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China's global influence in 2025: Projected foreign policy strategies

Melissa Toman

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China's Global Influence in 2025: Projected Foreign Policy Strategies

Melissa Toman

IA 499C Senior Honors Thesis

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Abstract

Many political scientists contend that the rise of China is inevitable. Through expanding political, economic, social, and military channels, it appears clear that China desires to increase its status in the global community. Through this analysis, China's various policies will be assessed in order to outline their objectives for growth by 2025. In addition, through the use of Counterfactual Reasoning, four scenarios are presented to hypothesize what the future of Chinese foreign policy objectives could mean to regional and global actors.

Overview

Current Chinese Foreign Policy Strategies	
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in international presence • Influence in Africa and Latin America • Use of soft and hard power • Pressures against Taiwan
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Direct Investment in Africa • Belt and Road Initiative • Made in China 2025
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exporting “Chinese Model of Governance” • Influence in Latin America and Africa • Leader of developing world • Soft power (culture, Confucius Institutes, etc.) • Sharp power information censorship
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals to develop a completely modernized military • Formation of joint command structure • First overseas naval base in Djibouti • Military bases in Spratly Islands and South China Sea • “Active Defense” strategy
Future Scenarios for Chinese Global Influence	
Hypothesis 1: US Challenger	After building up military capabilities, as well as expanding political and economic influence globally, China pushes to assert itself as the global hegemon. This threatens a Cold War-like scenario between the US and China as the US attempts to retain its status as the global hegemon.
Hypothesis 2: Regional Hegemon	Once domestic tensions are addressed and relations are improved regionally, China is able to assert itself as the regional hegemon of Asia. Through economic and political incentives, it is not met with resistance from its neighbors or the US.
Hypothesis 3: Contiguous Resistance	Facing pressure from neighbors Russia and India regarding regional expansion, China risks conflict at two fronts. They are threatened both politically and economically for their attempts at becoming the regional hegemon by not only these countries, but the US as well.
Hypothesis 4: Economic Expansion	China actively pursues its “Made in China 2025” plan while continuing to invest heavily in FDI in developing countries. The Belt and Road Initiative allows China access to markets around the world, thus allowing it to lessen its economic dependency on the US.

Introduction

Like many presidents before him, Chinese President Xi Jinping has reinforced commitments to increasing the People's Republic of China's (PRC) presence on the global scale through political and economic means. China is one of the oldest civilizations in the world and has grown dramatically over the past several decades into a prominent global power as a permanent member on the UN Security Council with the second largest economy in the world. Despite still being considered underdeveloped, the PRC has continued to expand its influence to the point that many consider the rise of China as the new hegemonic power to be inevitable. The PRC has referred to the 21st century as a "period of strategic opportunity" that will allow it to grow to a "comprehensive national power."¹ It is important for US policymakers and corporations to evaluate the goals of Chinese policies in order to combat against future aggressive plans in order to safeguard interests ranging from the economy to national security.

This thesis serves two purposes. The first is to assess the PRC's official plans regarding expanding global influence in the future through political, economic, social, and military means. Articulating these plans will allow for readers to assess future threats and opportunities presented to the US regarding China's plans for increasing its global presence. The second purpose is to present four distinct future scenarios through the use of Counterfactual Reasoning that evaluate what the world stage could potentially look like given the power and influence of China in the future. These scenarios will attempt to highlight the goals of the PRC and the effects that it will have for other global powers such as the US and EU.

¹ Defense Intelligence Agency. "China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win." 2019. Accessed March 20, 2019. [http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military Power Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf](http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military_Power_Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf).

Method

The methodology employed in this report is referred to as Counterfactual Reasoning. Used throughout my collegiate experience in the Intelligence Analysis major, this methodology is utilized to formulate future scenarios regarding threats and opportunities of specific targets of interest. It allows analysts to generate detailed accounts of projected scenarios to allow their clients to prepare for the future. Using an “if...then” mentality, this tool addresses the more uncertain, more significant, and more independent scenarios that policymakers may not consider when preparing for the future.

There are three specific tools associated with this methodology that aid its conclusions. The first is referred to as Convergent Scenario Development (CSD). This tool attempts to identify what changes would need to occur in order for an unexpected future scenario to ensue. In the context of this report, a CSD analysis might identify China surpassing the US as the global hegemon as the event that would need to occur in order for a specific event to happen.

The second tool is referred to as Ripple Effect Analysis (REA). Using REA, analysts examine how a future scenario would affect additional actors and events. For example, while the rise of China would immediately alter foreign policy strategies of the US and European powers, the ripple effect of this shift in the balance of powers could lead to the rise of Africa in global politics or a potential conflict between India and China. REA pushes analysts to consider long-term effects of generated scenarios.

The final tool used in Counterfactual Reasoning is Divergent Scenario Development (DSD). DSD is used to draft four-to-eight plausible future scenarios given pieces of evidence that will help determine the scenario developed. For example, when looking at the future of Chinese internal stability, an analyst could assess it as stable or unstable. Given the endpoint

associated with the variable, different scenarios can be generated. For the purpose of this report, DSD will be utilized to generate scenarios regarding the future of Chinese foreign policy and what the global stage will look like given its role. This will aid the sponsor of my Intelligence Analysis capstone project, the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), in applying my group's conclusions regarding the future of Chinese cyber adversaries to future scenarios regarding Chinese foreign policy.

Literature Review

In order to understand the motivations behind China's future foreign policy strategies, it is important to assess their current foreign policy objectives and how the future of relations with the European Union and United States is projected. This will help to explain the intentions and motivations behind policies that either target or work in conjunction with these large global actors now and in the future. Furthermore, with the elimination of term limits on President Xi Jinping's presidency, it is likely that his current foreign policy objectives will continue in the near future with slight modifications. By understanding his current objective, I will be able to forecast their influence and potential alterations in upcoming years.

