball" with Canada over trade disputes, perhaps Canada's dependency on the US is at a logical endpoint. Canada's retaliatory tariffs on US products could be construed as an assertive response, one which surely does not reflect a junior partner in a bilateral relationship. However, although Canada has some power in certain specific aspects of the relationship, the relationship is fundamentally asymmetrical and will remain so for the

foreseeable future. Some may argue that it is in Canada's best interests to either become more assertive in the relationship with the US or to seek closer allies elsewhere. However, the benefits Canada receives from the US, and the delicate nature of its geopolitical location, means Canada will remain the junior partner for years to come. Therefore, on key policy issues, such as the Huawei case, Canada will continue to "toe the line" regarding American national security interests.

Brexit: US-UK Rapprochement?

It could be argued that Brexit will lead to a greater UK dependency on the US, as it no longer has its EU membership to lean on. However, the UK's strong economy means that if this were to be the case then the relationship would remain more of a partnership of equals than dependency, particularly if one also considers the UK security apparatus. It would thus retain the option to implement Huawei 5G. There is also the possibility that the UK will not enhance its relationship with the US, and will instead be caught on the margins of both the EU and the US. This would mean that the UK may have no other option than to use Huawei in its 5G network.

Consequences of Defying the Ruling Power

As was mentioned earlier, the US has threatened cutting off allies' access to information should they put Huawei equipment in their 5G network. While we can only speculate at what the consequences will be, this paper has outlined the clear threat that the US faces from both Huawei and from a rising China in particular. Failure to support the US in what it perceives to be an existential threat may very well begin and end at cutting off that ally from information. However, this could lead to an increase in diplomatic tensions with that ally. If they



were not to accede to US dominance, it would be interesting to see whether diplomatic negotiations would be effective or whether other tools would be used in order to bring this ally in line.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This paper has argued that it is the degree of an ally's dependence on the ruling power that influences their response to a challenge to the ruling power from a rising power. PTT was used to analyze how the US feels it is being steadily surpassed by a rising China. The Huawei issue was outlined, and American, Canadian, and British responses to Huawei implementation of a 5G network were examined. This was followed by an analysis of Canadian and British security and economic dependence on the US. Both are dependent on and support the US due to its status as the ruling power. Canada was found to be more dependent on the US than the UK, prompting a stronger response to the Huawei 5G threat including the arrest of Meng Wanzhou and investments in other 5G companies. The UK is less dependent on the US, which helps explain its partial ban of Huawei equipment in its 5G network, despite acknowledgement that this would lead to vulnerabilities and difficulties in its relationship with the ruling power.

This subject would benefit from a firm Canadian position on the Huawei issue, and should therefore be updated once the Canadian decision has been made. A reversal from the US on the Huawei decision would also be an interesting case study. While the UK would benefit from this, as that it would no longer be in disagreement with its closest ally, Canada would also benefit from not rushing its decision-making process. This subject should be revisited once the Huawei issue is resolved, using this paper as a starting point.

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Angell vs. Mearsheimer: Trade, War, and the Future of the US-China Relationship

Introduction

This paper will analyze the unfolding trade war between China and the United States (US), and its potential implications. More specifically, the question of whether the trade war will increase or decrease the likelihood of a war between the two countries. The relationship between China and the US is one of the most important topics in contemporary international relations, and current discourse is steeped in debates surrounding the relationship, its implications, and whether its future will be peaceful or violent. Some theorists assert that China and the US are on a collision course for war, while others believe that the two countries' close economic relationship will prevent it.

This paper will argue that the trade war will increase the likelihood of a war between the US and China. The paper will contain three assertions in support of this argument. The first is that liberal theorists are incorrect in their assertion that economic globalization and free trade is sufficient to prevent conflict. The second is that China's economy is more vulnerable, and that it is more likely to lose a protracted trade war. And the third is that, if China is weakened by the trade war it is likely to behave aggressively making a major conflict more likely. The paper will begin by outlining the conflicting theories of realism and liberal/capitalist peace theory. It will be demonstrated that realist theoretical arguments and empirical evidence refute the liberal position. Following this section, the case study will be introduced and analyzed. Using empirical data, it will be demonstrated that China is more likely to lose the trade war. Finally, the Chinese situ-

ation will be compared with a historical case of a state in a similar situation (Imperial Japan prior to the Second World War), in order to demonstrate how China's vulnerability may cause it to behave more aggressively increasing the likelihood of war.