Current Chinese Foreign Policy

In 1978 China began its peaceful development strategy for economic and foreign policy reforms.² It considered itself a developing country and therefore emphasized building stronger domestic and international policies simultaneously. Since then, President Xi Jinping has ushered a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics.³ He has held five summits in the past five years to encourage bilateral agreements that emphasize cooperation and development in the Eurasian region. These summits include the fourth summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, the

² Yuwen, Deng. "Opinion: In New Era, Chinese Diplomacy Will Be a Display of Hard Power." South China Morning Post. October 31, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2117726/xis-new-era-chinese-diplomacy-will-be-display-hard-power>.

³ Tao, Xie. "Chinese Foreign Policy With Xi Jinping Characteristics." Carnegie. November 20, 2017. Accessed March 25, 2019. <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2017/11/20/chinese-foreign-policy-with-xi-jinping-characteristics-pub-74765>.

G20 Hangzhou summit, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, and the ninth BRICS summit.⁴

In addition, the country's foreign policy strategies have focused on countering the global influence of the United States, who has "branded China as a revisionist power that seeks to displace the US in the Indo-Pacific region and shape a world antithetical to US values and interests in an age of renewed great power competition."⁵ It has invested billions of dollars in infrastructure projects in Africa to increase their presence in the region, exert influence, and extract natural resources. These growing relationships pose a threat to potential US-Africa economic relations, as their foreign direct investment is contingent upon the strength of their relationship with individual countries. Additionally, China has begun expanding relations with India, as they perceive New Delhi as a target for the US to attempt to contain Chinese power in the region.⁶

Although China-US relations have become strained through their recent trade war, China has made strides to improve economic relations with other countries around the world. Still, however, internal problems in the country have been a large focus of Xi Jinping's administration. As a country still transitioning from a developing to a developed nation, China must first address threats such as its rise of nationalism, deficits in democracy and human rights, lack of political

⁴ Tao, Xie. "Chinese Foreign Policy With Xi Jinping Characteristics." Carnegie. November 20, 2017. Accessed March 25, 2019. <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2017/11/20/chinese-foreign-policy-with-xi-jinping-characteristics-pub-74765>.

⁵ Thomas, Neil. "Chinese Foreign Policy Under Xi Jinping." East Asia Forum. October 21, 2018. Accessed March 25, 2019. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/10/21/chinese-foreign-policy-under-xi-jinping/>.

⁶ Curtis, Lisa. "China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices, and Tools." The Heritage Foundation. March 20, 2008. Accessed March 25, 2019. <https://www.heritage.org/testimony/chinas-expanding-global-influence-foreign-policy-goals-practices-and-tools>.

reform, and unbalanced economy before it can successfully exert global influence politically, economically, and socially.⁷

Evolving Chinese-EU Relations

According to European Commission, the European Union (EU) is China's largest trading partner, while China remains the EU's second-largest trading partner behind the United States.⁸ Due to the strong economic ties between the two global powers, research has predicted that their relations will remain cordial and intertwined in the future, as they are extremely reliant on each other's imports and exports. Although projected relations are expected to encourage cooperation, there are some underlying tensions between the actors that could boil over in the event that China increases its global standing and begins to infringe on the interests of the EU.

The EU is also known for favoring the concept of multilateralism, which is the act of multiple countries working together through international agreements.⁹ Examples of multilateral organizations include the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. While these types of organizations successfully bring countries together to discuss important issues, the ratification process for new amendments and agreements can be very tedious and take many years as countries struggle to come to a consensus. Because of issues like this, China has appeared more

⁷ Yuwen, Deng. "Opinion: In New Era, Chinese Diplomacy Will Be a Display of Hard Power." South China Morning Post. October 31, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2117726/xis-new-era-chinese-diplomacy-will-be-display-hard-power>.

⁸ "European Commission Directorate-General for Trade." China - Trade - European Commission. Accessed March 25, 2019. <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/china/>.

⁹ Men, Jing. 2008. "EU-China Relations: Problems and Promises. Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series Vol. 8, No. 13, June 2008." <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid,athens,shib&custid=s8863137&db=edsupe&AN=edsupe.9060&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

supportive of bilateral trade agreements in recent years.¹⁰ This has aided in building stronger political and economic ties to specific countries of interest.

Although projections of future China-EU relations appear positive, several political scientists still argue that the current global climate could cause this to change.¹¹ The cohesion of the EU has faced many problems recently, such as economic and refugee crises and Brexit. In addition, the EU has expressed concerns about the US-China trade war and how it may have spillover effects into other economies and trade relation. Nevertheless, it is very likely that relations between China and the EU will likely remain strong not only due to their political and economic ties, but also their emphasis on cultural diplomacy that has encouraged young people and artists to better understand and engage with emerging social developments.¹²

The China-US Power Struggle

Since US President Richard Nixon established a commitment to diplomatic negotiations with China in the 1970s, the two countries have built an incredibly strong economic and political relationship. China has since become the United States' number one partner for imports and is the country's third largest exporter.¹³ The future of China-US relations is heavily reliant on a balance between cooperation and competition. The current world power structure is no longer

¹⁰ Men, Jing. 2008. "EU-China Relations: Problems and Promises. Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series Vol. 8, No. 13, June 2008."

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid,athens,shib&custid=s8863137&db=edsupe&AN=edsupe.9060&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

¹¹ Gabriel, Johannes, and Susanne Schmelcher. 2018. "Three Scenarios for EU-China Relations 2025." *Futures* 97 (March): 26.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid,athens,shib&custid=s8863137&db=edo&AN=128303395&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

¹² Lisbonne De Vergeron, Karine. "China-EU Relations and the Future of European Soft Power." London School of Economics and Political Science. July 2015. Accessed March 25, 2019.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/research/updates/european-soft-power>.