Theoretical Background

Power Transition Theory

In his book *Destined for War*, Graham Allison provides an outline of Power Transition Theory (PTT), which he calls the "Thucydides Trap". The Thucydides trap refers to the Peloponnesian War, fought between Athens and Sparta, and the Greek historian Thucydides' claim that the war was caused by "the rise of Athens, and the fear that this instilled in Sparta". According to the Thucydides Trap, when a rising power (Athens) threatens to replace a dominant hegemon (Sparta), the two are destined to go to war. According to Allison, the US, currently the dominant superpower in the international system, is being challenged by the rising power of China, which is threatening to overtake the US. He concludes that, while war between the two is not inevitable, it is likely to occur, unless the two sides actively take steps to avoid it.

The Liberal/Capitalist Peace Theory

Allison's book paints a bleak picture for the future of US-China relations. However, liberal theorists assert that economic globalization and free trade, are sufficient to prevent great power wars. One of the earliest proponents of liberal peace theory was Norman Angell. In his book Angell argues that increasing globalization, free trade, and

economic interdependence will make war more costly and therefore less likely. In other words, global free trade and economic liberalism have created a world in which countries can no longer benefit economically through military conquest. Angell argues that “wealth in the economically civilized world is founded upon credit and commercial contract”, and that these sources of wealth cannot be enhanced by military aggression. This is because the delicate interdependence of financial systems, and trade networks ensures that a destructive war between great powers would be economically disastrous for everybody, and that no advantage could be gained by declaring war on a trading partner. This theory has persisted into the contemporary era. Speaking specifically about the Asia-Pacific region, author Rosemary Foot argues that economic interdependence, and globalized production processes act as a major constraint on conflict largely using the same logic as Angell. She points out that the US and Chinese economies are interconnected and that this interconnectivity acts as a constraint on conflict because if violence did break out neither side would be able to avoid the negative economic fallout. Therefore, according to these scholars, two countries such as the US and China which have such a close economic relationship are unlikely to go to war as both sides’ economies would be negatively affected.

According to liberal theorists, global trade and economic interdependence are sufficient to prevent the kinds of great power struggles suggested by PTT. They provide an optimistic forecast, not only for the future of the US-China relationship, but for the future of international relations more broadly. However, the next section will show how theoretical and empirical evidence refutes these claims and demonstrates that it cannot be taken for granted that the economic re-

lationship between China and the US will prevent the two countries from going to war.

Realism’s Rebuttal

Much of the support for the liberal arguments lies in theoretical assumptions about how states would rationally behave in a world where globalized trade networks and financial systems would make it impossible to escape the negative economic repercussions of a major war. However, these theoretical assumptions are insufficient to back up the liberal case. According to David Rowe “liberal theory is not sufficiently grounded in international trade theory to show how globalization generates constraints on military force, nor does it adequately link these constraints to strengthened peace.” He goes on to argue that liberalism, far from encouraging peace, was actually a major cause of the First World War. While he does agree that economic globalization generates domestic constraints on the use of military force, these constraints do not strengthen the prospects for peace. This is because the credible threat of the use of force plays an important role in protecting national interests and strengthening the international order. In its absence, states are unable to dissuade rivals and reassure allies which can exacerbate strategic rivalries as it did in Europe in 1914. As Rowe puts it “Europe did not go to war despite globalization’s constraints on military force in prewar Europe; Europe went to war because these constraints undermined the very foundations on which European peace rested.”

As one of the most prominent contemporary realist scholars, John Mearsheimer is highly critical of the idea that a liberal international order, governed by free trade and hyper-globalization will ensure a peaceful future. According to Mearsheimer, not only is the liberal



international order bound to fail, but it is also the source of a great deal of international turmoil. In his book *The Great Delusion*, he argues that trouble emerges when liberal states believing that universal liberalism is the best way to guarantee world peace set out to effect regime change all over the world resulting in endless wars. Speaking specifically about the US-China relationship, he states that constant pestering of China by the US over its human rights record is damaging to the relationship, as it is seen by China as part of a hidden agenda that includes regime change.

Concerning economics, Mearsheimer argues that far from creating the necessary conditions for peace economic hyper-globalization causes major problems for the liberal international order for two reasons. First, global free trade incurs significant economic costs for liberal powers whose workers may be undercut by cheaper alternatives abroad resulting in lost jobs, stagnant wages, and income inequality. This can cause liberal democracies to be at an economic disadvantage resulting in negative public opinion. Second, free trade threatens great powers, including the US, by enabling competitors like Russia and China to increase their own economic power to the point where they become serious challengers and potential threats. Mearsheimer concludes that these are serious flaws inherent in the liberal international order which guarantees that the order itself is doomed to collapse, and which will ensure the emergence of a realist international order.

There is also a great deal of empirical evidence to support the argument that trade, and globalization are insufficient to guarantee a peaceful international order. In a 1996 study, Katherine Barbieri examines 270 militarized conflicts from 1870-1938. She concludes that rather than inhibiting conflict, extensive economic interdependence between states increases the likelihood that they will go to war. Indeed, states with extreme

interdependence on one another actually experienced the greatest potential for conflict. Furthermore, in a 2008 study of military conflicts from 1950-2000 authors Martin, Mayer, and Thoenig come to similar conclusions. They also conclude that countries more open to global trade have a higher probability of going to war. This is because multilateral trade decreases bilateral dependence to any particular country, which reduces the cost of a bilateral conflict. These conclusions have serious implications for the future of US-China relations, as the two studies together demonstrate that the empirical data refutes the liberal assertion that trade, and economic interdependence will prevent conflict.

This evidence alone cannot definitively answer the question of whether the trade war will lead to a shooting war between the US and China. What it can demonstrate, however, is that the scholarly evidence both theoretical and empirical, shows that liberal theory is incorrect in its assertion that globalized trade will prevent states from going to war. This means that it cannot be taken for granted that China and the US will refrain from conflict simply because of their extensive trade relationship.

This must be taken into consideration when examining the case study. When considering the implications of the trade war, there are three potential outcomes. Outcome number one is that both sides will find the trade war too expensive to maintain and they will agree to settle the dispute, in which case there will be no war. Outcome number two is that one side will win the trade war successfully undercutting the other's economy, the other side will agree to back down, and there will be no war. Outcome number three is that one side will be winning the trade war and the other side in desperation, will resort to violence to attempt to defeat the other side before its economy collapses, in which case there will be war. So, when examining the case study, and attempting to determine the

potential implications of the trade war, the relevant questions to ask are: which side's economy is more vulnerable, and how is that actor likely to behave when desperate? The next section will provide a background to the case study, and an analysis of the trade war, which will answer the first question, and show that the Chinese economy is more vulnerable than the US economy.

Case Study: The US-China Relationship

Background

Since President Nixon opened relations between China and the US in 1972, the two countries have developed an exceptionally close economic relationship. The US is currently China's largest export market and trading partner. China is also the US' largest trading partner and largest foreign holder of US treasury bills. In 2014, Chinese cumulative investment in the US was US \$36 billion. From 1996 to 2011 China was the fastest growing export market for US companies and during that period US exports to China increased by 542 percent compared to 80 percent with the rest of the world. However, despite the close economic relationship between the two countries there has also been a great deal of political tension, especially in recent years. This tension has increased as China's rapid economic growth has enabled it to dramatically increase its military power to the extent that it is beginning to challenge American military supremacy.

This growth in Chinese military strength is undoubtedly concerning for the US, and it has enabled China to become more assertive in pursuing its national objectives. Perhaps the most famous contemporary example of this is the South China Sea (SCS) dispute. The US Navy has routinely conducted freedom of navigation (FON) operations in the region, as part of its general commitment

to ensure global free access to maritime trade. However, this has brought the US into a tense standoff with China which claims exclusive ownership over the SCS region. In order to enforce its claims China has dramatically increased its military presence in the area. The tension has become even more pronounced as a result of repeated instances of Chinese threats and harassment of US military assets engaged in FON operations. The situation is reminiscent of Cold War-era standoffs between the US and the Soviet Union, and the number of incidents between the US and Chinese militaries has raised concerns that such incidents could lead to a serious escalation. Chinese assertiveness in the SCS region has also threatened American allies. This has raised concerns that the US could be drawn into a conflict with China due to the need to respond to a threat against an American ally from either China or a third party (such as North Korea). Any major threat against a US ally would likely trigger a response, since maintaining the US alliance system has long been a core concern of US foreign policy.