¹³ Gerber, James. *International Economics*. 7th ed. Harlow, England: Pearson.

constructed around nation states.¹⁴ Powerful soft power non-national actors like corporations, interest groups, and non-governmental organizations influence international relations and policies now that create expectations and standards for countries to follow to promote peace and prosperity. With an emphasis on issues like the environment and trade, it is likely that the two countries will work in conjunction with these actors to push for global standards and agreements. Although some political scientists believe that they may possess an inevitable tendency to impinge on each other in the process, neither country appears to have a conscious drive to contain or dominate the other currently.¹⁵

Future conflict between the US and China is likely to be focused on China's expansion into islands in the South China Sea and economic issues. The country possesses a desire to exert influence in East Asia and expand their territory.¹⁶ This poses a problem, as several islands they are targeting are located very close to the Philippines, a close ally of the US. Although China has not made advancements into the Philippines, the supposed military bases being constructed on these islands have caused concern, as the satellite imagery collected of the bases does not match statements that the country has released regarding their operations in the region. Denial and deception may be at play as they attempt to build a military deterrent for future conflicts. In regards to the future of economic relations, the US government is currently divided on how to

¹⁴ Tammen, Ronald L., and Jacek Kugler. "Power Transition and China–US Conflicts." OUP Academic. July 01, 2006. Accessed March 25, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pol003>.

¹⁵ Kissinger, Henry A. "The Future of U.S.-Chinese Relations: Conflict Is a Choice, Not a Necessity." *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 2 (2012): 44-55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23217220>.

¹⁶ Advincula, J. V. 2015. "China's Leadership Transition and the Future of US-China Relations: Insights from the Spratly Islands Case." *JOURNAL OF CHINESE POLITICAL SCIENCE*. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid,athens,shib&custid=s8863137&db=edsbl&AN=RN369466597&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

proceed with China economically in the future.¹⁷ On one side, there appears to be a desire for incremental gains on market access and reduction of the trade deficit, while on the other there is a desire to return to manufacturing supply chains in the US. This is likely due to issues such as China undervaluing their currency and violating intellectual property rights. Due to the strong economic ties the countries currently possess, it is likely that they will continue to have stable and cordial relations due to their reliance on each other to survive, develop, and prosper.¹⁸

¹⁷ Bush, Richard C., and Richard C. Bush. "The Future of U.S.-China Relations in Light of Domestic Developments." Brookings. July 06, 2018. Accessed March 25, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/the-future-of-u-s-china-relations-in-light-of-domestic-developments/>.

¹⁸ Advincula, J. V. 2015. "China's Leadership Transition and the Future of US-China Relations: Insights from the Spratly Islands Case." *JOURNAL OF CHINESE POLITICAL SCIENCE*. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid,athens,shib&custid=s8863137&db=edsbl&AN=RN369466597&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Chinese Foreign Policy Strategies

The Chinese government has published several white papers regarding their plans for expanding influence around the world, ranging from its “Belt and Road Initiative” to its “Made in China 2025” plan. By evaluating the country’s current foreign policy strategies as they pertain to political, economic, social, and military objectives, one can assess how these policies have the potential to alter diplomatic relations and the balance of powers in the future.

Political

Although most of China’s foreign policy objectives have underlying political motives, some are more transparent than others. The country possesses four major goals that have impacted their policies. They desire to “be seen as a country that strives after building a harmonious society and that works hard to give its people a better future; a stable, reliable, and responsible economic partner, a rising economic power that does not have to be feared; a trustworthy and responsible member of the international community, capable of and willing to contribute actively to world peace; and acknowledged and respected as an ancient but vibrant culture.”¹⁹

Part of China’s foreign policy strategies has been to increase its presence in the international community. They have expanded efforts in “peacekeeping operations (PKOs), counter piracy, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), counterterrorism, and multinational combined exercises.”²⁰ They have expanded their use of soft power to the

¹⁹ D'Hooghe, Ingrid. "The Rise of Chinas Public Diplomacy - Clingendael." July 2007. Accessed April 28, 2019.

https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20070700_cdsp_paper_hooghe.pdf.

²⁰ Defense Intelligence Agency. “China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win.” 2019. Accessed March 20, 2019.

http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf.

developing world, especially in Africa and Latin America. The country has also firmly declared their stance on issues through the use of vetoes in the United Nations Security Council and has attempted to pursue better relations with India.²¹ Many of these policies have attempted to combat the United States' presence in the region, while also asserting China's desire to influence global politics to the same degree as the US.

One of China's primary motivations for their political and economic relations with other countries is their pursuit of the One-China policy, which argues that Taiwan should not be recognized as sovereign because it is an inalienable part of China.²² Through political pressures, this goal has isolated Taiwan for much of the international community. President Xi Jinping once said, "We should firmly uphold national sovereignty, security and development issues. We should not yield to any external pressure."²³ China is willing to take hostile actions against Taiwan and countries that recognize it in order to further their objectives.

²¹ Curtis, Lisa. "China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices, and Tools." The Heritage Foundation. March 20, 2008. Accessed March 25, 2019. <https://www.heritage.org/testimony/chinas-expanding-global-influence-foreign-policy-goals-practices-and-tools>.

²² "What Is the 'One China' Policy?" BBC News. February 10, 2017. Accessed April 28, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-38285354>.

²³ Yuwen, Deng. "Opinion: In New Era, Chinese Diplomacy Will Be a Display of Hard Power." South China Morning Post. October 31, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2117726/xis-new-era-chinese-diplomacy-will-be-display-hard-power>.