It has already been shown that the trade relationship between China and the US alone is insufficient to guarantee peace between the two countries. In fact, it is actually a major source of discontent between the two sides for several reasons. First, Chinese trade with the US as well as its access to international markets more broadly has caused its power to increase to the point where it is now seen as a genuine threat by the US. Second, the trade deficit between the two countries has damaged some sectors of the US economy and the loss of jobs to cheaper labor in China has soured domestic opinion on global free trade which according to Mearsheimer is one of the factors that will cause the collapse of the liberal international order. Furthermore, China may view the US' actions as an attempt to



reduce its dependency on the trade relationship with China which might enable the US to protect its economy in the event of a war between the two countries. This could cause China to interpret US actions as threatening. Therefore, reducing the economic dependencies of the two countries towards one another might increase tensions and the likelihood of war in accordance with Barbeiri's conclusions. Moreover, China has become increasingly assertive, especially within the SCS region where it has demonstrated that it is comfortable in harassing and threatening US military forces. It is possible that part of the reason why China feels so comfortable threatening the US is that it believes that the close economic relationship acts as a constraint on the US being able to respond forcefully and that consequently the US will not risk going to war. This is extremely dangerous because it may embolden China to continue behaving aggressively which may eventually force the US to respond. It is within this seemingly contradictory background of close economic ties coupled with heightened political and military tension that President Trump raised the stakes even further, by initiating a trade war with China in 2018.

The Trade War

President Trump's decision to initiate the trade war was in response to three major American grievances. These are: the concern that America's trade deficit with China is damaging to the US economy; that China is using illegal methods to acquire US technology and intellectual property; and that China is seeking to increase its own power and influence to the detriment of US national security. In contrast, China views the trade war as an attempt by the US to undercut its economic growth, and prevent it from rising any further. Consequently the two countries have imposed a series of tariffs back and forth on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods from each country. Negotiations between the two sides are ongoing, but there has been little apparent progress and no indication that the

trade war will end soon.

The trade war is still relatively new and at this point it is difficult to say for certain who will win or lose. With that being said, there are numerous indications of whose economy is more vulnerable, and the news is not good for China. To start with, China has far more capital invested in the trade relationship than the US does. In 2017, China exported more than \$500 billion worth of goods to the US, while the US exported just \$130 billion worth of goods to China. This means that China cannot match US tariffs because it has far more invested in the US than vice versa and therefore more to lose. Indeed, according to the World Bank trade accounts for roughly 38 percent of China's GDP compared to 27 percent for the US. Because China has more of its economy dependent on foreign trade its economy is more vulnerable to any disruption of their ability to export goods such as hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs from its largest trading partner. This imbalance is already having a real world effect; US trade data from September 2019 (the most recent data available) shows that US imports from China decreased by roughly \$9.795 billion from the previous year while US exports to China only decreased by roughly \$1.132 billion. The fact that Chinese exports to the US are falling so much faster than US exports to China certainly indicates that right now China's economy is more vulnerable. Therefore, what must be determined next is how China is likely to behave if its economy is weakened, and it becomes desperate.

Obviously, it is impossible to know for certain how China will behave if its economic prosperity is seriously threatened, since nobody can predict the future with perfect accuracy. However, when attempting to answer this question, it is useful to refer to historical precedent. The next section will compare the current Chinese case, with the historical case study of another country that faced a similar set of circumstances—Imperial

Japan, prior to the Second World War.

Historical Comparison

The Japanese Case Study

Japan existed in a state of self-imposed isolation for centuries virtually cut off from the rest of the world. This came to an end when, in 1853, during the height of Western imperialism four US Navy ships entered Edo bay and forced Japan to open diplomatic relations with the West. While this experience was undoubtedly humiliating for the Japanese they were also terrified by the awesome display of modern firepower that they witnessed. They realized that in order to survive and protect themselves from subjugation they would need to rapidly modernize which they quickly set about doing. Their main purpose was ensuring they would never again be humiliated and subjugated by a foreign power.

As Japan modernized one of its main areas of focus was its military. The Japanese military was able to modernize so quickly that it managed to defeat Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904. Japan's rapid industrialization coupled with its military successes emboldened the Japanese desire to be seen as equal to the Western powers. Unfortunately, to achieve this Japan set out on a program of imperialist expansion attempting to emulate Western empires that had acquired great power via the same means. This would eventually bring it into conflict with the US.