Figure 1: Proximity of Taiwan to China

Economic

Over the past decade, China has established thorough economic policies that detail their desire to increase trade around the globe, support infrastructure developments in foreign countries, and boost their domestic manufacturing industry. Through these policies, the country will possess the ability to achieve political objectives while also combatting domestic issues like poverty and the widening wage gap.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will allow China to strengthen infrastructure, trade, and investment links with over 65 other countries.²⁴ The BRI will not only reduce trade costs and improve the connectivity between China and countries around the world, but it will also increase investment in Chinese companies. The BRI consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which links China to Central and South Asia and Europe, as well as the New Maritime Silk

²⁴ "Belt and Road Initiative." World Bank. March 29, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2019.
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>.

Road that links China to Southeast Asia, the Gulf Countries, North Africa, and Europe.²⁵ It allows the country the opportunity to enhance current economic relations with countries around the globe, as well as establish new relations. The Office of the Secretary of Defense argues, “China intends to use the Belt and Road Initiative to develop strong economic ties with other countries, shape their interests to align with China’s, and deter confrontation or criticism of China’s approach to sensitive issues.”²⁶ Through the BRI, China can also achieve political and military objectives, such as establishing diplomatic ties with countries to gain support for their political agenda and expanding military bases to participating countries.



Figure 2: Belt and Road Initiative Map

²⁵ "Belt and Road Initiative." World Bank. March 29, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2019.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>.

²⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018." May 16, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/16/2001955282/-1/-1/1/2018-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT.PDF>.

In the past two decades, China has invested trillions of dollars into supplying Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to countries around the world.²⁷ Through these investments, they have improved industries from infrastructure to mining and manufacturing. FDI is a popular investment tool because it allows countries to control the amount of influence they wish to exert in a region through economic channels that can result in benefits to both the recipient of the investment and the donor. Africa is the third-largest destination for Chinese investment behind Asia and Europe.²⁸ These countries make attractive recipients of FDI because they lack a strong American presence. This has allowed for China to become the dominant investor in the region. Through FDI, the country has helped to “create jobs, supply local markets, and create linkages and knowledge spillovers to local firms.”²⁹ Chinese FDI has frequently been referred to as debt-trap diplomacy. This type of diplomacy involves a creditor country intentionally extending credit to a recipient country that cannot afford to repay them.³⁰ Since these countries are unable to pay back their debts, the creditor countries is able to extract political and economic leverage to acquire influence over the countries in exchange for debt forgiveness and credit extensions.

²⁷ Shullman, David. "Protect the Party: China's Growing Influence in the Developing World." Brookings. January 22, 2019. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/protect-the-party-chinas-growing-influence-in-the-developing-world/>.

²⁸ Sow, Mariama. "Figures of the Week: Chinese Investment in Africa." Brookings. September 06, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/09/06/figures-of-the-week-chinese-investment-in-africa/>.

²⁹ Brautigam, Deborah, Xinshen Diao, Margaret McMillan, and Jed Silver. "Chinese Investment in Africa: How Much Do We Know?" Accessed April 25, 2019. https://pedl.cepr.org/sites/default/files/PEDL_Synthesis_Papers_Piece_No._2.pdf.

³⁰ Parker, Sam, and Gabrielle Chefetz. *Debtbook Diplomacy: China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Newfound Economic Influence and the Consequences for U.S. Foreign Policy*. Report. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School. 2018. [https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/Debtbook Diplomacy PDF.pdf](https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/Debtbook%20Diplomacy%20PDF.pdf).

Through these policies, China has been able to gain support on issues like Taiwanese recognition.

One of China's most extensive economically driven policies is their "Made in China 2025" plan. Through "research and development programs aimed at improving innovation capacity and economic efficiency," the country hopes to strengthen its domestic economy and lessen its dependency on the US commercial industry.³¹ The ultimate goal of "Made in China 2025" is to transform China into the top manufacturing country in the world. The ten-year strategy to achieve the objectives of this plan possesses ten strategies, including "next generation information technology, aviation, rail, new energy vehicles, and agricultural machinery."³² These advancements have the potential to reshape not only China's domestic economy, but global markets as well.

Social

Social policy is often intertwined with a country's political and economic objectives. Through addressing social issues like poverty, education, unemployment, and health care, countries are able to exert influence that can later be turned into support for their policies. Through influencing media outlets, countries are also able to manipulate information regarding their domestic social policies in order to create a narrative that favors the national government. China's social foreign policy objectives have focused on exporting the "Chinese model of governance," which endorses development and political stability through authoritarian policies

³¹ USA. US Chamber of Commerce. *Made in China 2025: Global Ambitions Built on Local Protections*. Washington, DC, 2017. 1-80.

³² "Made in China 2025." June 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.
<https://www.printpackagingsummit.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Tariffs—Aluminum.pdf>.

rather than democratic.³³ Through these policies, the country has attempted to directly challenge the United States' exportation of democratic values. In addition to supporting authoritarian governments around the world, they have also been accused of exporting techniques and tools of repression, such as riot control gear and tips on how to use the Internet to monitor and control dissent.³⁴

Chinese social policy has been most influential in Latin America and Africa. In the Doha Round of the latest round of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization, China sided with developing countries in regards to trade policies.³⁵ As one of the most influential developing countries in the world, supporting other developing countries allows China to push towards acting as the leader of the developing world. In regions like Latin America and Africa, The country "uses development models as an alternate to traditional liberal free trade and democratic model of the West."³⁶ Due to the debt-free nature of their investments, these models are attractive to developing countries since they do not appear to have political commitments or pressures attached to them.

Parts of China's social foreign policy objectives have focused on exporting their culture in order to make them more attractive suitors for political and economic relations. This is referred to as soft power. In Southeast Asia, Chinese influence in regards to "culture, cuisine,

³³ Pant, Harsh V., and Pushan Das. "China's Military Rise and the Indian Challenge." ORF. April 19, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/china-military-rise-indian-challenge/>.

³⁴ Brands, Hal. "China's Master Plan: Exporting an Ideology." Bloomberg.com. June 11, 2018. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-06-11/china-s-master-plan-exporting-an-ideology>.

³⁵ Pan, Esther. "China's Soft Power Initiative." Council on Foreign Relations. May 18, 2006. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/chinas-soft-power-initiative>.

³⁶ Shirk, Susan, Jonathan Holslag, and Trefor Moss. "What Is the Source of China's International Prestige and Influence?" ChinaPower Project. August 11, 2017. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://chinapower.csis.org/source-chinas-international-prestige-influence/>.

calligraphy, cinema, curios, art, acupuncture, herbal medicine, and fashion” is extremely popular and prevalent.³⁷ This has not only had positive economic effects on China, but has also allowed for the spreading of their ideology to these countries. Other forms of soft power used by the country include cultural exchanges. They send teachers and doctors to work abroad, welcome students from other nations to study in China, and offer free Chinese-learning programs.³⁸ Examples of the educational programs China has created are Confucius Institutes, which are non-profit educational organizations that promote Chinese culture and language learning.³⁹ There are currently over 480 Confucius Institutes around the globe. These cultural exchange policies have allowed for the spreading of China’s culture and ideologies, while also fulfilling political objectives. For example, by teaching the Chinese language with simplified characters instead of classical characters used by Taiwan, they are enforcing a form of isolation towards Taiwan.⁴⁰

While the country has attempted to exert social influence globally, it has also taken measures to protect domestic interests regarding social norms and values. China has enacted tight Internet and media censorship laws on its public to limit the flow of information. These policies are referred to as the “Great Firewall of China.”⁴¹ Extensions of these policies that have been enacted in response to globalization and China’s increased presence globally are referred to as

³⁷ Pan, Esther. "China's Soft Power Initiative." Council on Foreign Relations. May 18, 2006. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-soft-power-initiative>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "Confucius Institutes Worldwide." Confucius Institutes Worldwide | UCLA Confucius Institute. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.confucius.ucla.edu/about-us/confucius-institutes-worldwide>.

⁴⁰ Pan, Esther. "China's Soft Power Initiative." Council on Foreign Relations. May 18, 2006. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-soft-power-initiative>.

⁴¹ "The Great Firewall of China." Bloomberg News. November 5, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/great-firewall-of-china>.

“sharp power.”⁴² This strategy is categorized by the manipulation of information to enforce control over what ideologies and information enters China. The goal of sharp power is not to attract or persuade others to authoritarianism, but rather to distract and manipulate the public from ideas and opinions that have the potential to spread “ideological contagion from democratization and ‘color revolution’ that might cross into China.”⁴³ Color revolutions are acts of resistance against a government, such as strikes and protests, which aim to pressure governments to make policy changes. Although at face value many of China’s social policy objectives emphasize advancing a country’s goals, it is clear that their influence can be used to promote their own political agenda.

Military

Increasing military projection capabilities is a significant strategic consideration for any country hoping to increase its strength relative to neighbors and other major powers. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) was established under Mao Zedong in the early 1900’s as the “Red Army,” the military arm of the Chinese Communist Party (CPP).⁴⁴ It has since grown to the largest military in the world with over two million active personnel. In recent years, China has published several white papers regarding their plans for military expansion. The 2015 paper titled China’s Military Strategies stated, “It is a Chinese Dream to achieve the great rejuvenation

⁴² "Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence." December 4, 2017. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sharp-Power-Rising-Authoritarian-Influence-Full-Report.pdf>.

⁴³ Shullman, David. "Protect the Party: China's Growing Influence in the Developing World." Brookings. January 22, 2019. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/protect-the-party-chinas-growing-influence-in-the-developing-world/>.

⁴⁴ Defense Intelligence Agency. “China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win.” 2019. Accessed March 20, 2019. http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf.

of the Chinese nation. The Chinese Dream is to make the country strong.... without a strong military, a country can neither be safe nor strong.”⁴⁵ As the PLA increases its technological sophistication, it will become easier for the PRC to pressure regional neighbors like Taiwan and Japan and counter retaliatory measures by the United States. Since 2014, Chinese defense spending has increased at an increment of approximately 1.3% per year.⁴⁶ In 2018, China spent 170.4 billion dollars on defense expenditures. These increases in spending have gone towards projects such as developing maritime power projection capabilities, establishing a joint command structure, establishing military bases around the globe, and developing advanced weaponry.

The increase in Chinese defense spending illustrates their desire to modernize their military. This modernization process is divided into two stages. The first stage entails that by the end of 2035, Chinese national defense forces will be completely modernized.⁴⁷ By the end of the second stage, the country plans to be “fully transformed into a first-tier force.”⁴⁸ Through this modernization process, it will develop sophisticated weaponry, a coordinated army, and projection capabilities that could reach as far as the US. This will allow them to secure “national interests overseas, including a growing emphasis on the importance of the maritime and information domains, offensive air operations, long-distance mobility operations, and space and

⁴⁵ Defense Intelligence Agency. “China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win.” 2019. Accessed March 20, 2019. http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf.

⁴⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018." May 16, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/16/2001955282/-1/-1/1/2018-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT.PDF>.

⁴⁷ Pant, Harsh V., and Pushan Das. "China's Military Rise and the Indian Challenge." ORF. April 19, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/china-military-rise-indian-challenge/>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

cyber operations.”⁴⁹ As part of the modernization process, China has also formed a joint command structure within its military to encourage communication and cooperation between branches. This will allow for more coordinated missions and organization within its military.