In 1931, Japan invaded China in a campaign so brutal that it is burned into the collective memory of the Chinese people. The attack drew widespread condemnation from the international community which Japan saw as hypocritical and unfair since so many Western empires still held overseas colonies, some of which right next to Japan. Eventually the US responded economically, imposing an embargo of raw materials against

Japan which included iron, brass, copper, and most importantly oil. The oil was especially important, since imported oil was essential for the Japanese industrial economy and its war effort. The embargo therefore forced Japan to either back down completely, or risk everything in an attempt to win a short decisive campaign against the US in the same way it had against Russia. The Japanese would not back down fearing relegation to the permanent status of a second-rate power, which would leave them open to exploitation by more powerful Western states. Instead, they chose to gamble on war and attacked the US.

Japan-China Case Study Comparison

When examining the historical case study of Imperial Japan, it clearly bears many similarities to the contemporary Chinese case. The high degree of similarity between the case studies means that it is worth comparing them, to help determine how China is likely to act if it becomes desperate. Japan was a rising power recovering from a period of subjugation, whose economic prosperity was threatened by the US. It was faced with the choice of either submitting to American demands or risking war to rebalance the geopolitical situation and remove the threat to its continued rise. Likewise, China is a rising power recovering from what it sees as a period of subjugation (it's so-called "century of humiliations") and its continued economic rise is being threatened by the US. Like Japan, China is faced with a choice. It can either concede to US demands, which would effectively mean conceding to continued US leadership of the international system, or it can attempt to find another way out if its dilemma. Nationalism, and the Communist Party narrative of having saved China from its "century of humiliations", means that it is highly unlikely that China will concede to the US. At the recent



70th anniversary celebrations President Xi Jinping said in a speech that “no force can stop the Chinese people and the Chinese nation forging ahead,” indicating his determination to continue increasing Chinese power. According to Michael Beckley, China is likely to become increasingly aggressive the more desperate it becomes. As evidence he points to a historical trend of rising great powers, like China becoming aggressive and even expansionist when faced with economic stagnation. Therefore, if the trade war persists and China becomes more vulnerable, much like Japan, it may become aggressive or expansionist in its attempts to secure its rise which would likely trigger a major conflict with the US.

Conclusions

Based on the theoretical, empirical, and historical evidence presented in this paper a number of conclusions can be drawn which will be listed in the next section. First, despite the arguments put forward by liberal theorists, the weight of realist theoretical and empirical evidence demonstrates that trade and economic globalization is not by itself sufficient to prevent countries from going to war. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that China and the US will refrain from violence because of their close economic relationship. Moreover, the economic relationship may even have a negative effect on the prospects for peace.

Second, while neither side can emerge from the trade war without suffering the imbalance in each countries' stake in the other's economy coupled with the data showing US imports decreasing drastically faster than its exports indicates that China's economy is more vulnerable and that the US is more likely to emerge victorious from a protracted trade war. Therefore, the longer the trade war lasts the more China's economy will suffer and the more desperate it will become unless it can rapidly diversify its economy.

Finally, China is likely to behave

more aggressively as it becomes increasingly desperate. Much like Imperial Japan, China is a rising power recovering from humiliation and subjugation by external powers, experiencing a threat to its continued economic growth. As Allison points out, denying a state access to resources that it deems necessary for its survival can potentially lead to war. Just as the US's oil blockade against Japan was denying Japan vital resources that it needed for its economy and military, US tariffs against China are an attempt to block Chinese access to a commercial market, and an export destination that is crucial for its continued rise. In this case, the resource in question is access to American consumer capital. Without it, China, like Japan, will be forced to choose to either capitulate to US demands or fight to attempt to rebalance the situation. Much like Imperial Japan, a core objective of the modern Chinese state is to increase its power to prevent a repeat of its “century of humiliation”. With this in mind, it is unlikely that China will concede to US demands but instead it will most likely fight against what it sees as an attempt by a Western power to undercut China's rise and subjugate and humiliate it as has happened in the past. This will increase the likelihood of a

major war between the two countries.

These conclusions have profound implications for the future of the US-China relationship and the consequences of US trade policies. While the US may have the advantage in the trade war, a desperate China may prove to be a dangerous China and the trade war could easily turn into a real war. Therefore, if the US wishes to avoid open conflict with China, it should seriously reexamine its trade policies. Rather than wielding tariffs as a punitive weapon the US should devote more energy to bilateral diplomacy with China, in an attempt to come up with a new economic arrangement that satisfies both parties by addressing US economic concerns without

threatening China's economic growth and stability. Recently, the two countries did sign a tentative trade deal with the expectation of restoring a degree of normality to their economic relationship. The deal includes concessions from China which has agreed (among other things) to purchase more American products, protect intellectual property rights, and stop artificially devaluing its currency. The deal is expected to be the first part of an ongoing negotiation process, in which both sides will likely make further demands and concessions, and so it absolutely is not the end of the trade war. With that being said, there are undoubtedly many who hope that this deal and the continued negotiations will cause the resumption of a normalized stable relationship between the two countries which will reduce tensions and ensure peace. However, such deals can be fragile and whether or not this will actually happen under President Trump or his potential successor after 2020 remains to be seen.