In addition to its military modernization, China has also begun expanding its military reach. In 2017, the country acquired its first overseas naval base in Djibouti.⁵⁰ This location is very strategic, as it allows access to Gulf of Aden, where “an estimated 12.5 to 20 of global trade passes every year.”⁵¹ This base also possesses economic advantages as it is integrated in China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Djibouti is a recipient of Chinese FDI. It has also begun expanding military relations with countries around the globe by sending PLA officers to observe and work under various militaries. Currently, there are PLA officers working as military attachés in over 110 offices worldwide.⁵²

China has also begun constructing military outposts in the Spratly Islands and in the South China Sea.⁵³ On these island chains, the country has build landing strips, barracks, and bases to expand their military reach. Although they insist that their intentions behind these developments are not to exert force on regional neighbors, these islands have been the subject of

⁴⁹ Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018." May 16, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/16/2001955282/-1/-1/1/2018-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT.PDF>.

⁵⁰ Chefitz, Gabrielle, and Sam Parker. "China's Debtbook Diplomacy: How China Is Turning Bad Loans into Strategic Investments." Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. May 30, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/chinas-debtbook-diplomacy-how-china-turning-bad-loans-strategic-investments>.

⁵¹ Wang, Monica. "China's Strategy in Djibouti: Mixing Commercial and Military Interests." Council on Foreign Relations. April 13, 2018. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/chinas-strategy-djibouti-mixing-commercial-and-military-interests>.

⁵² Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018." May 16, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/16/2001955282/-1/-1/1/2018-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT.PDF>.

⁵³ Ibid.

territorial disputes in the past, thus making Chinese occupation of them controversial, and to some, aggressive.⁵⁴ China's presence on these islands could be met with opposition if they were to attempt to assert territorial claims to the South China Sea, as the ocean cannot fall under a country's jurisdiction according to international laws.



Figure 3: Chinese Military Base in South China Sea

In a 2019 report, the US Defense Intelligence Agency warned that “China is rapidly building a robust lethal force with capabilities spanning the ground, air, maritime, space, and

⁵⁴ Kim, Patricia M. "Understanding China's Military Expansion and Implications ..." Council on Foreign Relations. May 17, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/report/understanding-chinas-military-expansion-and-implications-us-policy>.

information domains designed to table to impose its will in the regional and beyond.”⁵⁵ This expansion poses a direct threat to regional neighbors like India, Japan, and Taiwan, especially in regards to territorial disputes. One of China’s primary motivators behind their foreign policy objectives is to pressure Taiwan into reunifying with the mainland. The country’s military strategy of creating an “active defense” entails that it will act “strategically defensive but operationally offensive.”⁵⁶ This strategy allows for China to justify offensive measures by claiming that the adversary possessed plans to threaten Chinese interests, even if they had not acted yet. This approach demonstrates that they anticipate foreign intervention or retaliation regarding their policy objectives, most notably in regards to Taiwan.

⁵⁵ Defense Intelligence Agency. “China Military Power: Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win.” 2019. Accessed March 20, 2019. [http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military Power Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf](http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military_Power_Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Potential Future Scenarios

Through the use of Divergent Scenario Development (see appendix), eight future scenarios were generated that detail various hypotheses regarding the opportunities, restraints, and goals of China in expanding its global influence. Below, I have elected to detail four distinct scenarios that feature unique situations pertaining to the future foreign policy objectives of China. Each scenario presents different opportunities and threats to the global community as it is forced to respond to the aspiring actions of the Chinese government.

Hypothesis 1: US Challenger

In the scenario US Challenger, China possesses a global focus, persistent international pressures, and an eliminated economic dependency to the United States. This scenario presents the most destabilizing environment for the United States as China actively pursues a shift towards hegemony in a unipolar international system after asserting itself as the regional hegemon in Asia. Through negotiations with Russia and India, the country avoids regional resistance in their strive for power. In fact, Russia supports their direct challenging of the US as it diverts attention away from them. This allows them to the opportunity pursue their own goals with minimal resistance from either country. Given the expansionist nature of recent Russian policy surrounding issues like Crimea, it is also plausible that Russia would use this scenario to build up their military forces in order to challenge the winner of the US-Chinese fight for hegemony.⁵⁷

China is able to expand its political and economic ties around the globe, specifically in the Middle East and Latin America. Establishing relations with China appeals to these countries,

⁵⁷ Trenin, Dmitri. "Highs and Lows: Russia's Foreign Policy at the Start of 2018." Carnegie Moscow Center. February 2, 2018. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/75425>.

as the memory of past US presence in the regions have caused hesitancy in pursuing diplomatic relations with the country. With China advertising and exporting the “Chinese model of governance” that contrasts Western models of democracy, its presence is welcomed in hopes of creating economic prosperity in these nations.⁵⁸ In Africa, China would have fully integrated its companies into the economic foundations of several countries. This would create a means for bargaining, as they could threaten to close business operations and stop funding to FDI projects in the event that these countries refuse to support China in this strive for global supremacy. China’s Belt and Road Initiative would be fully established, thus creating a China-centered global trading network with economic interdependence formed between China and over 65 countries.⁵⁹ This would place pressure on trading and diplomatic partners to support China’s growing influence.

This scenario is the most destabilizing to the United States because it forces them to determine whether or not to confront China militarily in order to maintain the current global order. As a regional hegemon, China did not pose a direct threat to the Western hemisphere. They were able to negotiate diplomatically to protect allies and interests in the region without fearing that China would push for a transition of balance of power. However, as a country striving to replace the US at the top of the global hierarchy, China not only poses a more severe to US interests, but to the country as a whole as well. The expansion and sophistication of the country’s military lends it the ability to exert military force all the way to the America. Due to bureaucratic pressures, the decision of whether or not to respond to their actions with military

⁵⁸ Pant, Harsh V., and Pushan Das. "China's Military Rise and the Indian Challenge." ORF. April 19, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/china-military-rise-indian-challenge/>.