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Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Canada's Role in the Monopoly of Rare Earth Minerals

In the game of Rock, Paper, Scissors, the player who presents the strongest object wins the round. While there is no obvious advantage to any of the three objects, it is the player who correctly decides the strategic importance of each object that wins. China and the United States are currently entangled in their own match of Rock, Paper, Scissors. However, in this game, both players are stuck in a stalemate where China is relying on Rock to gain the upper hand in its competition against the United States. To expand, rare earth elements are mineral deposits generally found in varying degrees of concentration in the earth's crust—it is the obvious Rock in the analogy since commonly, rare earth elements are found in rocks. As with any natural resource, its distribution varies globally making some countries “haves” and others, “have-nots”, with China falling into the former category and the US into the latter. Today, in the competition against the other, China is trying to play Rock in an attempt to outdo the US in its latest great power showdown. Examining this in the context of the power transition theory, the Chinese monopoly of rare earth minerals is interpreted by the US as posing a threat to its strategic interests since this move by China has the potential of destabilizing American superiority. As the dominant nation, the challenge that this imbalance presents can supply a motive for the US to use whatever means necessary to reinforce the status quo. Considering the past precedent of resource wars, a struggle over the control of rare earth minerals can be a potential catalyst for conflict between the two

states. So, will China's monopoly of rare earth elements be an incentive for conflict for the US? This paper will explore the US strategy of diversifying its rare earth market as a way to avoid conflict with China. For this, an analysis of the importance of Canada's role as not only a close ally to the US but also as a resource haven will help to determine the potential of reaching this goal of a neutral resolution. To consider all the factors affecting this conclusion, this paper will begin with an overview of the events that have led to the heightened sense of alarm surrounding the discussion of rare earth elements, followed by an analysis of the precedent set by other states previously implicated in “resource wars” to determine whether military force is a likely strategy in securing a reliable source for rare earth elements.

In 2010, an incident of friction between China and Japan over rare earth elements can be used as a symbol for the larger problem with the struggle for raw materials. As retaliation for a maritime incident involving a Chinese fisherman, Japanese coast guard vessels, and the disputed waters near the Senkaku Islands, China temporarily blocked shipments of rare earth elements to Japan. This measure demonstrated Beijing's willingness to use its rare earth supplies for political persuasion in a territorial dispute. However, it was not until after this incident occurred that the world took note of China's ability to use its monopoly as leverage in response to relatively minor altercations, like with Japan. It followed that governments around the world who feared for similar embargos jumped

into action to secure reliable supplies of rare earth elements. Although Beijing denies the 2010 incident as being an “official” embargo of rare earth elements, the US and other states were not entirely convinced of China’s motives and worried about China’s capability and willingness to do something similar again. In response, the former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated that the foreign policy importance of looking for additional sources of rare earth element supply was of strategic interest for American security. The Japan–China embargo as a case study reflects the growing importance of resource security plays as a factor in state security. For the US, although access to rare earth elements is not originally a source of conflict with China, combined with the perceived threat of China’s rise, the struggle for rare earth element security contributes to the existing tension and extensive competition between the nations.

The understanding of capabilities as translating into power is adopted and applied by Brooks and Wohlforth to power transition theory. Firstly, Brooks and Wohlforth’s theory of “inclusive wealth” helps to determine the importance of rare earth elements and why China’s abundance of this resource can be interpreted as potentially threatening to the US. Through their introduction of the term “inclusive wealth” as a new way to measure power, they also include the idea of natural capital as having valuable explanatory capacity. They introduce this measure as a new way to measure China’s rise since “China’s rise reveals the main shortcoming of our previous approach: it does not specify how much of a shift away from a lopsided concentration of power must occur before it is no longer reasonable to view the system as unipolar”. Instead, inclusive wealth considers the three areas of a country’s power—manufactured capital, human capital, and