⁵⁹ "Belt and Road Initiative." World Bank. March 29, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2019. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>.

force would be influenced by factors like the severity of the threat China poses to American allies, international support for the US in pursuing a defensive or offensive attack on China, and domestic support for the cause.⁶⁰ Through means such as propaganda and cyber hacking, the country could attempt to skew American public perceptions of their objectives. In an already politically divided nation, this would make bureaucratic measures much more difficult.

If this scenario were to evolve into a military confrontation, it could also create a Cold War-like environment that might lead to threats of the use of nuclear weapons. This would have devastating consequences for both countries, as well as surrounding neighbors and allies. Due to the resources at the disposal of both countries, as well as their relative power and alliances, it is difficult to conclude which country would overpower the other and become the global hegemon. Regardless of the victor, this scenario would possess the most destructive consequences for the global community.

Hypothesis 2: Regional Hegemon

In the scenario Regional Hegemon, China maintains and possesses a regional focus, minimal international pressures, and an eliminated economic dependency on the United States. This scenario represents China's ideal plan for global influence in 2025, as they are able to assert themselves as a hegemonic power without facing a direct confrontation with the US. The country's "Made in China 2025" plan is effective in bolstering its domestic economy into a new technical age that eliminates the need to rely on assembling US products. Through assimilating its products into the global market, especially regional ones, it expands its economic influence and its GDP flourishes. The advancement of Science, Technology, Engineering, and

⁶⁰ Breer, William. "U.S. Alliances in East Asia: Internal Challenges and External Threats." Brookings. May 12, 2010. Accessed April 23, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/u-s-alliances-in-east-asia-internal-challenges-and-external-threats/>.

Mathematics (STEM) programs throughout the country causes the domestic population's literacy levels and technological skills to improve dramatically. Due to economic prospects brought with these advancements, the government turns its attention to address domestic issues like the wage gap and tensions among ethnic groups to create internal stability.

By soothing domestic tensions and internal instability, China is able to direct its attention to neighboring countries. Through product development, the country is able to turn to other countries in Southeast Asia to assemble their products, as nearly 783 million people living in Asia are living below the poverty line and can therefore produce their products at a cheap cost.⁶¹ By creating this economic relationship, China creates a level of interdependency with their partners. As a strategy to prevent China's increased power, the US and global community would need to suppress the country's economic growth, such as through sanctions, cutting off economic contact, or using "strategic economy engagement designed to increase regionalism within China's borders."⁶² This would involve taking power away from the central government and placing it in the hands of regional authorities to cause internal disunity and conflict.

The most significant initial challenger to China's attempts at becoming a regional hegemon is Japan. As one of the strongest actors in the region and an ally of the US, China would need to defeat them, whether it be through military or diplomatic means, without prompting American intervention. Although Japan is a strong challenger, it possesses two severe obstacles that China can take advantage of, mainly their economic instability and weak military capabilities.⁶³ Due to their economic instability, Japan would struggle to assemble a military

⁶¹ "Poverty in Asia." 香港世界宣明. Accessed April 23, 2019.

<https://www.worldvision.org.hk/en/learn/poverty-in-asia>.

⁶² Roy, Denny. "Hegemon on the Horizon? Chinas Threat to East Asian Security." *International Security*19, no. 1 (1994): 1-149. Accessed April 23, 2019. doi:10.2307/2539151.

⁶³ Ibid.

force capable of confronting China. In addition, due to the bureaucratic nature of American politics, the process of appealing to and assembling forces to aid Japan would be time-consuming and could result in faster movements by China to overpower Japan and force their submission. Their positions in the East and South China Seas would place Chinese military forces in close proximity to Japan to act quickly.

Despite this initial resistance, in this scenario China is able to negotiate with Japan, as well as their other regional neighbors to support their assertion as the regional hegemon. This is accomplished through economic and political incentives, such as development projects, FDI, and non-interference policies ensuring sovereignty. By persuading its neighbors to support its rise, they avoid any US intervention.

Hypothesis 3: Contiguous Resistance

According to political scientist Stephen Quackenbush, the number one determinant of war is the presence of contiguity.⁶⁴ Contiguity refers to the sharing of borders. For example, the United States possesses two contiguous neighbors in Canada and Mexico. China, on the other hand, possesses 14. Contiguity is very serious in a country's assessment of whether or not to go to war because proximity makes it easier for adversaries to attack. If a country feels threatened directly at its border, it is likely to take action in order to avoid invasion or the threatening of its territory.

In this scenario, named Contiguous Resistance, China possesses a regional focus, persistent international pressures, and an eliminated economic dependency to the United States. As the country attempts to exert influence in Asia to assert itself as the regional hegemon, it is met with resistance from Russia and India, two of its contiguous neighbors who are also major

⁶⁴ Quackenbush, Stephen L. *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*. Los Angeles: Sage, CQ Press, 2015.

powers. This resistance comes in the form of political, economic, and military means that pose challenges to them at every front. Lacking defensive alliances with other neighboring countries, China is forced to evaluate whether or not to continue its stride for regional supremacy as it faces the threat of economic sanctions, diplomatic vetoes on its policies, and, potentially, military intervention by these two powers.

India presents a threat to China's growth due to their ongoing border disputes. As China would attempt to assert force in these disputed territories, India would be forced to respond militarily. Although China possesses a stronger military, if they were to face opposition at two fronts India could potentially overpower them and take control of the disputed Arunachal Pradesh territory.⁶⁵ India could also take precautionary balancing measures and attempt to build their military capabilities before a direct confrontation occurred with the country. As a retaliatory measure, China could attempt to align itself with Pakistan, another country that India has historically had challenges with. The most effective strategic choice India could employ to protect its interests would be to develop a closer alignment with the US to create regional balancing against China.⁶⁶ The United States could provide military aid to India while also pursuing other balancing strategies like cutting of economic trading routes or rallying the UN to condemn and punish China's actions. As the country with the strongest ability to combat China's rise, the US would be an attractive ally in combatting Chinese aggression.