natural capital—as more accurate predictors of Chinese power. While arguably the US may still be ahead of China using this measure, a flaw of inclusive wealth is its inability to capture ‘latent power’. What this means is that inclusive wealth cannot accurately predict if a significant transfer of power will occur between China and the United States based on the ability to draw on domestic resources. Latent power, defined as measuring “the key resources that exist within a state that a government can draw upon to build up military power and otherwise compete with states geopolitically”, differentiates between a country’s resources and its reserves. To clarify, resources become reserves through a combination of discovery and improvement in technologies of extraction and production. So, while the quantity of mineral deposits is important—the resources—it is practically useless if a state cannot extract and use the minerals. If the theory of inclusive wealth were to be taken into consideration when contemplating rare earth elements as natural capital, then the continued domination by China regarding rare earth element reserves may pose a threat to US dominance since domestically, the US does not currently possess the ability to draw on this resource. Through this, China has created the situation of American “strategic vulnerability” where the US is at the mercy of a foreign government’s management of its reserves. While the impact of this capability as power is still largely to be determined, it is worrisome to the US that China has shown a willingness to use rare earth elements as a mechanism of control.

So, the issue with rare earth elements is not scarcity, it is access. This means that it is the entire supply chain from mining to the processing plants that contribute to the imbalance. Economically, however, this places importance on the production of rare earth elements



into ores and magnets for industrial uses, which cedes power to any nation who can manufacture this type of finished product. China seized on this ability after the discovery of significant quantities of rare earth elements. Since then, there has been investment in all stages of the mining process from innovation to production, effectively concentrating the supply chain for rare earth elements in China. While China rose globally as a rare earth element supplier, the US took a step back. The Chinese strategy of undercutting foreign competition impacted American mines—specifically the Mountain Pass mine in California—and production ceased when it became more cost-effective to source rare earth elements from China. Even with the recent reopening of Mountain Pass, it does not significantly alter the US position of strategic vulnerability since Mountain Pass ships its ores to China for separation, processing, and refinement. As well, the impact of the dependence is a casualty of the intensifying of tensions between China and the US amidst an ongoing trade dispute which has meant that this process has been subject to a 25 percent “.tariff. The concentration of almost the entire supply chain in China means that this trap of import dependence requires an active reordering of the supply chain or else the US will suffer if China decides to use rare earth elements as leverage. If the US allows power to be ceded in this context, it effectively destabilizes a key power base that is necessary for the maintenance of power.

The discussion of the Chinese monopoly gains its most critical importance when considering examples of states who parallel the US predicament. As noted by Alfred Eckes, “what standard explanations of the war’s origins often neglect, however, is how underlying material difficulties contributed to German, Italian, and Japanese expansionism, and a resulting global war”. While the need for raw material may not be the direct cause of conflict, it can escalate and motivate

conflict to break out. Eckes considers this through an analysis of the situation presented in WWII; the situation at this time was the uneven distribution of raw materials among industrial states which meant that access to resources became a key determinant of power. As “have-not” nations, the Axis powers began to stockpile minerals like coal, nickel, and petroleum under the assumption these were vital to national security and the ability to wage war. Moreover, as another path to self-sufficiency, both Germany and Japan began looking elsewhere to secure a reliable source: “in seeking security through self-sufficiency, they pursued an ultimate objective and an immediate need”. The US is incapable of meeting its own supply needs, hence the high rate of imports for rare earth elements from China. So, if China were to deprive the US of its rare earth source, the parallel suggests that eventually, the US would try to take matters into its own hands. Since it is all about access, the case example points to the US using whatever power necessary to gain access while it is still in a position of strength.

As an alternative, an example of a resource conflict that did not result in the outbreak of military violence is the Cold War. During the Cold War, tensions arose between the Soviet Union and the US over critical minerals. As a strategy, the Soviets tried to deprive the US supply of oil and minerals as a way to beat the US out in the competition to be the top power. The Soviet approach was twofold: “Our aim is to gain control of the two great treasure houses on which the West depends, the energy treasure house of the Persian Gulf and the mineral treasure house of Central and Southern Africa”. While Americans recognized the external security threat posed by the Soviet plan, Washington chose nonviolent means to address the weakness. The reality of the situation was that the expansion of Soviet power would jeopardize American access to resources. So, the US approved and launched numerous plans to counter