Although China and Russia both desire to challenge principles of the Western-dominated international system, conflict could still emerge between the countries. If China began to infringe on Russia's sovereignty, such as in the Arctic where China aspires for infrastructure

⁶⁵ Rajagopalan, Rajesh. "India's Strategic Choices: China and the Balance of Power in Asia." September 2017. Accessed April 23, 2019.

https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_312_Rajesh_Strategic_Choices_FNL.pdf.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

development and resource extraction, Russia could take retaliatory measures.⁶⁷ Similarly, since Russia also strives to enhance their power in the world order, they might interpret any effort by China to increase its own status as a direct threat to their interests. Due to the strained relationship between Russia and the US, it would be difficult to establish similar relations with them that India developed in this scenario. Since Russia would likely experience difficulties in combatting Chinese military forces, they would be forced to use other channels to weaken the country, such as cyber hacking or distributing anti-Chinese expansion propaganda to Chinese citizens.⁶⁸ Russia's resolve would pose a direct threat to China's expansionist aspirations. Resolve refers to their willingness to continue fighting. As demonstrated in the Cold War, Russia is willing to endure long, costly periods of conflict in order to protect their status in the world order.⁶⁹ Although China might expect some degree of regional resistance regarding their attempt at becoming a regional hegemon, their resources would likely be exhausted primarily due to opposition from Russia.

In addition to Russia and India, China also risks resistance from other neighboring countries. If Japan were to appeal to the US, claiming that they felt their security was at risk, they could gain military support to combat the country's attempts at becoming the regional

⁶⁷ Stronski, Paul, and Nicole Ng. "Cooperation and Competition: Russia and China in Central Asia, the Russian Far East, and the Arctic." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. February 28, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/02/28/cooperation-and-competition-russia-and-china-in-central-asia-russian-far-east-and-arctic-pub-75673>.

⁶⁸ Helmus, Todd C., Elizabeth Bodine-Baron, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson, Joshua Mendelsohn, William Marcellino, Andriy Bega, and Zev Winkelman. "How to Counter Russian Social Media Influence in Eastern Europe." RAND Corporation. April 12, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2237.html.

⁶⁹ Rajagopalan, Rajesh. "India's Strategic Choices: China and the Balance of Power in Asia." September 2017. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_312_Rajesh_Strategic_Choices_FNL.pdf.

hegemon, thus creating a new bipolar conflict.⁷⁰ Due to persistent pressures, China would be forced to decide whether to bear the costs and continue their expansionist strive for supremacy, or retreat and face retribution from the international community. Regardless of their choice, this scenario demonstrates the costly nature of China's attempt to assert itself as a regional hegemon without first securing the support of its powerful neighbors.

H4: Economic Expansion

In the scenario Economic Expansion, China possesses a global focus while combatting minimal international pressures and sustaining an economy dependent on the United States. Although the country's domestic economy and workforce still possess a heavy reliance as the assembling stage in the American manufacturing industry, policies like the Belt and Road Initiative, "Made in China 2025", and FDI investments in Africa have allowed for it to expand its economic reach around the globe. By asserting itself in global markets, China strives to bolster their domestic companies and economy.

This strategy is met with minimal foreign opposition because, at face value, it appears to be for solely for economic purposes. This is because in ventures like FDI investments in Africa, China has vowed not to exert political influence in its "five-no" approach to engagement, which states that there will be "no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of our will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no

⁷⁰ Roy, Denny. "Hegemon on the Horizon? Chinas Threat to East Asian Security." *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 1-149. Accessed April 23, 2019. doi:10.2307/2539151.

seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation with Africa.”⁷¹ Policies such as these attract countries to pursue economic relations with China.

By expanding their economic partnerships and improving their domestic economy, China is able to rely less on exports and abandon manufacturing relations with the US. This is aided by the expansion of STEM programs and a growing emphasis on education, which leads to a more-educated population and workforce. China’s “Made in China 2025” policies are also successful in targeting their 10 sectors of interest: “next-generation information technology, high-end numerical control machinery and robotics, aerospace and aviation equipment, maritime engineering equipment and high-tech maritime vessel manufacturing, advanced rail equipment, energy-saving and new energy vehicles, electrical equipment, new materials biomedicine and high-performance medical devices, and agricultural machinery and equipment.”⁷² Through improving these industries, China develops to first become the world’s largest manufacturer of goods, and eventually the leading global manufacturing power.

⁷¹ Copley, Amy. 2018. “Africa in the News: China-Africa Cooperation, South Africa’s Recession, and Rwanda’s Parliamentary Elections.” *Brookings*.

⁷² USA. US Chamber of Commerce. *Made in China 2025: Global Ambitions Built on Local Protections*. Washington, DC, 2017. 1-80.

Conclusion

It is evident through policy and practice that China aspires to increase its influence globally through political, economic, social, and military means. With its position as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and its status as the second largest economy in the world, China possesses the means to influence regional and global actors both now and in the future. Despite these ambitions, however, China still faces domestic and international challenges that it must overcome if it hopes to eventually challenge the United States. China must address its growing wage inequality and domestic instability with respect to its minority groups. In addition, it will take years for China to develop the sophisticated military it needs to counter the US and create a fully functioning independent domestic economy.

In order to prepare for China's implementation of policies such as "Made in China 2025" and "China's Military Strategy," the United States will need to increase their influence through political, economic, social, and military channels in order to assert their presence in regions where China may attempt to apply pressure. Although there are many speculations as to what the balance of powers may be in the future, it is clear that China is a specific threat that the United States will need to monitor.

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