this in an attempt to proactively protect themselves against strategic vulnerability. The plans included the protection of strategic facilities abroad, the surveillance of industrial operations, and the stockpiling of critical resources. Unlike with the previous example of expansionism for mineral security, Eckes interprets the Soviet strategy as being, in part, ideologically motivated. The American belief was that an overt military operation by the Soviet Union seemed unlikely. Instead, the US envisaged political and ideological warfare that would work to undermine US access: “In brief, the Soviet strategy of global conquest appeared to rest on promoting chaos and disruption which would permit the disciplined Communist leadership to emerge”. Part of this plan was to shut off access to raw materials to weaken mineral-deficient, capitalist economies like the United States. Theoretically, the Soviet plan should have worked yet instead, Washington realized the importance of mineral-rich regions and how the Soviet threat could jeopardize its military and economic foundations, as well as impacting the balance of power. So rather than responding with military power, the US participated in “constructive engagement” in many key regions—most notably in South Africa to maintain access to strategic minerals. The larger meaning of the South African example to the Cold War case study is that efforts to monopolize the market of strategic minerals are likely to be counteracted in favour of an unimpeded flow of resources. A way to do this is by diversifying the source of the supply, as seen with Washington’s new long-range American foreign policy. The Truman administration turned outward, encouraging foreign suppliers and increasing US reliance on other nations. To conclude on this argument, the lesson to be applied from this precedent to the current US situation is that new markets

are a way out of the strategic vulnerability trap.

If Canada does play a part in solving the predicament of US mineral dependence, it will not be the first time that it has played such a role. As mentioned, Canada is a natural resource haven with one of our key supplies being the element, nickel. In 1883, during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, an extensive supply of nickel was discovered. The importance of this commodity was established after the discovery that when mixed with steel, nickel prevented rusting, leading to the invention of what we know today as “stainless steel”. For defense applications, this meant that nickel could be used as protection against missiles that pierce armour, sparking interest with the US Navy. As more inventive uses cropped up, hardened nickel-steel and nickel-alloys were used in a range of other weaponry, including in guns, tanks, and battleships. This meant that when war was declared, Canada was nearly the sole supplier due to its monopoly of almost 90 percent of the world’s nickel supply. However, Canada did not only supply the US nickel need: the Canadian company Inco also shipped vast amounts of nickel to Germany, inadvertently participating in its stockpiling of materials in preparation for war. Despite this, “it must be stressed that Inco made an enormous contribution to the Allied cause during World War II. The company supplied 95 percent of all Allied demands for nickel, about 1.5 billion pounds of all forms of nickel — during wartime”. So, based on this historical relationship, Canada will continue to provide US material need. As a friendly supplier, Canada seems more than perfect for this role. Recently, President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau discussed “ways to improve mineral security and... work more closely to ensure secure and reliable supply chains”.



This is in response to Trump's declaration that the monopoly created by the Chinese is a situation of national importance; the US is seeking to "reverse the decades-long trend of increasing dependence on foreign imports of critical minerals that are essential to American prosperity and national security". While the US is looking to Canada as a source for capabilities, the US should be wary of falling into a different type of trap that can still result in vulnerability. Although Canada is a friendly supplier and as close allies, we share a lot of the same goals as the US, if the US wants a permanent solution to its domestic supply issue of rare earth elements, it is also important to start rebuilding the supply chain within the US. The biggest lesson that the US can learn from the case study of the Soviet Union should be to not rely on any single source for supplies since this can lead to a situation where a deprived state will try to seek control. If the US wants to ensure its secure supply of rare earth elements, the best place to do this would be to begin at home with Canada acting only as a supporting actor.

To conclude, this analysis leads to answering whether or not conflict is likely between China and the US over rare earth elements. While China's monopoly of rare earth elements does threaten US strategic interests and has the potential in causing a shift in power, influencing the potential for a power transition war, there are enough factors in play that should prevent any conflict from breaking out. Even though rare earth elements do critically figure into the measurement of state power and the willingness of China to use its monopoly as leverage does justify alarm, the Soviet case study goes to show that once reliance is identified as a problem, projects can be developed to reduce dependence. As for Canada's role, while Canada has always been a supplier to US needs—and will continue to be in the future—the better use of Canadian involvement would be as a subsidiary to an American supply chain. To eliminate

the situation of deprivation, the best way to do this is self-sufficiency. So, the US should not worry as much about China using Rock in the rare earth showdown—it is only just one tactic available amongst many other options.

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